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By Adelin Hohlfeld

I was brought up on stories of old Madison. I have a grandmother who was present or had first hand information about everything of importance that ever went on in this town. Not only that, but she remembers what she wore and what they had to eat and the amusing things that everybody said. There are plenty of plots here for novels that I've always been going to write, but never do. For instance, there's the story of the old castle.

[Probably the majority of Madisonians do not even know that Madison ever had a castle, a real English castle whose towers rose on the shores of Mendota.] It has long been demolished. The original stone of its construction was carted away to build another and more modern house, now the home of Prof. J. L. Tormey, 137 East Gorham st. The old stone barn and part of the stone fence are still in use, though a frame house, home of Dr. Arthur Sullivan, 930 East Gorham st. now stands on the foundations of the old castle. One can still drive one's car under the castle's portecochere with the head of a British lion carved over it.

When my father was in college the castle was still standing, in decrepid dignity, on the lake shore. It was a favorite place for fraternity initiation stunts. Trembling freshmen were sent alone at night through the eerie tunnel which led from the empty cobwebbed rooms of the castle to the deserted stables, an expedition which formed the most lurid experience of initiation "hell week." When my mother was a little girl, the children used to go out there to play, to walk the high stone wall that ran down to the lake and scare themselves by climbing through the broken windows and the sagging doors into the big empty rooms, which by that time were believed to be haunted by innumerable ghosts. I myself never saw the castle but when my grandmother was a little girl, the castle was new and resplendent and some of her happiest childhood memories are of the days she spent there.

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[The castle was constructed in 1863 by Benjamin Walker. The Walkers were rather mysterious people as befitted the owners of a castle. They came to Madison from England about 1861; no one seemed to know just what

had brought them to this inland town. They evidently did not think much of midwestern styles of architecture, for they built and designed their own home on the plan of their ancestral home in England, with battlemented towers, and gothic doorways, all the accoutrements of a real medieval castle, except the moat and drawbridge.

Benjamin Walker, the builder of the castle, was something of a recluse and made few friends in Madison. One of these few was my great grand uncle, Alexander McBride, whose family had had connections with the English Walkers, and as my grandmother was just the age of little Rose Walker, the two children became fast friends. It was a long way in those days from McBride's Point (the original name of Maple Bluff) to Gorham st., so when my grandmother came to town to play with Rose, she usually spent the whole day and stayed all night. These visits were great occasions in the life of little Minnie Woodward. To begin with, there was the ride to town in the Walker's carriage. Great-grandfather Woodward had plenty of horses and nice buggies, but [the Walkers had a cabriolet, glass enclosed, with green trimmings and a coachman on the box.] When little Minnie, all dressed up in her best merino with her nightgown and toothbrush, no, excuse me, she didn't have a toothbrush, wrapped in a neat brown paper parcel, she felt very grand and elegant indeed. [Through the green woods rolled the cabriolet with its glittering glass and its green decorations, then up the curving drive to the arched stone entrance of the castle] where waited Mrs. Walker and Rose and Paul and the baby sister, whose name my grandmother after a lapse of only about 70 years, has negligently forgotten.

[One went first into the big entrance hall with its straight carved chair and big square piano. To the right and left of this hall were the parlors, two identical rooms which occupied the full circumference of the two towers. The rooms were octagonal in shape, both papered in gold. In the room on the right the deep carpets and the plush upholstery of the heavy chairs and tables was crimson; in the room to the left it was green. Both rooms had fireplaces at the far side, made of white marble intricately carved with grapevines and