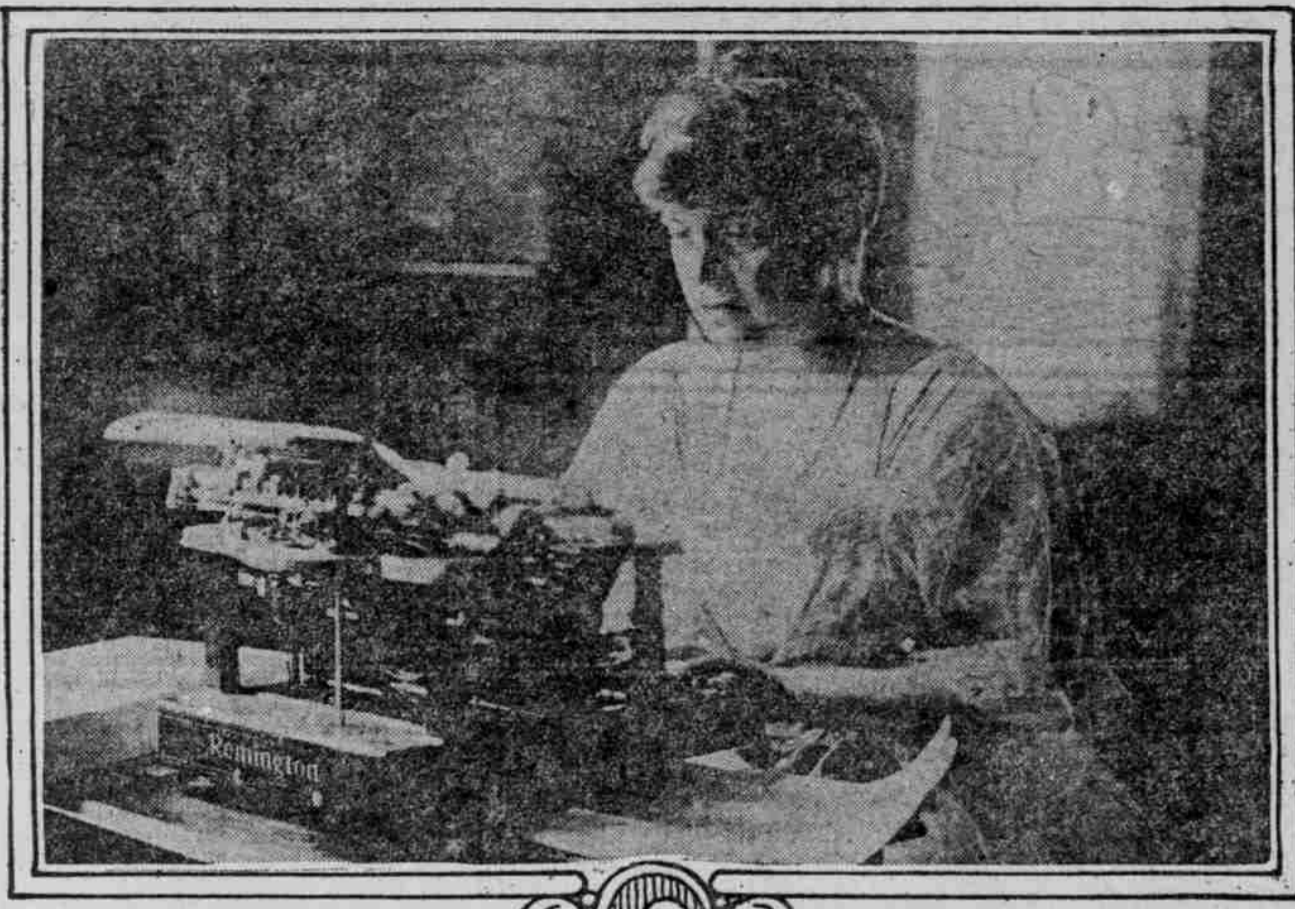


MARY ROBERTS RINEHART TALKS OF BABIES AND FIRES

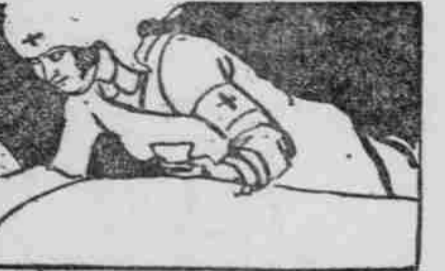
As the Author Talked of Her Granddaughter a Blaze Brought the Engines Booming by, the Set Interview Went Bang! But What an Intimate Glimpse of Herself



Mrs. Rinehart in Her Study.



