

A SUMMER in the BIG WOODS

Boyhood Reminiscences of JOHN WALKER POWELL

THE AUTHOR of the nostalgic reminiscences here presented was the son of pioneers who migrated westward from Indiana in 1855, settling first in Mankato. His father, for whom young Powell was named, was actively identified with the Methodist Episcopal church in Minnesota for more than four decades. As a member of the state conference of that denomination, he occupied many pulpits in central and western Minnesota, moving with his growing family from one frontier community to another. Shortly after his arrival in Minnesota Territory, however, he acquired a farm on the Blue Earth River a few miles southwest of Mankato in an area known locally as Spring Island. Throughout his years of pastoral service, the pioneer preacher retained ownership of this farm; to it his family returned for occasional summers like the one here described; and there the elder Powell spent the years from 1895 until his death in 1904. When young John and his mother left for Spring Island

in April, 1882, the family was living at Tracy in Lyon County. Sometime during that summer the father was transferred to the county seat—Marshall, some fifteen miles north of Tracy—and there the mother and son joined him in the autumn.¹

John Walker Powell the younger was born in 1872 while his father was serving a congregation at Blue Earth. He was educated at Hamline University, the University of Minnesota, from which he was graduated in 1893, and the Boston University school of theology. Like his father, he entered the ministry, serving as pastor of a number of Methodist and Congregational churches in Duluth and Minneapolis. It was as an educator, however, that he was best known. In 1912 he returned to the Minneapolis campus to direct the university's program of religious education; during the First World War he went to France to conduct an educational program for American soldiers; and he organized the extension center of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. In later years he was a lecturer in the University of Minnesota extension division, giving a special course in "*The Bible as Literature*." He retired from the latter position in June, 1940, fifty years after he entered the university as a sophomore.² He continued, however, to reside in Southeast Minneapolis, where he was a familiar figure until his death in 1953.

The narrative here presented has been adapted from a manuscript of some eighty pages to which the author gave the title "*A Boy in the Eighties*." He presented a

¹ A detailed obituary sketch of the elder Powell appears in the *Mankato Press* for July 23, 1904. See also Methodist Episcopal Church, Minnesota Annual Conference, *Minutes*, 1881, p. 11, 1882, p. 9; and Arthur P. Rose, *History of Lyon County*, 148 n. (Marshall, 1912). The boyhood photograph of the author and his brother reproduced on page 84 was taken sometime between 1882 and 1885, while the family was living in Marshall. This and the view of Spring Island appear through the courtesy of Mrs. Powell.

² Powell's recollections of "Minnesota Student Life in the Nineties" appear in installments in the *Minnesota Alumnus* for November and December, 1946, and March and April, 1947. For information about his career as an educator, see *Minnesota Chats*, April 30, 1940.

copy to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1947, suggesting that it be used "in any way you see fit." The longer narrative is preserved in the society's manuscript division. Ed.

THIS IS the story of a happy summer—the happiest summer of my boyhood. For me, it began on a raw, gray day in early April, 1882, in the western Minnesota prairie village of Tracy, where my family lived at the time. My parents had reached the great decision that I should go with my mother to spend the summer on the family farm at Spring Island in the Big Woods country near Mankato. We would be joined there by my big brother, a master of woodcraft and sport who was my boyhood hero. He was working his way through college and was coming home for the summer.

I have no recollection of the hundred-mile journey by train eastward from Tracy. For me the joyous venture began when the rattling farm wagon, drawn by a rough-coated team of plugs, drew away from the curb on Front Street in Mankato and headed through the muddy ways for the country. On the spring seat sat my sonsy, sweet-faced mother and my big brother, a raw-boned, ungainly lad of seventeen. I sat behind, perched on a swaying load of household goods—a chubby, freckle-nosed ten-year-old, who gazed with absorbed interest at the store windows and the countryside as we passed. We had been living "out West" in Lyon County, but this Big Woods country was home, and the very names of the farmers whose homesteads we passed had a homely ring.

