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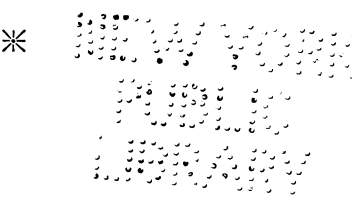
Frontis. "THE CHILDHOOD SHOWS THE MAN." *p.* 14

GLIMPSES OF BOYHOOD

BY
MR. G. R. ALDEN
(*A. G. Rossenberg*)



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WHEN I WAS A BOY.

I.

I USED to like to hear, and read, and tell stories. This was long ago, when it was not a very unusual occurrence to see a man who had served in the Revolutionary War. That seemed to me a very long word then, as I suppose it will now to some of my little friends, but if any among you do not know what is meant by "Revolutionary War," please ask some one to tell you, for it will not do for me to take space to write its history.

Remembering how I used to enjoy stories, and thinking over some of my own experiences as a boy, it seemed to me a good idea to tell my readers about them. You young people can hardly imagine the changes which have taken place, and how differently people live. If, therefore, some incidents mentioned should seem queer, ask yourselves if they are queerer

than the pictures found in old books, than the old bonnets and hats and coats and dresses which you may find in Grandmother's chest, or in some box in the attic.

Some of my stories will be about myself, and some about persons whom I knew; and, remember, they are to be facts.

I suppose I might as well tell you in the first place that my father died when I was too small to know anything about my loss. I mention this to account for some facts which would not have been, if we could have all lived at home. As it was, we children were scattered. Perhaps because I was the youngest, I was not sent so far from my birthplace as were my sisters and brothers. But I have forgotten to tell you where I lived — in what State even. Of course you wish to locate what you read. I was born upon the east bank of the Androscoggin River, just north of the town of L——, and a little south of two towns of L——. If you should now think you had guessed the place to a T, you would be mistaken. Yes, it was cold in winter, and the winters were long, yet we had our own fun, and plenty of it. How clean everything was. Jack Frost would

come early in autumn and lock up all the dirt. Then Mother Winter (Jack's wife, or mother, I suppose) would open her wardrobe and bring out blanket after blanket, clean and white, and spread them over field and forest, river and lake, as thick as three or four feet upon the level, with pillows and bolsters so big and high, here and there, that we would sometimes get almost lost in the feathers.

But, oh! it was so charming in spring. How the brooks would laugh and dance, when unchained by the great liberator, the sun! How the river, which had been so crusty all winter, would roar and leap along over rapids and falls, running away with logs, and capturing everything it could, even to the bridges which had thought themselves so much above it. Then when the dear little sparrows would come around and begin to sing, I think nothing ever sounded sweeter. A little later would appear the welcome robin. Glad was the boy, and sometimes a little envied, who first heard his cheerful song, or saw his red breast, as he surveyed the prospect from the top of some tall Lombardy poplar. I cannot begin to tell you how sweet the springtime was to me, with the

bursting buds, the returning birds, the frisky calves, the playful lambs, the fields beginning to put on their green, and the lovely pussies all over the willows. Rough winds, long winters, stony fields, rocky pastures we had indeed, but with sleds, and skates, and schools, and apples, and doughnuts, and pies, and puddings, with great roaring fires in winter, and fruits, and fishing and boating in summer, let us see if we didn't have grand good times, after all.

I lived half a mile from the house in which my father was born, and in that house lived my grandfather. He was just eighty years older than I, yet there was no one whom I would rather visit than this grand old man. He had served his country in the war by which its independence was won, but had long before this time united with the Friends, or Quakers, and could not conscientiously draw any pension money. In the same house in which he lived were cousins of my own age, with whom I have had many a play-hunt, and a play-dinner. Pieces of broken crockery were our dishes, save that we used real acorns for saucers. These cousins were almost the only friends of my own age with whom I had a chance to play,

yet I remember that the thought of talking with my father's father was the one uppermost in my mind, when I was allowed to visit the old home. But oh! how hungry we used to get. We were so glad that we had an aunt who understood how to cure that disease. Her big, big brick oven made first-rate prescriptions, in the shape of loaves of brown bread, of real allopathic size. After playing "Fox and Hound" till both fox and hounds were thoroughly tired out, and as hungry as real dogs are supposed to be after the chase, we would be called to the pantry, and each in his turn supplied with a full-sized, well-buttered slice of bread, not so thin that it had to be folded two or three times in order to get enough to taste. After this good lunch generally our venerable grandfather would have a word to say to his visitor. One little experience of this kind I want to tell you.

A few months before this time, Grandfather had made me a present of a copy of Webster's Spelling-Book, which I suppose I prized more on account of the giver than for what the book contained. Among its contents was the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, and this I committed

to memory. On the day in question Grandfather called me to him, where he sat in his old, high-backed chair, and after a few kindly, gentle words, which showed how tender his heart was toward the boy whose father was gone, he opened the family Bible which had been lying closed upon his lap, adjusted his large spectacles, found the place, and said, "Will thee read this chapter for me?"

"Yes, sir," I answered, and looked at the spot where his long forefinger pointed. To my surprise, what should it be but my one chapter of the whole Bible which I knew by heart! A happy thought came to me. Closing the book, with my hand in it to keep the place, I looked up into the venerable face bent over me, and repeated the whole chapter. That was the happiest moment of my life! It seems to me now as though I could almost feel the touch of that large, trembling old hand, as it lay upon my young head, while in a voice whose quavering showed much of the palsy of age, he said, "Why, thee can read it without looking on, can't thee?"