Mary Roberts Rinehart, 2d, the Author's First Grandchild.



Another Portrait of Mrs. Rinehart.

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART has just passed a psychological milestone: her oldest boy, who married last year, has made her a grandmother at the age of 43.

"I'm quite conscious of having passed this milestone," she declared feelingly, "but I passed it with great pride."

In the meantime, little Mary Roberts Rinehart, second, familiarly known in the family as "Baba," although she has turned a mother into a grandmother, is resting quite undisturbed by this fact, as well as by the honor of bearing so distinguished a name. Like her small grand-daughter, the dignity and responsibility of her position and added honor sit lightly on the shoulders of this popular writer. It was all there in her voice and I was quite impressed by her manner until—clang! down the street thundered a fire engine. Like lightning came the metamorphosis. Up she sprang, up went the window and out went her head!

"Why, I do believe it's really a fire!" she exclaimed delightedly. "Come look," she called. As far out as she could lean, unmindful of any possible injury to gown or person, she was oblivious of everything but the volumes of smoke from the nearby building and the clatter in the street below.

"Why don't the firemen hurry?" she asked excitedly. "I suppose each action tells through"—to herself.

"Oh, look at the men coming up through that trapdoor!" she cried, completely lost in the spirit of the moment. Interviewers were, for the time being, quite forgot.

Had she said "grandmother" or had I dreamed it? No, it was certainly true; but I had learned one thing, that love and pride enter mostly into the make-up of some grandmothers and that a feeling of age and too much dignity are not necessary, are only handicaps. Roads to babies' hearts are very straight for grandmothers when love and pride lead the way. Back she turned from the window with a sigh (the fire had not come to expectations), but the sight quickly became a smile as she dropped into a chair and said:

"A racing fire engine or a circus parade always takes me back to my childhood. The single dramatic moment of the whole day, then, was when I heard the fire engine and saw it tearing down the street. It represented excitement, romance and adventure, and all the rest of childhood's dreams. The circus came less often, but was almost as thrilling."

"I remember, seven years ago, I must have rather stunned a diversified publisher, who came to see me at my apartment in New York. But he was a good sport, as you will see. It was evening. He was talking very interestingly about fire engines, when out the window I saw a bright red glare. I jumped up.

"I'm awfully sorry," I said, "but I have to go to this fire." So he picked up his high silk hat and went with me. I'm not bloodthirsty, but when there is a fire I have to be there."

After 15 years of hard work Mrs. Rinehart finds it hard to relax. At present she is trying to eliminate the short work with which she usually fills in her year. Her new novel, "The Poor Wise Man," to be published in October, she began last August and worked steadily on till the middle of January—straight ahead every day. She wrote the book in longhand with pen and ink and then rewrote it after it had been typed, making a total of 300,000 words.

"I still have not recovered from the strain," she told me. "While I was working on the book," she continued, "I had some fear of writer's cramp and endeavored to use the typewriter, but I found myself so busy looking at the letters on the machine I could think of nothing to say."

Every morning about 8 o'clock, after giving her orders for the day, she leaves her home in Sewickley and motors into Pittsburg to her city office. Sewickley is 12 miles from Pittsburg and it has been her home for many years.

"I never have been able to wait for a time to write. Automatically, as soon as I reach my office, I pick up my pen and go to work. Concentration comes easy. When I am working on a novel I am apt for a few months to put everything out of my life, but the work I am engaged on. Except an occasional dinner I don't go out ge-

cially, just write steadily from six to eight hours a day."

"Do you find it easier to write now than when you first began?" I asked the novelist.

"Yes, it is easier to write," she answered, "but I myself am more critical of my work. I work harder all the time, but am less satisfied with the result. Writing with me is infinite labor and great discouragement. I used to read book reviews for criticism of my work, but I found that opinions were so diverse it was impossible to get any idea of a real estimate. One praised; another tore down. I stopped reading them a year ago."

