

I was a little doubtful as to which of two beginnings to take. Some of the people whose lives I have heard read begin right in the middle of things, then go backward to the real beginning and catch up with themselves before they go on. I never liked that way, it seems to mix things up so; and so I am going to begin the other way—with the very first thing I can recollect.

You may think, from some little things which I have already said, that I have always been a country dog; and so I have—almost, but not quite. I was born in a large city, in the very top room of a five-story house. My mother, whom I can barely recollect, belonged to the janitor of this great building—that is, the man who took care of all the fires and with the help of his wife and daughters kept the rooms and passages clean. They lived at the top of the house, because nobody wanted those rooms for offices, it was such a long climb up all those stairs; and then the ceiling was lower than it was on the other floors. But the rooms were cheerful and sunny; there was a nice large “flat” for drying clothes, and in summer the daughters used to put boxes with flowering plants in them all along the edges by the railing; it was really beautiful. The janitor’s name was Jimmy, and his wife was called Mrs. Jimmy. All my people now have at least two names apiece, but perhaps when people are very poor they can only afford to have one.

I used to wonder what made Jimmy keep so many dogs. There were so many that Mrs. Jimmy, who moved very quickly, used to