As I recall it, it seems like a benediction.

II.

AFTER an absence of thirty-four years, I went back to the home of my childhood. I must not forget to tell you that during my visit I secured the identical Webster's Spelling-Book from which I learned the chapter I recited.

A friend had kept it for me. The covers are not quite sound, but the book is neither "dog-eared," nor pencil-marked, while almost every page is whole and sound.

Upon this same farm where I visited, and not very far from the barn, stood a flourishing butternut-tree. Now the nuts from this tree were much prized by all of us children, the more, probably, because so few kinds of nuts then grew in that part of the world. This old tree stands yet where it did so long ago; and now, as then, annually yields its harvest.

Upon the other place — the place where I used to live — there was also a tree of the same sort, and its fruit was carefully gathered and put away to dry in what we called the "corn-house."

This old tree, like so many of my boyhood friends, was there no more. But not far from where it used to stand, I found, upon my late visit, others growing, the seeds of which I planted with my own hand.

I was a little fellow that fall, when I took those three nuts and put them where "Jack Frost" would have all the long winter to crack their shells for me.

I didn't know much when on that bright day of the following spring I took those nuts again, and carefully planted them in the ground by the side of a high stone wall, but I believed God could make trees from those nuts, and he did.

How?

Ah! I did not know then, and do not know now, and never expect to know in this life. "God giveth the increase," while our part is to sow the seed.

As I looked at those great trees I recalled the

strange sensation I felt when I first saw the little trees which had come up for me at my planting.

I had planted the seeds — I had just seen the sprouts from them — and then had left them to the care of others, and for God's earth, air, rain, dew and sunshine to make grow.

Thinking of this I said, "How much this is like that other seed — the Word!"

Jesus calls his Word, his Truth, "seed." No, I am not going to give you a sermon, but just one or two thoughts that I hope will make you as happy as they do me.

I am glad God could make butternuts grow for a little boy, aren't you? We have harvests because He puts life in the seed — we could not do that — and because He sends the rain and the sunshine, and can do all that we cannot do.

And as I stood there thinking, thinking over the past, looking at those trees, I said, "I am glad God can make the seed of his Word to grow and bear fruit just as well when sown or planted by a little child as when planted by a big man, for He knows how to water it by His spirit, and warm it by His love, and even from

the cold winters of trouble, and from the experiences of earth, cause the stalk to lift towards heaven, and spread out its branches laden with sheltering leaves, fragrant flowers and precious fruit.

III.

THE most interesting thing about the location of the old schoolhouse, at least to me, was its distance from where I lived. It was not so very far, I think not more than three quarters of a mile. Far enough when the drifts of snow covered the fences on either side of the road, and the thermometer took a race downward, or the mercury tried to see if it could not hide itself in the bulb.

Even then we did pretty well going to the school, but to come home about dark, facing the wind as it came fresh from the North Pole, with no flannel wrapper or overcoat, was not all fun, nor very suggestive of a Fourth of July picnic.

Still for a little fellow I did pretty well, for with one or two other boys, I had my turn of a "lee" chance behind a kind and large cousin, whose ample skirts defended our almost frozen noses from too sharp a pinch from Jack Frost.

But there was a great advantage in having school so far from home that we could not be expected to go home to dinner. That gave us the most of the hour for play. Very few minutes were occupied in disposing of a slice or two of bread and butter, and two or three doughnuts, and an apple or two.

The schoolhouse, as I remember it, was not built for ornament. Economy was considered both a virtue and a necessity. In the first place, it was built upon land, or rather stones, for the stones and the soil were about in the proportion of brick and mortar in an ordinary chimney.

As the lot could grow little more than bushes, and as these had been cut, the site could cost but little. Then it was not thought wisdom to put too much underpinning to the house; that might interfere with the circulation of the air under the floor.

No paint had ever been wasted upon the outside or inside of the old schoolhouse. The two ornaments were a big box stove located about as near the center of the room as one could guess, and a big pile of wood piled "high and dry" in the "entry."

These were what I most admired, for they contributed most to my comfort. I suppose this estimate is upon the principle of "Handsome is that handsome does."

I have not drawn a very pleasing picture of this seat of learning. The name is appropriate, for there was hard, earnest studying done there, and good foundations of education were there laid in many minds.

I do not say that more and better work might not have been done with better helps, but the tools and the time we had were made the most of. I know of one boy at least who was often up by four o'clock on many winter mornings, studying by the dim light of a tallow candle, or by firelight.

But it was not all dull work and hard study. We had our fun, and a great deal of it.

I cannot speak for the girls. I think they must have had pretty dull times. The boys did not remain in the house at "intermission," to see what they did.

Our sports were of the kind that hearty, hard-working boys enjoy after sitting upon hard benches for three hours.

There was a great deal of running and wres-

tling, and jumping and snowballing, and sometimes, would you believe it? we exercised our lungs, and made a little noise.

But isn't it queer? One if he had only thought about it, could have picked out the men who were to grow from these boys. That is, one might have judged pretty well what kind of men the boys would make.

All enjoyed the sports, but all did not enjoy good, honest application to study. The boy who would cheat in his recitation — well, he certainly was not cultivating conscience by it. If afterwards, as a business man, he was honest, his practice of cheating in school did not make it easier to do just right in his shop or store.