After crossing the Blue Earth River on a new iron bridge, we turned to the right, went through a mile of virgin forest, where the buds were already swelling, climbed a "dug-way" to the top of the bluff, and crossed the fields to home. It was a little unpainted farmhouse, standing on the brow of a hill at the head of a ravine through which a brooklet made its way past the stone quarry to the river, a quarter mile

away. The garden lay about the house to the east, and beyond it were the open fields. Westward the road ran down the hill and across the ravine to climb over a second hill to Mason Hynson's house, sixty rods farther on. The hillsides were used as pasture land, and the trees were thin and scattered. North of the house the woods came down in unbroken splendor to the barnyard bars. Big oak stumps stood all about the house, and a few giant elms and basswoods were still standing. North of the garden was the bee yard, with a magnificent white oak at one corner, a tall, stately basswood at another, and smaller elms and wild cherry trees shading the hives in summer. The bees were still in their winter quarters in the cellar; one of our first jobs would be to set their hives out under the trees.

First of all it was necessary to get settled. I jumped down excitedly as the wagon drew up before the kitchen door, and begging the key from Mother, opened the door and ran through the house to explore while my elders were getting in the things. The stove was already up, and the principal articles of furniture were in the house. But the bedding had to be brought in, and the empty ticks filled with fresh, clean straw from the barnyard. Then Mother called, "Come, Laddie, bring Mother a pail of water." The spring was down the hill and along the pasture path, a dozen rods from the house, and it was a much-splashed boy that toiled up the hill with half a pail of water to fill the teakettle for supper. The team, which had been borrowed from Hynson's, had been taken home and the frogs were beginning to sing in the slew beyond the barn before the settling was finally accomplished and supper was ready.

Next morning the house must be cleaned. Then the walls were papered with old files of the *Christian Advocate*. I found it fun to read the stories while I wiped dishes and helped with the housework, only the page always ended at the most exciting

*SPRING Island
in the
Blue Earth River*



point, and the rest of the story was pasted down on the other side!

Housecleaning finished and the old house swept and garnished, there was the yard to be raked. Chips and rubbish accumulated during the past three winters strewed the ground. While Big Brother got the garden ready and Mason Hynson plowed and harrowed it, Mother and I were busy getting the yard in order. On the whole my duties were light enough. The farm was worked on shares by a neighbor, so all my brother and I were expected to do was to grub the stumps and hazel stubs out of some of the roads, tend the garden, and look after the bees. True, I had not been brought up on a farm. My father was a frontier minister, and our home was usually in a little village with the country as its background. But there were always farm folk who drove to town to church and whose families must be visited. There were farm boys with whom I played. My sisters had married farmers, and more than one summer I had spent with them. And there was always this old place in the Big Woods to which the family would return for a season from time to time, and all the boys and girls—for ministers' families were large—would work together indoors and out.

A week or more was spent in cleaning the house and yard. By that time the garden was ready for planting. There is little fun for a boy in sowing wheat, or trudging up and down a long field after a corn-marker, swinging a heavy planter. But a

garden is different. It was fun to help Mother lay out the beds and decide where the lettuce, radishes, and other vegetables should be planted; to choose a corner all my own for popcorn; and, best of all, to heap up and smooth out the orderly beds, mark out the rows by laying the hoe handle across the top, and scatter the seeds from the brightly colored packages.

Best of all were the flower beds. A big oak stump stood a short distance from the kitchen door. This was covered with a mound of fresh earth and planted with moss roses. Both sides of the path from the front door to the road were lined with flower beds, and there Mother and I planted phlox, verbenas, pinks, four-o'clocks, cockscomb, marigolds, bachelor's-buttons, petunias, nasturtiums, asters, and other old-fashioned favorites.

FISHERMEN'S ADVENTURES

OUR WHOLE LIFE centered about the Blue Earth River. It permeated our thoughts and plans as the sound of its rushing waters dominated our days and nights. Its name was given to the county, and the clear, ice-cold springs on the island above the bend gave its soubriquet to the neighborhood, which was known as Spring Island. The contour of the valley determined the character of the farms. All the sports of winter and summer attracted the country folk to its banks. There my brother and I spent many exciting hours fishing during that happy summer of 1882.

