

No, not all, for there were three little girls, Hetty, Katy, and Emma, who were very fond of the old woman, and called her "grandma" with real affection.

Sometimes when they visited her, they came out to the corner of the fence to talk to their acquaintances, lingering outside on their way to school; and when they spoke of "grandma," their little friends, who always associated that name with a quiet, sweet-faced, old lady, with a white lace cap and gold bowed spectacles, pitied them, and thought how awful it must be to have *such* a grandma. They would not be convinced by Hetty's stout assertion that she was "real nice, and not a bit cross."

Nor were the children the only ones who avoided her. Grown people let her alone too. Some of the women were as much afraid of her as the children were, and declared they "wouldn't go past her house after dark for anything;" others pitied her; others never noticed her, except to smile at her grotesque appearance; and others dealt with her purely in a business way, giving her work and paying her for doing it. These last were the only people she ever had anything to do with.

For years she lived on in the little weather-beaten old house by the road, weaving carpets and taking care of the cow and chickens, just as she had done for so long. Her grandchildren were growing up now, and did not come to see her so often as they used to.

But one day, a man, tall, with long hair combed straight back, and wearing eye-glasses, got off the train at the little station, and asked if anyone could tell him where to find "an old lady by the name of Mrs. Sears."

Then there was excitement. Yes, of course, everyone knew where "Mrs. Sears" lived. But what in the world could this fellow want with her! Was he some relative? A son, maybe, who had run away when a boy.

A half dozen, or more, offered to guide

the tall stranger to the house, vainly hoping that they might learn who the stranger was, and what he wanted. But the tall man gave no reason for his visit, he merely thanked them when they reached the little rickety gate, and sent them back. His call on Granny Sears lasted about an hour.

All that evening, people gossiped about it and wondered what it could mean. But the stranger stayed in his room all evening, and the hotel clerk, who had found some excuse to go to him, said that he was busy writing, and had the room "all littered up with papers."

Some of the women, for whom Granny Sears had worked, were even bold enough to go to see her that evening; but they came away again with their curiosity unsatisfied.

The next morning, the stranger was seen going back to the little old house with a big tablet under his arm, and all day long the curious public waited in suspense for him to come away, so that, if possible, they might learn the meaning of his visit. But it was almost five o'clock, about half an hour before the evening train time, when he went back to the hotel, then hurried down to the station, boarded the train, and was gone.

No one ever found out what he wanted with "Granny Sears," and things went on just as before.

About six months after the stranger's mysterious visit, the booksellers began to advertise a new "Biography of Abraham Lincoln." The book at once became popular. Never before had so much been known concerning the very early life of America's most remarkable man.

"Many of the facts here published," so said the introduction, "were obtained from an old lady, now living alone and unknown in a western town, but who, in her girlhood, was an intimate friend of the Lincoln family."

One day a package came to Old Granny Sears. She carried it home from the post-office, pulled down the blinds of her little sitting room windows, lit the lamp, and tore off the wrapper. Inside was a volume, neat-