The best time for a tree to secure a good straight trunk is when it is small and growing.

I can look back, and in my memory see the dignity of my classmate, the doctor to be, and the faithful application and manly bearing of the editor to be, and the promise of leadership in the characters of others, and the prophecy of future culture and queenliness in the gentle, diligent, modest sister. It was character which told, quite as much as talent. Yes, there is a difference in girls as well as in boys.

My teachers were not many, nor were they all great, or wise, or skilled, and I fear that all were not strictly conscientious, but this I remember, there was no teacher of the number from whom the student could not get help, if he himself was faithful.

I should like to tell you of some of them. One, I remember, was a large man of the age of fifty or more. I think he was born to be a teacher, for while he had not great learning he had good learning, so far as it went.

He had boys full grown, but none so large as he, nor did any student bring so large a dinner as his, or enjoy it more.

He understood boys; knew just how to get work out of them in school hours, and to help them to have a good time at the noon intermission.

Six or eight average boys could put him into a snowdrift during the play hour, but forty would not have undertaken it in the time of school, or anything else which would have tested his right to command. Yet I do not now recall any punishing of even the kinds then common in the country schools.

We liked him, almost loved him, and greatly

respected him. After all, there was but one of the number who really captured my heart, and he was the only one whom I ever heard pray.

He would join us freely in our sports, and outdo the lithest of the number; but there was something in his eye which was, after all, better than the look of authority, with suggestion of power. It seemed to look into the heart, and said, "I am your friend; I love you and want to help you all I can."

So we loved him, as a matter of course, and tried to please him. Yes, we often forgot, for we were thoughtless and careless, and did not quite understand how to tell him of our regrets; but some way he could seem to read boys' hearts, and to understand what was unspoken.

This man was the only one of my old teachers whom I was able to find on my late visit to the old home. I went to see him in his place of business, for he fills an important office, in which his skill as a penman is much to his advantage, and to the comfort of many others.

Forty years had not passed without leaving some of their tracks, but there were the same eyes, speaking of the same tender heart; and I was so glad to know I had a place in it yet.

Now what do you suppose melted those eyes the quickest and the most?

It was not the review of any part of the history of either of us; it was not the memory of any sorrow, but the fact that his old pupil was a Christian, and a minister of the Gospel.

It was a short visit that we had, but if he remembers it with half the pleasure that I do, both of us will treasure it among our sweet memories.

He will never know how much his character helped to mold mine.

IV.

MANY of my readers have heard of the "Shut-In Society."

That is quite a modern affair, and very interesting, especially to those who belong to it. I should like to tell you about some of its members, who learn to love each other a great deal, though they are so shut in from the rest of the world, and from one another, that they never see their fellow members, or hear them speak.

The society of which I wish to tell you, was not so large as this, and it was not composed of invalids. Yes, our society began early, was of great interest to its members, was short-lived, and when it died there was no desire nor effort to revive it.

To tell you of it, it will be necessary to say more about butternuts. I hope you are not tired of them yet. Most young folks like them, but it must be confessed there may be more interest in eating them than in hearing

of them. And do not complain of these as "stale" because so old. They are better when dry, if sound.

Well, from our tree the nuts had been long gathered. Winter had come and gone since they had been put away upon the corn-house floor to "cure."

On the visit of which I have told you, I saw the old corn-house, much as it stood there forty-five years ago. As I stood looking at it, that queer thing (is it a thing?) the mind, just started faster than a grayhound — I don't know but as fast as lightning. Back, back it ran, not stopping for breath, leaping over the years at a bound, seeming to take me along until there we were, as sure as a dream.

It seemed like a sort of resurrection; for was not my cousin, the other "active member" of said society, long since dead, standing there with me? I mean, of course, there in that long, long ago to which mind or memory had so suddenly hurried me.

Let me tell you something. Memory does not always bound along so, over everything, refusing to stop by the way. Sometimes it stops at every little place, where we wish it

wouldn't. Scold it as we will, whip it up as hard as we can, it will persist in stopping, and pointing its bony finger will say to us, "There, look at that," and we look, and then try to turn away and go on, but it will run ahead and thrust the picture right before our face; we can't run away from it.

What is it?

Oh! some picture of a piece of work which we did away back there, and we cannot destroy it; we can only run back in memory's track and look at it now and then. So I say, let us be careful what we paint along our life's journey. There are things pleasant to look at again and again.

Well, here we were; it came up as fresh as need be.

My cousin, who had come down of an errand, and with the privilege of stopping to make me a little visit, was to be entertained. How could this be done?

There was little variety from which to choose. The only thing I had to offer her was butternuts, so she was invited to go with me to the place where they were stored.

We were not long in opening the door, and

soon we had secured a flat stone and an old hammer. Even with these it was not easy for us to break the dry, hard shells, but by perseverance we succeeded in cracking a few, and began to eat them.

Were we doing just right?

I think we were not quite sure we were. I had not been forbidden to take the nuts, but had I been told I might?

We thought it would not be quite pleasant to be interrupted in the midst of our feast. The door could be fastened upon the inside, so we put a link of the little chain which was attached to the door, over a staple in the post, and then, to keep it there, we forced a piece of a horseshoe into the staple.

Were we not safe?