Day after day in the spring months we visited the river, watching anxiously to see whether the water had gone down or its muddy current cleared enough for the fish to bite. By the time "the lowest boughs, and the brush-wood sheat, Round the elm-tree bole were in tiny leaf," the sport had begun, nor did it slacken before the low, clear water and stagnant pools of midsummer appeared.

The water was still yellow with mud and washed high the sandy banks below the island when Big Brother announced his intention of trying his luck at catching the despised suckers. Worms were dug in the garden, and a few fat white grubs from the manure pile by the barn were placed in a tin can. The tackle was of the simplest. The ironwood poles had already been prepared and were light and dry. A stout line, a good-sized hook, and a heavy sinker were all the equipment required. Sucker fishing does not demand a high degree of skill. All that is necessary is to bait the hook and cast it well into the stream, then sit still and wait until a casual fish, sucking up the mud in search of tidbits, chances upon one's bait on the sand at the bottom of the river. Then main strength and awkwardness bring him to land.

Early in June the red horse began running on the rapids. Then it was that the placid sport of still fishing gave way to the exciting game of spearing. It was the spawning season, and the fish made their "nests" by fashioning shallow hollows among the pebbles at the bottom of a swift shoal, where they deposited their eggs. Meantime they sported in the swiftly running shallows, where their red tails could be seen among the swirling ripples.

These fish loved to play where the water was shallowest and swiftest. The neighborhood boys would arm themselves with long-handled spears having three barbed tines and a line tied to the end of the handle for better recovery after a throw. Then with trousers rolled to their thighs they would wade down the channel after

the fish whose red tails they could see several rods away. The noise of the water covered the fishermen's approach, and they were among their prey before their presence was discovered. After a few swift lunges, the victims were tossed upon the banks, and the other fish darted to the safety of the deeper water above. Then the boys waded ashore, gathered and strung their prizes, rested on the banks for fifteen minutes, and repeated the performance.

The best fun was at night. Then the other boys of the neighborhood came down to the river, the younger lads carrying lanterns or torches, and the older boys handling the spears. They would sweep down the channel, six or eight abreast, each torchbearer flanked by two spearsmen, the lights gleaming upon the pebbled bottom through the clear ripples and throwing weird shadows upon the stones. The fish showed white in the torchlight as they darted past.

Not red horse alone, but a huge, lazy catfish, a worthless gar, an occasional shark-like sturgeon, or even now and then a pickerel was speared at night. Often the catfish and pickerel were found in the deeper pools under the banks, their long bodies looking like old snags till a sudden movement of tail or fin betrayed them to the keen-eyed sportsmen. It took both a quick-eyed and a quicker-handed spearsman to land a pickerel, however, for it was like spearing a streak of lightning.

As summer approached the bass and pike began to bite, and the fishing with hook and line took a new and more fascinating turn. After all it was rather dull sport to sit on the bank and wait for a casual sucker to bite. These warier, gamier fish were another matter.

The only change in the tackle was to a lighter hook, with a wire snell to guard the line from the sharp-toothed jaws of the fish. But the bait became far more varied. Frogs and minnows were the favorites, and later grasshoppers and mottle-winged "mosquito-hawks" or dragonflies. Big

Brother had a spoon hook which he sometimes used when trolling for pickerel, but the rest of the tackle was homemade.

There was no lack of fish. One of the best spots was just at the foot of the rapids below the big boulder at the lower end of Spring Island. There one could stand on the sand spit in the shadow of the great rock and drop his hook into the foam at the very edge of a deep hole. He was almost certain of a bite. Big Brother would sometimes catch a dozen fine black bass at this spot in an hour, and even I got an occasional fish.