"While I do not read book reviews, I do read with immense care all the mail that comes to my desk every day and answer all letters, good, bad and indifferent; for I insist that people who write to me must have a reply. With the development of my business—writing the theater and the moving pictures being added to my other work—my mail has grown to the point where I am unable to answer it personally. My husband is now my business manager and has taken over the correspondence. It covers all sub-

jects. All sorts of questions are asked me—intimate personal ones, abstract inquiries on economics and politics, requests for autographs, autograph books and photographs and always a certain percentage of begging letters. Also there are always a number of fine and encouraging letters, which keep me busy answering them and living up in my work to the ideals and standards they have set for me."

From a novelist to a playwright is an easy transition, at least Mrs. Rinehart found it so. She has just finished her fifth play. This last one is in collaboration with Avery Hopwood and the rehearsals for it are now well under way.

"I have to break in on these rehearsals and run to California to cut and write the titles of my new 'moving picture,' a comedy photoplay called 'It's a Great Life.' This is my second photoplay. The first one is called 'Dangerous Days,' recently finished in New York, and I am now at work on the third. Since I began writing for the screen and more recently putting on my own productions, we have had a 'moving picture' projector installed in our home. I find it a good way to see and study picture production at

close range. The 'moving picture' addition to my work necessitates my going to the coast about three times a year.

"How do I play?" Well, I never have been able to take my play with my work. I must play all at once. It is always hard for me to relax, so when I take a vacation it must be a real one. Long horseback trips with my family are the best recreation I know anything about, and until the war broke in on them it was a family habit to go west every summer. Since the war we have not been able to get back the habit. This year, however, my husband and my two younger boys and I plan to ride in the Rockies in July and August, probably taking our usual camp outfit. Each night we camp in a new place, preferably on the banks of a trout stream or lake. If the fishing is good we stay several days."

"Tell me how a business woman like yourself keeps house," I asked, "and does the servant problem bother you?"

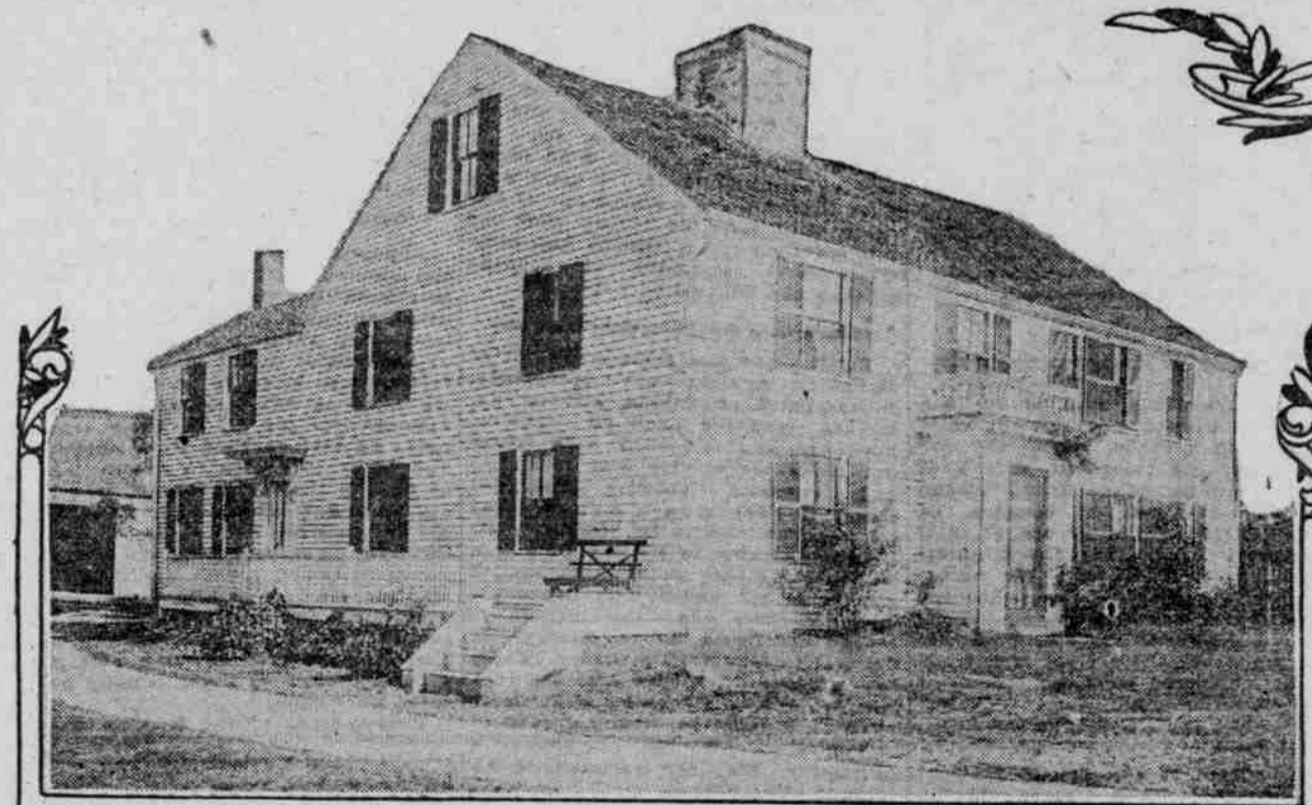
"I never had a servant problem in my life," she replied, tapping wood. "I have no particular secret. I have had my servants a long time and regard them as part of my business organization. Unless my house is running smoothly I cannot work. The personal equation enters into the servant problem more than in almost any other in which employment is involved. In the first place, I have to like the people who are in my house; then, for success, the feeling must be reciprocal—they must like me. That