Then we thought ourselves happy, and cracked and ate with some peace of mind, until we wanted to go out of the place for something, when, lo and behold! we found ourselves shut in. Try as we would we could not get that iron out of the staple.

But were we not where we had chosen to be?

Did we not want to be where there were as many nuts as we could eat? Did we not fasten

the door because we wanted it fastened? What was the matter? Why were we not contented and happy?

I need not tell, for you can guess.

How did we get out?

Well, the nuts seemed suddenly to grow stale, and it was getting late. The time had come when my cousin should have been home.

It began to grow dark. We were almost in despair. "Suppose no help should come?" "How could any one help us when we had fastened them out?" "Oh! it was our fault."

But finally we heard a kind voice calling. It called again, it came nearer.

We knew the voice, and then we answered. The friend pitied us, and planned for our escape.

He said, "I can help you, if you will do what you can. If you will take all the barrels and boxes off from one of the large planks of the floor, then I will push the plank up from underneath, and come in and unfasten the door for you."

Did we believe him? Did we trust him and try to do as he told us?

Were we glad to see his smiling face come up through the floor?

How quickly he unfastened the door, and how thankful we felt.

Well, what do you think of our "Shut-in Society"? Does it remind you of a shut-out society?

Did you think of another couple who got into trouble because they wanted what they should not have had?

Do you know of any one else who is in need of a strong Friend to help him out of his trouble? Do you know who the Friend is who offers to break the chain for you, and will you remove the rubbish so that he can come in and do it?

V.

DID you ever go hunting or fishing?

I think most boys are fond of these sports, and even the girls enjoy holding the fishing-rod.

I want to tell you how two poor boys, about thirteen years of age, once managed to have what they thought were "first-rate" times. I must first describe our treasures.

One was an old, heavy, long, much-worn, badly-rusted flint-lock musket, known as a "Queen's Arm." This was supposed to have done duty in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. We knew it had been to many "trainings" and "general musters." It was owned by my young friend's father, and we believed it could make a little more noise on Fourth of July mornings than any other gun in the place.

It had, I was about to say, two drawbacks, but I am reminded that one would be more

properly called a "kick back," for the gun was badly worn, and hurt one's shoulder so much when fired that it had the reputation of "shooting at both ends."

But it was a "drawback" upon our purses to furnish powder for a gun that needed at least two ounces for a charge! Still, as we did not have to fire it very often, and could use bullets cast from lead, which we managed to pick up here and there, with short bits of wrought nails, and even beans, and sometimes cherry stones for shot, we got along pretty well.

My partner lived a half mile or more from what was then my home, and a quarter of a mile or so farther in the same direction was a little lake, or "pond," as we called it. This body of water was three quarters of a mile in length, and perhaps a third as wide. It has been so long since I have seen it that I do not feel quite sure of the dimensions. I remember it had two islands, not very far apart, which were our favorite resorts, especially in berry time.

But what interested us most was that the musk-rats seemed pleased with the location.

These islands were like fairyland to us, but how we were to reach them was a question not

so easy to answer. The water between them and the shore was much too deep to ford, and the distance was too great for those just beginning to swim to safely navigate in that way.

But boys will grow, and if they persevere, will improve in the art of swimming, so after a while we were able to swim the distance.

Still, this mode of getting back and forth had its disadvantages. It required some skill to fasten our clothes securely upon our heads, and carry them so as not to get them wet. Besides, we wished to have our gun with us, and that was too heavy to carry in one hand while we swam with the other.

We thought of a raft, but material was scarce around that lake; besides, if we had one the boys would be likely to borrow, and forget to return it. One day my friend came with a shining face, and informed me that he had made a great discovery. What could it be?

A boat! That was news almost too good to be true. I was not long in getting an opportunity to go with him and satisfy my own eyes of the fact.

When I first looked at the craft I was not nearly so enthusiastic as I was expected to be.

What I saw was in appearance much like a rotten hollow log, as it lay on the edge of the lake, or rather upon the shore; for my friend had drawn it out to dry.

It had evidently once been a log boat; but of what use could it be to us? One end was almost entirely gone, and quite one third of the other had also rotted away. It had never been much of a boat, any way, for the hollow was only just wide enough for us to sit down in.

My chum had not only discovered the boat, but had learned who made it, and the pleasing fact that he had discarded it — as well he might — and that he had purposely sunken it, for fear some of the boys would be drowned in trying to use it. Our absolute right to this craft, under these circumstances, never was questioned for one moment by either of us.

Columbus might have rejoiced more at the discovery of the New World, but he never felt more sure of its belonging to his sovereign, by "right of discovery," than we that this craft belonged to us on the same principle. Now, having it, how were we to make it sea-worthy?

It had no seats, but that was of little consequence to us. It had no oars nor paddles, but

a pole would make a good substitute for those. But while recognizing the fact (having learned it from experience) that a "hole will wear longer than a patch," we were not quite sure that these holes would wear so well as the ones in our annual pairs of boots.

My friend was not at all discouraged with the prospect, and immediately proposed that we proceed to stop the water from coming into the boat, just as they stopped it from flowing out of the lake — that is, by dams!

I shook my head doubtingly, but he was full of faith in his plan, so we went at it.

Near the lake were plenty of ferns, which made a very substantial sod, especially with the other roots, which shared with them the small amount of soil lying between the rocks.