Although I was no match for my brother at this game, one day I caught a fish that was the prize of the season. Some forty rods below the island, the strong current had cut a small cove into the bank, and there a powerful eddy piled huge blocks of foam against the rocks along the shore. It was a favorite fishing place, for there one could cast the hook out into the main current and then let it float down and back with the eddy. There were always fish in the depths, and they seldom failed to rise to the lure. One afternoon I was fishing at this point, using a frog for bait, and a pole and line so heavy that I could scarcely manage them. I made a frantic cast, and had not fully recovered my balance when a fish struck. Its first rush jerked me off my feet and carried me up to my waist in the river before I could check myself. When I got firm footing, the fish was pulling with all its might for deep water. My tackle would have held a crocodile. But my arms were too slender to play a fish with such a load, so there was only one thing to do and I did it. Turning to the bank with the heavy pole over my shoulder, I waded straight out and climbed ashore, pulling my captive by main strength in my wake. I never stopped till I reached the edge of the woods and my fish was ten feet up the bank. Then I made haste to examine my catch. I had to sit on the flopping monster to hold it, while I called with all my might for my brother. When

he arrived, he found a giant black bass that tipped the scales at a trifle under eight pounds! I was the hero of the neighborhood for the rest of the summer.

THE CAMP MEETING

IN JUNE the annual camp meeting of the Methodist church in the Mankato district was held at Minneopa Falls, across the river and about a mile and a half from our farm. There a woodland brook leaps over a lofty ledge into a lovely glen. Minnehaha is more famed in song and story, but not more beautiful. Near the head of the falls stood a fine grove of young hardwood timber in a natural amphitheater—an ideal spot for a camp meeting. My father and an older sister who could play the organ and sing joined us for the week of the camp meeting. The circuit riders and the people from farms and villages as many as thirty miles away came and camped in a huge half-circle about the grove.

A speaker's stand was built of rough pine boards at the foot of the slope in the center of the encircling tents. At the back of the stand was a shack known as the "preacher's tent," with bunks for the visiting ministers. Enough plank benches to seat several hundred people were constructed in front of the stand, and abundant clean straw filled the space about the altar, where the mourners knelt and prayed. A big tent served for prayer meetings and was generally used on rainy days.

Mother purchased a bolt of unbleached cotton sheeting with which to make a tent and fly. When the meeting was over the material would be made into sheets for the family to use. A cookstove was set up under the trees at the back of the tent, and a rough table built of pine boards. Sleeping arrangements were of the simplest, straw ticks being laid on the ground and covered with abundant quilts. Frontier hospitality was open and free, and a visiting minister and his family were always welcome.

The presiding elder of the Mankato district was in charge of the meeting, with the preacher in charge of the circuit second in command. The older preachers were men experienced in this sort of thing, however, and they took turns conducting the services. One brother would preach, after which another, chosen for his evangelistic skill, would "exhort." A small reed organ on the platform was used to furnish music, and every frontier minister could conduct his own singing. The day began with a prayer meeting in the big tent, and there was preaching morning, afternoon, and evening. Kerosene lamps were hung in brackets on trees and on the sides of the stand, and the campers used lanterns or even candles.

To me the week of the camp meeting was like one spent in another world. My brother and I waded the river at the island and walked to the campground, while Mother drove around by way of the main road with the camp furnishings. The beauty of the June woods, the excitement of cooking out of doors, of eating under the trees while the sunshine through the branches threw a quivering pattern of light and shadow on the white cloth, the joy of sleeping in a tent, the smell of the canvas, the patter of dew on the roof, the scampering of the chipmunks over my head in the dawn, the riotous matin song of the birds—all thrilled me to my heart's core. I was always meeting friends of my father and mother from distant circuits, and they patted my head and inquired for my soul's welfare, while they told me stories of my father and filled my pockets with peanuts and peppermints. I made new friends among the children, and we played quiet games about the camp or took long rambles in the woods, chasing the squirrels and finding wild strawberries to eat.

Of course I was too young to get a great deal from the religious side of the meetings. Children's meetings were held now and then—of none too wholesome a character it is to be feared—but these did not much

concern me. What fascinated me was the unusual atmosphere—the fervid preaching, the rapt faces of the listeners, their shouts and prayers, the while the birds sang and the sun shone down among the quivering leaves. I loved the camp songs, with their simple words and melodious refrains. While the sermon went on I would sit and dream, and when the people knelt for prayer or gathered about the "mourner's bench," I too would kneel.

Sunday was the great day of the week. Later, before the camp meeting decayed utterly and passed out of the religious life of "the people called Methodists," it became the custom to call in some famous preacher for the closing days, and particularly for Sunday. But in those more primitive days the camp meeting was always a purely homemade affair. The presiding elder saved his best sermon for Sunday morning, and the ablest preacher of the district took the afternoon service.