achieved, there is no longer any question of grudging service. My servants are well paid, well housed, well fed and have proper hours for recreation and, because I do appreciate the efforts they make, I believe in showing them appreciation."

"Like every other housewife, I am facing the problem of the high cost of living. We all know that 43 cents is all a dollar is worth, and I do not look for any decrease of prices. There must be an increase all along the lines, in salaries, to meet the rising demands. After the civil war prices never went back to what they were before, although they lowered somewhat. The difficulty today seems to be that, while employers of labor have recognized the dollar at 43 cents, employers of people in salaried po-

QUILLCOTE, COLONIAL FARMHOUSE HOME OF KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN, DECORATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH HER IDEAS BY NOTED ARTISTS

Walls Painted With Woodland Scenes, Lighted With Cream-Colored Batiste Hangings, Charming in Design, Representing Wheat, Apples, Corn, and Showing Delicate Tracery of Rushes and Climbing Vines—Fire Dogs Are of Iron, Representing Owls—Only Morning Given to Writing.



Quillcote, The Home of Kate Douglas Wiggin at Hollis, Me.

BY MARY HARROD NORTHEM.

"QUILLCOTE," the summer home of Kate Douglas Wiggin, is charmingly situated at Hollis, Maine, not many miles from the railroad station. The name signifies "home of a quill driver," most appropriate for one who has written so many charming stories as she has.

Here during the summer months she spends the season with her mother and writer sister, Miss Nora Smith. Originally, she occupied the house almost directly opposite, but within the last few years she has purchased this old homestead and remodeled it to suit her needs, using the old barn at the rear for musicales, tea parties and many good times.

During a recent call she told me that she loved to come here where all her writing is done and that she takes up her pen and resumes her work just as readily as if it had never been dropped. Then when fall comes and she steals away for nine months of social life she lets her brain lie fallow. This, she claims, is the reason why she has had such great success in her work.

The outside of the house shows simply a colonial farmhouse, the remodeling being done by her own townsmen, but inside the decoration has been by her order worked out by noted artists. This is particularly true in her workshop, where the prevailing tone is forest green. The walls are papered with woodland scenes lighted with cream-colored batiste hangings. This is charming in design, representing wheat, apples,

corn, and showing a delicate tracery of rushes and climbing vines. Here in this her den she spends her mornings, either resting in front of the fireplace, where the fire dogs are of iron, representing owls, or seated at her writing table in the alcove, bringing forth quaint betrayals of the joys and sorrows of childhood that have made such an appeal to the hearts of not only the English-speaking people but the countries overseas.

Mornings are given up to writing, but as she is not very robust the afternoons and evenings are left open for social purposes. It is a very common sight to find her mother, Mrs. Riggs, and her writer sister, Miss Nora Smith, sitting under the trees in the pine grove, listening to the rustle of the leaves and the song of the birds perched high up in the branches, while the active brain is busy planning what shall come next in the book.