With the aid of some sticks and our ever-present jack-knives, we soon had the sods, and had them well crowded into the openings in the ends of the boat.

We thought it wisdom to put the worst end forward, and seat ourselves in such manner that that end would not be so deep in the water as the other. Then, one with a pole, and the other with a bit of narrow board, we tried our

frail bark. She was so narrow, and so round upon the bottom, we soon discovered that some skill would be needed to keep her right side up, as well as to prevent her from filling with water.

But to our great satisfaction we found the sods did duty very well; so, little by little we ventured out into deep water, and before we came back to the mainland, had visited one of our dear islands, and gathered some berries.

Now you would have supposed we would have been full of nothing but the most pleasant thoughts, but alas and alas! we then and there began to feel the burdens of possession.

What should we do with the boat, so as to keep it? The best we could do was to hide it in the most unfrequented place we could find, and trust Providence for the rest.

But now another question came up. Would it do to take the musket with us in the boat?

We had read of certain vessels, privateersmen, I think, which had carried a great gun called a "Long Tom," and our navy would not be complete, nor would we be worthy of the name of "hunters," unless we could sail our little sea armed. After a few trials we con-

cluded that we might carry the gun, but felt that our bark was too frail to risk firing our "Long Tom" on board of her.

Now hunters must have traps as well as gun and boat, so another serious question arose as to how we were to furnish ourselves with these. We might borrow a steel trap or two, but we did not understand how to set these for musk-rats, and besides, there would be great danger of losing them, they being valuable enough to tempt some one to carry them away.

If we only had a box trap, or a number of them! These we knew how to set. Why not make some?

We could find pieces of boards which had floated down the river near my home; the only trouble was to find nails with which to put the traps together. These we had not, nor had we any money left, after getting our ammunition, with which to purchase.

But "where there is a will there is a way," says the old adage; we resorted to a new method. With a small gimlet and a great deal of hard work we made several box traps, fastening them together with wooden pins driven into holes made with the said gimlet.

These had the advantage of being perfectly safe for us to manage, and not very dangerous for the animals for which they were intended.

Now we felt pretty well prepared for active duty, so soon as a month should arrive which had an *r* in it; for we learned that the hide of the animal would be worthless if he were caught at any other time of the year.

Patiently we waited, and at last were rewarded with the arrival of the month of September. As soon thereafter as we could both secure a little time together, we carried our traps to the lake, carefully baited them, and with all the skill we could muster, adjusted our "figure fours," the spring, which held the bait, and also supported, with the aid of a string, the cover which was to come down and shut in the game for us.

The next morning was the time appointed to secure the animals who had entered the fatal traps.

VI.

AS I have before stated, I lived quite a distance from the home of my friend, and so farther from the lake. It was therefore my duty to rise first, and awaken my chum at the proper hour. The latter was a task that we did not at first quite see how to accomplish, as he slept in the attic, while the old people slept below.

We finally hit upon this plan: I was to take a pole, and raising his sash a little, let it drop gently; and as he was not to sleep very sound, he would be awakened by it and come down at once.

I went to bed early, and slept as well as could be expected under the circumstances. Finally I awoke, and as soon as I could collect my thoughts, and make sure that I was not dreaming, I sprang lightly out of bed, dressed, and started for the lake. Our plans worked well so far as my awakening my friend was

concerned, for I had to raise and drop the sash but once before he signalled me that he was coming. Soon, with the old gun in one hand, and a large powder-horn in the other, he joined me.

What time was it?

Well, that we did not know. The sky had a queer look, to us. Some way the stars did not seem to be in just their right places. We started for the lake as fast as we could. The stumps looked very large, and we were glad we had the old musket along. On we went, through the cow-yard, and the cows took some long breaths and stretched themselves, and looked at us wonderingly; on through the pasture, over the rocks to the lake.

How still it was! What time could it be?

There was no sign of daylight yet. How we wished we had something to tell us the time of night.

It began to feel quite chilly, and as there were old pine stumps along the shore we decided to set one or two of these on fire to dispel some of the gloom, and at the same time warm ourselves a little. But how they glared in the darkness! There we stood close to the

fire, watching our shadows, and waited for morning.

It came at last, and as soon as the darkness lifted enough for us to see fairly well, a light fog arose also. But we shoved off our boat, got into it, my friend holding the big gun, and I working the pole, which we used for moving and steering. Boldly we pushed out into the water, steering so as to go between the two islands. We were very quiet, as hunters must be, when lo! there was a real live musk-rat swimming about twenty yards from us, making the very best time he could for one of our islands. As quickly as it was possible for me to do so, I turned the bow of the boat in the direction of the game, for I remembered too well the kicking powers of the old musket.

As soon as our craft was in a favorable position, my companion took aim. Oh! what a moment was that. We lived a great deal in a few minutes. We hardly breathed. My eyes were upon the game. Then came a flash, a roar that sounded in that stillness like that of a cannon — but what a disappointment. Before the shot had left the muzzle of the gun the musk-rat had dived under the water and was

safe, though for the credit of my partner I must say that the shot fell right where the animal was when the trigger was pulled.

Yes, it was a great disappointment, but we had the pleasure of laying it all to the fact that the gun had not a percussion lock.

I remember we discussed how many nails and how much powder we might have bought with the hide of that musk-rat, if we had got him.

We then made for one of the islands, loaded our gun again, and waited for another chance to fire; but none came that morning.