These country ministers were not to be despised. Some were college-bred, for the Methodist folk founded a college at the same time they organized their church, and education invariably went hand in hand with their evangelistic effort. But even those who had missed the advantages of college training were not infrequently men of great natural gifts, and they knew their Bibles by heart from cover to cover. Moreover they knew life. They were bred of the frontier. They had braved the wilderness and battled Indians. They shared the hardships of their people and won the respect of their rude neighbors by the sheer force of their inherent manliness.

Small wonder that on camp-meeting Sunday the people of the neighboring city of Mankato turned out in full force, while the country folk came for miles around. The day began with a prayer meeting at sunrise in the big tent. At nine o'clock there was a "love feast" before the preacher's stand. Bread and water, the symbols of fellowship, were passed, and the simple-hearted men and women told about their

religious experiences. By ten o'clock the grounds were thronged with people, and the buggies and farm wagons were parked in ranks on the outskirts of the grove. The elder preached a stirring sermon, after which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed. Then the farmers and their families retired to their wagons and the city people to their carriages and spread their picnic lunches on the grass, while every table behind the tents was crowded with guests. While the grownups were enjoying the morning love feast a children's meeting was held in the big tent, and there was Sunday school after dinner.

At three o'clock my father preached. He was a man untrained in the schools, a son of the Hoosier frontier, his language often crude and full of colloquialisms. But he was a constant reader, a theological thinker of no mean ability, and his preaching was marked by great simplicity and directness, with a wealth of apt illustration and a native eloquence which rose at times to tremendous emotional power. On this occasion he surpassed himself. By turns the vast crowd rippled with laughter or bowed with uncontrollable sobs. The more emo-

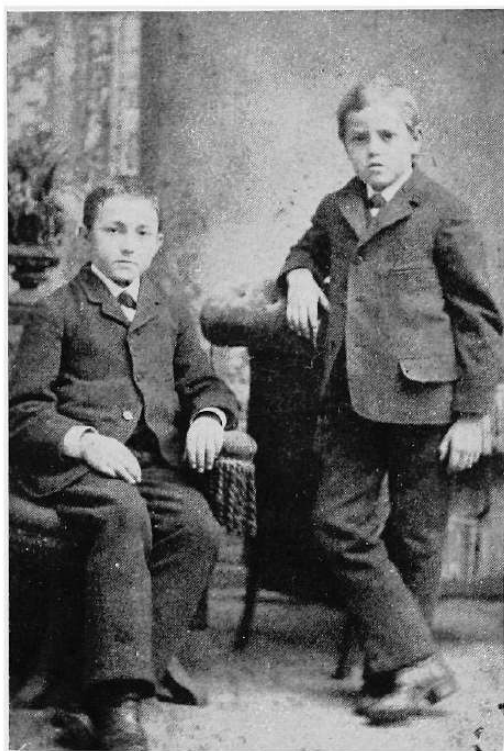
tional shouted in spiritual ecstasy, and more than once the great throng rose unknowing to its feet under the spell of the preacher's vision.

It was an experience I never forgot. Much of the sermon, of course, was beyond my comprehension. But much of it was so simple that a child might understand; and by some magic the preacher seemed to have fathomed all the mysterious yearnings, the blind emotions, the eager questionings that had stirred in my breast while I roamed the woods and thrilled at the lonely spell of the great bluffs and the rushing waters. When the sermon ended in a tumult of joyous hallelujahs and the crowd began to melt away, I slipped off alone into the woods, my very soul shaken by a tumult of feeling I was too young to translate into articulate meanings.

By the time the evening service began, the farmers and many of the townsfolk had gone home. But the crowd was still large, and the interest in the meeting was intense. A powerful sermon was followed by an earnest "exhortation," pleading with sinners to flee from the wrath to come. The altar filled with penitents. The preachers

MINNEOPA Falls
near the site
of the camp meeting





JOHN and Arthur Powell, about 1882

came down from the stand and knelt and prayed by the side of the seekers, or moved quietly about giving them counsel and encouragement. Now and again the air was rent with triumphant shouts as some soul "found the light," and the songs and prayers and shoutings continued until midnight. Doubtless there was much in all this that was purely psychological, consisting of mere nervous and physical reactions. But there is also no doubt that beneath it lay sincerity and genuine devotion.