She is the idol of the country folk, who come for miles around that they may talk over old times and learn what has happened since they last met.

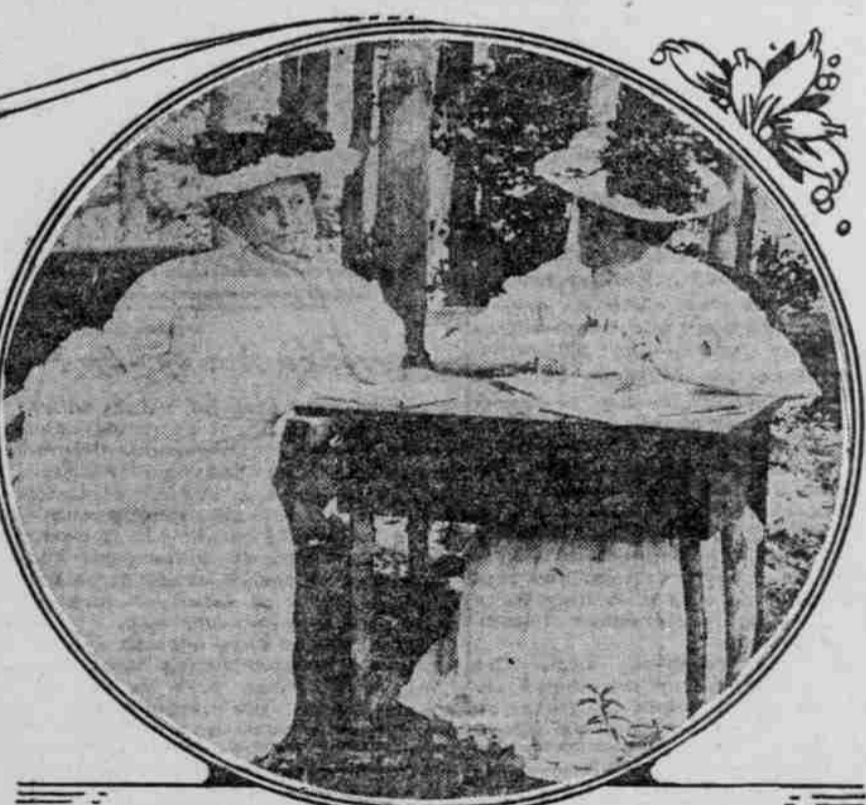
The barn at the rear of the house is a feature that should be visited. It is in reality a large music room with a rustic platform at one end. A new floor was laid and many windows inserted that it might be used for social purposes, and when the church was done over a few old-fashioned settles of weathered wood, toned by time to a silvery hue, were added. Nothing else was touched. There still remain the ancient rafters and walls

just as they were a century ago. The lighting is by lanterns, some of them very curious, being especially painted for the owner by the Japanese, and they bear the crest or coat-of-arms of the artist.

The door at the rear frames a charming picture showing a field of daisies and buttercups with arching elms as a background.

Here the village folks are invited several times a year for a dance and a spread, the old harness room having been filled with shelves on which rests the old china used for such purposes as this. The old Buxton meeting house in the village is of special interest to her. She attends church there regularly and in payment for the same opens the barn for an annual author's reading and concert, charging a small admittance fee.

One cannot mention the old Tory meeting house without mentioning "the old Peabody pew," in which the friendly intimate relations of the author and the villagers are brought out. She says: "We have worked together to make our little corner of the great universe a pleasant place to live in and so we know not only one another's names but something of their joys and sorrows." Both the author and her sister are fond of music and each of them plays and sings. Every Sunday they help out in the choir, Mrs. Wiggin playing the organ, and when the evening service is held in her barn she takes the place at the piano, where she shows her skill. These two are not the only instruments she plays, for she is an expert



Mrs. Wiggin Entertains and Works at Fresco

on the guitar, and has composed many songs with words for both kinds of instruments.