There remained one thing more to do: we were to go the rounds of our traps, and kill whatever game we might find there. This was soon done — the visiting of the traps. The killing and skinning of the game — well, we did not have that to do that morning.

We carried on our hunting for some time, all our efforts being rewarded with but one "catch." That was found by my partner, and as I was not along I think it was decided that the game was his.

You think it did not pay?

Well, perhaps not, in the way we planned, at least, but we had some good times, and

many "great expectations." We enjoyed as much as some men enjoy following a brook half a day at a time trying in vain to catch a trout, or sitting in a hut on the ice, "bobbing" for hours for fish which will not bite.

I do not know that we were doing anybody any good by our "hunting," but we were fast friends, and always true to each other. That time has no bitter memories.

One of my disappointments on visiting the old place, last fall, was to learn that the home of my boyhood friend had been torn down — not a trace of it to be seen. He had long since gone over the river. Not that one on whose banks we used to play, and in whose waters we bathed, and fished, and rowed, but the one on the other side of which are the "many mansions."

I am hoping to meet him there.

VII.

THERE are experiences which are very common to boys, and some which are not common. The boys who live in large cities have different surroundings from those of the boys who have the good fortune to live upon farms, or in the beautiful country villages.

The life of the apprentice differs from that of the lad who attends school for nine or ten months of the year.

Again, customs so change that one generation sees and experiences things very differently from those of a former generation in the same line.

If there were no differences, and all the boys in all times had the same things, saw and did the same, I should have little hope of interesting any one.

When I was a small boy I was for the most part upon a farm; but there were few horse-rakes then, and those were of rude shape.

There were no mowing machines, or reapers; no horse forks.

But even for the time and town in which I lived, my experience differed considerably from that of my young friends around me.

We raised one kind of stock which few others had. There were richer farmers than the one with whom I lived, and larger farms than that upon which I worked, yet we fed a greater number than any one else whom we knew.

I think we numbered thirty-seven thousand head one year.

How would you like to feed such a number as that?

This is what we had to do, and in the first of the season the responsibility of getting their meals ready devolved upon me.

"A pretty big story," do you say?

Well, boys like big stories if they are true, do they not?

"What kind of stock?"

Oh! nice, interesting, peaceful little creatures. They had certain peculiarities, which I will tell you about, and see if you do not think them interesting.

First, they all wanted the same kind of food, and they wanted it all the time. Breakfast, dinner and supper must be just alike. There were no petitions for a change of diet.

"What were they?"

I will describe them a little further, and see if you cannot guess.

Well, let me see — yes, they were all very industriously engaged making ready for their life-work.

They did it all with their mouths, and yet they never said anything.

Their work was very fine and delicate, and they gave themselves to it with great self-sacrifice.

They would spin, and weave, and build, and when one moved out of his house he could never be coaxed back into it. Yet no one of them was ever known to rent a house of his neighbor, nor would he live in a house which he did not build.

One peculiarity of their houses was, they were built without door or window, so that when they wanted to go out they had to make a hole in the end, and go right out through the wall.

If this was a mistake, it was one which almost every one made. Perhaps they thought they must follow the fashion. You know people will endure great inconveniences rather than not be in the fashion. Could you expect these little fellows to be wiser than those who have souls?

While their houses were made so nicely and skillfully, none of them seemed satisfied to live long in them. They were all of one mind, and all would move out, if they could do so.

But when they decided to move every one came forth with a new dress on, and ornamented with wings, and all in white.

A stranger wouldn't have known them, nor even mistrusted who they were. I could hardly believe they were at all the creatures I had fed and cared for, and thought I knew so well!

No, O, no! they were not angels.

I have sometimes thought how they reminded me of human beings. See how many things are alike about them.

When the Christian dies he leaves the old house — the body — and puts on a new white dress, and I don't know but wings too. He does not care for the old house, nor want the

food of which he used to be so fond. And now I think of it, these creatures leave the world richer for their having lived and toiled in it.

Ought not that to be said of the Christian too?

How I wish this could be said of every one!

But there is one thing more I wish to tell you, and I very much wish you to remember it. All of these creatures did not come forth with new white dresses, and with beautiful wings, to live again in a new and beautiful life. Some were put into the furnace, or oven, and then all they had made was taken from them!

Think of this, and notice how God tries to teach us, and help us to live for him here, so we can live with him hereafter.

But have you guessed what this stock was, which numbered so many, and was so unlike cattle and horses and sheep?

Some have not thought what it could have been, so I must tell.

They were worms, nice, clean, pretty worms. You girls would have nothing to do with them?

Why, yes, you would. Your prettiest ribbons and nicest dresses were provided by them. Not by the worms I used to feed, but by others like them.

When you think of a nice silk dress, or stand in front of some large show window, admiring the pretty patterns of silks for all sorts of pretty apparel, remember the worms spun it all. They did not weave it, though I have seen them try that work, and have had some nice little bits of weaving done by them. But that is not their trade; they do their best work in the line of spinning.

How did I like the work of caring for them?

I don't know that I should answer that, after all I have told you.

If you, or some one, had asked me that question about 11.45 A. M., after I had worked all the morning picking the leaves of the mulberry-tree for the worms' dinners, having no one all this time to speak to, I might have answered, "I hate it." But if you had been calling to see the worms, and had seen them spinning their cocoon (that is the name of their little house I was telling you about), and I had been showing you how to feed and handle them, and I had heard your surprised "Oh's!" and "Ah's!" and heard you say, "Isn't that too funny for anything?" "Did you ever?" "I never!" and a few such classic phrases — if I

had been asked then how I liked the business I probably would have replied, "O, splendidly! it's real fun."