On Monday morning the camp meeting broke up. There was a farewell prayer meeting in the big tent, and at nine o'clock the people gathered on the benches. The presiding elder made a brief parting address, and two or three of the brethren prayed. Then while they sang "Shall We Gather at the River," the elder and the preacher in charge clasped hands. One by one the other preachers shook hands with these two, each one thereupon taking his place in the line, followed by the men, women,

and children, till in the end everyone had shaken hands with everyone else. The emotional excitement was intense. For six days these people had been living on the mountaintop of spiritual experience, and they were still under its spell. The men wept on each other's shoulders, the women sobbed, and they bade one another farewell as though they expected never to meet again this side of eternity.

Then the tents were struck, the benches and the preacher's stand torn down, and the lumber piled ready to be returned to the dealer from whom it was hired for the occasion. The homebound wagons, piled high with camp furnishings, lumbered away. In a few hours the place was deserted.

THE FOURTH OF JULY

MY PREPARATIONS for the Fourth of July were very modest. My resources consisted of thirty cents—five cents more than I ever had before to spend on the holiday. I earned the money by gathering and selling the roots of ginseng, an herb which grew wild in the Big Woods. Every country boy hunted ginseng, and I soon learned to distinguish its leaves from those of similar plants. The dried roots brought a good price in the city, for they were much in demand for medicinal purposes.

Two days before the Fourth, I walked to Mankato, seven miles away, and with infinite care expended my thirty cents. A ten-cent cap pistol, a dozen boxes of caps for five cents, and two bunches of firecrackers made up the sum of my purchases. But it required some careful bargaining to secure that much. Firecrackers were ten cents a bunch, but after visiting a dozen stores and looking over their stocks I found a bunch that had been broken open, and the dealer let me have it for half price.

The distance from Mankato to the farm was too great for a ten-year-old to cover twice in one day, so it was necessary to spend the night in town. On the western slope of one of the great hills that shut in

the city and the river lived Old Man Shigley, one of the quaintest and most interesting characters imaginable. Born in Indiana in the days when that commonwealth was still in the heart of the wilderness, he had spent his life on the frontier. By turns trapper, scout, Indian fighter, soldier with Zachary Taylor, and finally settler, the old man might have stepped out of the *Leatherstocking Tales*. He had lived among the Winnebago and the Sioux, and he could speak half a dozen Indian dialects. He had an inexhaustible store of woodcraft, and he still trapped and hunted bee trees. And he would sit in his quaint den, with its litter of pipes and hunting knives and buffalo robes, and, smoking his corn-cob pipe, tell stories of the Mexican War and of Indian fighting for hours on end. His vocabulary was crude but picturesque. He was sometimes profane, but never vulgar or coarse, and I adored him.

The old man lived with his ancient housekeeper in a vine-covered cottage built into the hillside and surrounded with flowers and fruit trees. He was a born gardener, without a particle of scientific knowledge or trained skill, but with a remarkable gift for making things grow. He raised his own tobacco, which he cured himself. His roses bloomed more abundantly, his grapes and plums were more luscious, his melons earlier than any for fifty miles around. It was all one with his woodcraft. In his youth he had been the best scout in the region. In his old age his gifts turned in the direction of his nursery, and the community reaped the benefit.

The old man and my father had been friends for forty years. My older brothers had sat at his feet and learned the finer arts of frontiersmanship, and they were his special protégés. He taught them the ways of a bee in the air, the ways of a fish in the stream. He had given them of his craft without stint, and they repaid him with a friendship in which he took the greatest delight. It was without a question, therefore, that I turned my steps to Shigley's

when my shopping was done. Mrs. Ross, the taciturn old housekeeper, made me welcome, and the old man inquired of my brothers, and smoked, and told Indian tales to my infinite enjoyment. The next day, I made a careful bundle of my treasures, and with one of the old man's finest roses in my buttonhole trudged back to the farm.