Unlike many writers, Kate Douglas Wiggin sets herself a daily task and at times turns out 20,000 words in 10 days, or rather one-half that time, as she never works afternoons. In reply to a query as to whether she considered it more profitable to write magazine articles or books, the answer came, "Without doubt, books, for they give you an income even while you are resting; but magazine articles have to be written all the time in order to make good. Still,"

she continued, "one must follow one's star in writing and do the work one feels impelled to go." And as she was never robust, busy all the time does not appeal to her.

It is well known that in addition to her story writing she is an enthusiastic supporter of the kindergarten, having always retained her first interest in its expansion and improvement. She is today vice-president of the Free Kindergarten Association of New York, and she is constantly devising ways and means from the time she leaves "Quillcote" in September until the time she returns, in May or June.

timates at 0.01159 or 1.159 per cent of the population.

Should such a rate of increase be continued, it must result in a severe strain on the resources of nature, in the opinion of a writer in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Knibbs asks whether medical men in future will take a stand in favor of so colossal a population that the masses will scarcely be provided with the bare necessities of life, or will they favor birth control and limitation of births in such a manner that the population of the earth shall never be greater than can be adequately provided for on a high plane of physical, mental and moral existence?

Fertilizer Boosts Spud Yield.

ST. JOHN, N. B.—At the annual meeting of the Canadian Fertilizer Association at Guelph, Ont., it was stated that the yield of potatoes in New Brunswick had been increased by 100 per cent in eight years through the judicious use of fertilizer.

Growth of Population Presents Problem.

Scientists Wonder Whether Hunger Will Overtake Human Race.

sitions have not yet done so. I do wish that women would begin to train their daughters in some useful profession. No matter how remote the possibility of their ever needing to earn their living, it is a wise thing to equip a girl should this necessity arise. That is why I am interested in the case of Bryn Mawr college."

"Would you tell me something about your ideas in regard to clothes, and the way a business woman should dress?" I asked again, and Mrs. Rinehart very quickly replied that the way a business woman buys clothes and the way other women buy is, in her opinion, a very "different proposition."

"I never have developed the shopping habit," she told me. "Women who have the time and don't know what to do with it go shopping, and this accounts for big bills from department stores, utterly unnecessary. My system in replenishing my wardrobe consists in going to New York three times a year, and knowing in advance just what things I need. I go to the best dressmakers and they do the rest. After that, aside from seeing things are kept in order, I forget about clothes entirely. I never shop, in any sense of the word, at all. I believe a business woman should be as well dressed as possible, in quiet, well-made clothes, absolutely inconspicuous." Many of Mrs. Roberts Rinehart's war experiences are still fresh in our memory, but perhaps we do not remember it was as a trained nurse, as well as a writer, she was permitted to go into the war zone.

"The fact that I was a graduate trained nurse," she said, "made me hope that, although my boy was in service, they would still accept my help and let me go across. At first this request was denied, but subsequently, in 1915, I was permitted to go and had a wonderfully interesting experience, spending some time at every front of the army." (She was decorated by the queen of Belgians for services to Belgium and interviewed the queens of Belgium and England for the Saturday Evening Post, also General Feoh.)

"I got to France that year by 'stowaway' across the channel. It was arranged that I should be met at Calais by an officer of the Belgian army, but when I got to Folkestone to take the boat I found it had been forbidden to carry passengers across the channel, and I had just reached England the Germans had announced they would sink all ships going in that direction. What should I do? Go back and face defeat? Not if I could help it. Two boats were tied up at the quay. One was the Boulogne boat ready to sail, but the Calais boat was dark. I made an appeal to the captain of the Calais boat to take me across, but he refused. It was 3 o'clock in the morning and raining heavily. There seemed a slim chance that by taking advantage of the night, the darkness and the confusion of the boat, I might be able to slip in unobserved. I determined to try. So I stood at the end of the quay and waited for my opportunity, which came sooner than I expected. Reaching the cabin unobserved, I locked myself in and went to sleep. The boat was tied up at the wharf at Calais when I awakened. It was a gray dawn and still raining. I got off without being noticed, was met by the Belgian officer, who took me directly to the front. Of course later on, when precautions were more rigid, this 'stowaway crossing' would not have been possible, but it succeeded beautifully then."

"Succeeding beautifully" has now become a habit with this writer. You can hardly call it luck nor altogether talent, for good hard work and much common sense has had something to do with results. She works and plays equally hard and faces her milestones unafraid.