But wasn't it something to enjoy when a minister or doctor called who had never seen a silkworm, and asked me to tell him something which I knew, and he did not?

There was inspiration in that, and some compensation for the lonely hours spent in the mulberry orchard alone.

I started out to tell you how I tried to "drive the lonesome away," as a little friend used to say. Sometimes I would plan what I would do when I should become a man.

I wanted to be somebody, and would wish I had a big farm; and then I would think how nicely I would keep the fences and trees and yard.

What seemed very strange to me was, that I often wished I could be a minister, though I was not then a Christian! Perhaps that was a part of my preparation, and these were the "whisperings of the Spirit," though I did not understand who called, any more than Samuel did.

You remember how he was called?

Well, you listen for God's "call" to you.

He may want you to do some great thing for him; and if you do not watch for him, that is, want to obey, you may not hear.

Sometimes I sang, or yelled — perhaps that would be a better term — so loud and long, that when I came in with my mess of leaves I would be so hoarse I could hardly talk.

Other times I would tell long stories — "talk to myself."

My heroes and heroines were my favorite friends among the boys and girls who in winter attended the same school I did.

I was very fond of dogs, and so my friends of "imagination" had wonderful dogs — watch dogs, hunting dogs, and even dogs for teams, instead of horses.

These heroes hunted great bears, killed terrible Indians, and rode with their dogs faster and farther than any one else could with their horses.

My heroes began poor, and became rich.

How I enjoyed their prosperity in imagination and mind too — for I was one of them. I remember it so plainly. It seems but a little while ago.

But I must tell you of one of my disappoint-

ments. As I led my friends on, up, up, up, to honor and riches and fame, till I could get them no higher, then I felt so disappointed.

I had taken them thus far, but could carry them no farther.

I suppose this was a real experience, a kind of prophecy of the disappointment of riches when one has nothing higher.

Oh! if I had only made them moral and Christian heroes; then after leading them up as far as my imagination was able to take them, I could have left them looking heavenward, with such wonderful heights beyond that my heart would have been satisfied with the "hope set before them."

Boys, perhaps I should not feel this so much, were it not for the fact that almost all of the "originals" of my heroes are gone, and I do not know what their lives were. I do not know whether they were moral heroes or not. If they were true soldiers of the Cross, how much higher have they been led than my imagination could carry them!

VIII.

WE did not know much of Christmas then, but the Fourth of July was a time to be remembered. We planned for it for weeks in advance, racking our brains to get, by some honest means, the money, or its equivalent, with which to purchase a goodly quantity of noise for the occasion.

It might as well be called "noise," for that was what we were after, and tried to make with the powder which we purchased.

I can imagine how some of the good fathers and mothers did not enjoy certain portions of the day. The morning nap was sure to be shortened, and surely it required some self-sacrifice to endure, in addition, the anxiety lest the boy should be brought home either killed or wounded.

I fear I should not have been equal to the occasion if I had been the father instead of the son.

But, after all, I suspect the boys were having their patriotism cultivated by the smell of powder and the sound of guns. Perhaps many were getting ready for the strife which followed; for alas! many of them gave their lives to their country on fields where powder was not burned for fun, and something besides blank cartridges were used.

Did it ever occur to you, boys, how much the almanac has to do with one's sleeping?

As a rule, I did not like to awaken early. The bed never felt so soft and sleep so sweet as at about the time in the morning when I was expected to part with both. That was the rule, but when the calendar reached the Fourth of July, presto! all was changed.

The effect was sudden. There was scarcely a lad of us whose eyes did not open as the clock struck twelve, on the night between the third and the fourth of that month.

I think that either the almanac or the boys have improved, and I leave you to judge which.

Well, about twelve there was a bound out of bed, a rattle of the loose boards of the attic floor, now and then a bump of the head against the rafters, a few "Oh's!" and "Oush's!"

some whisperings, then a creaking of the stairs, and we stood under the midnight stars.

Then we started for the barn, where were hidden the old musket, or a little cannon, and the powder-horn and the wadding, then we started for the appointed place of meeting, and in a little while every one in the neighborhood knew what day it was.

From one o'clock to six A. M. most of us had our time, but it was not so with every one for the remainder of the day.

Some had to work all or part of the day.

I think a man is to be pitied who has grown so old that he has forgotten he was ever a boy, and I think his boys are more to be pitied. I believe in good, solid, faithful work, but I also believe in good honest play. All of either is bad.

With us, those who could fish or hunt or go to the "celebration" sympathized with those who had to work, so out of this there came some good.

One Fourth which I remember the prospect for me was pretty gloomy. I saw no chance but for a long day's work before me. And that was not all; I was to be alone, and at a kind of work which I greatly disliked. I had

some pretty sad, not to say hard thoughts, that day.

"There would not be another Fourth of July for a year — for twelve months, for three hundred and sixty-five days!" I was discouraged, disappointed and hurt.

About nine o'clock in the morning I was surprised to see a young friend coming through the orchard.

What did he want?

Help to celebrate the day.