On the Fourth I was up with the dawn. Big Brother had bored an auger hole in a big oak stump at the corner of the house. After this was filled with gunpowder, a wooden plug with a bit of fuse beside it was driven home and a heavy piece of railroad iron laid on the plug. When the first rays of the morning sun touched the chimney of the house a match was touched to the fuse, and we stood back in the shelter of the house to watch the effect of the explosion. There came a roar like a three-inch cannon, the rail tumbled off the stump, and the plug flew high in the air to drop with a clack upon the roof of the shed. Again and again, until the store of powder was exhausted, we fired the stump, in the end fairly splitting it.

Then Big Brother went off to milk the cows and I turned my attention to my firecrackers. Some I held in my fingers. Some I lighted and threw high in the air. Others I shot off under an old tin pan, where they made a most delectable roar. But for the most part I used them as ammunition for a gun, made from a broomstick with a small hole bored in the end of the make-believe barrel. To stick a firecracker in this, light the fuse, and shoot imaginary Indians was better than seeing a Wild West show.

THE HONEY HARVEST

AFTER THE FOURTH of July the busiest season began for us, and for a few weeks we had all the work we could do. The bees were beginning to swarm. There were about twenty hives on the stands under the trees. As soon as the blossoming

fruit trees in May assured a plentiful supply of food, the queen bees began filling the combs with the brood. By July the hives were crowded with honey, brood, and newly hatched bees. Then the old bees, accompanied by their queen, sallied forth from the hive in search of more commodious quarters.

To induce the bees to settle, our neighbors rang cowbells, beat upon pans, and threw dust among the bees. But my father regarded all such practices as pure superstition. He insisted that the swarm would settle in a short time anyway, and that we should wait until their ranging scouts brought back word of a convenient location for a permanent home. Experience justified his contention.

The swarms seldom came out until the heat of the day. From ten until three or four o'clock we kept constant watch, busying ourselves about the house or garden until a booming roar from the bee yard warned of an issuing swarm. Soon the air above one of the hives would be black with whirling bees. In half an hour the swarm would settle in a dense brown cluster on some convenient branch fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. Then we placed a ladder against the tree and Big Brother climbed up and sawed off the limb, holding it if possible to prevent it from falling to the ground. Next he carried the branch to an empty hive made ready beforehand on a new stand and filled with empty combs, shook the clustered bees off on the ground, and they promptly entered the hive and set to work making themselves at home. Within an hour a new and busy colony had been added to the yard. By the middle of July forty swarms filled the stands. Each hive was given an upper story filled with empty combs for the honey harvest.

As soon as the cells were filled with honey the bees promptly capped the combs with wax. Then Big Brother visited the hives, quieted the bees with a few puffs of smoke, and removed the heavy combs,

shaking the bees back into the hive. It was my part to remove the caps with a sharp knife and to run the "extractor," a wire basket in which the frames were hung four at a time. As I revolved the basket rapidly in a tin barrel, the motion threw the honey against its sides. The empty combs were returned to the hives to be refilled, while the extracted honey was drawn off in jelly glasses and quart jars for market. The abundant store of honey was sold to furnish Big Brother the means to return to college in September, so we both worked with a will from about nine in the morning until we could no longer see in the evening.

WITH THE approach of autumn, it was time for Big Brother to leave for college. The farm seemed empty and lonely after he had gone. But a younger brother had joined us in the meantime, and we two stayed on with Mother for another month.

There was still much to be done. The potatoes must be dug and the squash and pumpkins gathered from the garden. Father came to put the bees in the cellar for the winter and to help with the packing. We also busied ourselves gathering a winter store of nuts.

When we left the farm we did not go back to the prairie village whence we came in the spring. Conference appointments had sent my father to a larger town. School must begin, new friends must be made. All too soon the work on the farm and garden was finished. The nuts we had gathered were stored in barrels, the jam and jelly packed in boxes. Once more Hynson's team was brought into requisition, this time to take us back to the city whence the train was to bear us to our new home in Marshall. With beating heart I stood at length on the station platform awaiting the arrival of the train. Soon the bustle of departure effaced the past for the time being from my consciousness. I was embarked on the future, for better or worse, and the joyous summer was only a happy memory.



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