This made my condition seem to me unbearable. My young friend was indignant, and I thought of him as soon to start for some other chap who could help him play.

I did not wish to be seen crying, but it was not easy to keep the tears back. But "a friend in need is a friend indeed."

This boy had the right kind of stuff in him. He looked at the tall weeds and at the tough grass, and then, "Where's another hoe?" he asked. "Come, now, I'll pitch in and help do this work this forenoon, and then you go with me this afternoon. What do you say?"

What could I say? I was too astonished to say much.

"Well, you go ask them if I may," was my answer.

He agreed to that, and came back with, "All right. Here's the hoe, and away we go."

The forenoon went so much faster with my friend to talk with. I thought I loved him before, I knew I did then, and secretly determined he should be the main hero in my next story. He might never know of the reward, but I would have the pleasure it afforded me.

If he was fulfilling the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens," I was not less willing to spend the afternoon in "rejoicing with" him.

I have told you about the way the boys spent this holiday, and perhaps you would like to know what the older people did.

Some made little of it, some worked the whole or part of the day, but here and there the people "celebrated."

A pleasant place was selected by some persons, then invitations were sent out, with little formality, inviting all to "come and bring their baskets well filled."

Generally the day before those most interested would put up a little stand for the

speakers, table for the dinner, and some kind of seats for the audience.

There was sometimes an oration, but we must have the "Declaration of Independence" read first of all.

It was then that people of Maine were being educated up to a proper stand upon the question of temperance.

We were getting ready for the "Maine Law," and upon such occasions we heard some good, ringing words about abstaining from strong drink.

We then heard how many men who were "born free and equal" were no longer "free," but slaves to strong drink; no longer "equal" to those who did not drink, either in health, wealth or character.

I do not know but this was a pretty good way to spend the "day we celebrate."

We listened more than some supposed we did, and did some good thinking too. When one speaker compared alcohol to the "legion of devils" which the Lord cast out of the man, I remember I thought the illustration a good one.

But the dinner was served after a while — a long while, it seemed to us — and our faith in

the Fourth of July was made strong with baked beans, bread and butter, sandwiches, pies and cakes, and we drank in patriotism with draughts which were not intoxicating.

The next day — the fifth — well, it always seemed to me a day to be pitied, it was at such a disadvantage from being upon the wrong side of that Fourth, and so far from the next.

IX.

THERE was much which we enjoyed on the old farm, if we did not have everything the boys now have. One orange a year, brought to me by my own dear mother, afforded me more pleasure than a whole tree full would now.

How sweet it was, how fragrant! I did not think much about it then, but now, as I remember it, the sweetness (they do not taste that wav now) seemed to come, like the orange itself, from my mother.

So it was I used to enjoy her visits. They would tell me she was coming, and I wanted to believe it, but, little skeptic that I was, I would not allow myself the pleasure of the anticipation, for fear of the sad disappointment should she not come. I think I wanted the pleasure of the entire surprise which I would feel on coming in from work and see my mother sitting there.

I have only to shut my eyes and think for a moment, and there memory will hold up the picture for me! I am walking down the hill, through the orchard, toward the house. There are no blinds to hide the picture. There! I see her cap with its pretty border. I cannot see the face, but I know whose eyes and nose and mouth are framed by that border.

Beautiful cap, on a noble head, tied under a beautiful chin, and soon that cap will turn, and those eyes will look at me, and that face will smile, and those lips will speak my name, ' nd — and — and she is my own dear, dear mother, the one who loves me!

My hungry heart was almost in my mouth, it was so glad to be fed again with pure mother love.

If I have held up the picture too long, it is because it is so dear, so sweet to me. Those whose mothers have gone away from them will forgive me.

As I could not have my mother much of the time, and as my brothers and sisters were all scattered, I suppose I lavished my love upon the animals with which I had to do.

There would be new ones frequently. A

new calf was something to talk about, a pet which was often "loved only to be lost." Long fasting from fresh meat made the butcher relentless, and the poor mother cow and I, in mutual grief, mourned all alone.

To go out to the sty and find a dozen new little piggies was pleasure enough for a week.

The little lambs were so many, and often required such constant care, that there was not always so much pleasure in finding them, yet I often learned to love them dearly. What more needs our pity than a little motherless lamb? And what reminds us more of our good Shepherd than to kindly care for them? A cruel farmer would he be who would not try to shelter such a little orphan, and, if need be, take his coffee without milk for its sake.

"Mary" was not the only one who "had a little lamb" which would "follow" its mistress or master anywhere it could. I remember one in particular which I loved dearly, because it seemed to love me. I had a great deal of fun with it, and so it seemed to have with me. Often we chased each other around a large rock, and it would wheel and dodge me with as much skill as I could use, yet keeping close

to the rock, and as much out of my sight as it could. When I would stop to rest, and throw myself upon the grass, it would come to me and lie by my side, like a dog or kitten.

A great deal of this pleasure was experienced in the spring. It seems as though we could be happier then than in the fall. The ground had been out of sight, hidden by the snow, for so many months, that when it appeared again, and the brooks were unlocked and uncovered, and went laughing and singing towards the sea, and the robin would venture back, alight in the top of the old poplar or elm, and with a few cheery notes announce his return, and the chickadee would hop around the wood-pile, and the sparrow sing his sweet song upon the currant bushes, and the cows call for their calves — these were such sweet sounds, coming after winter's long silence, that spring was very welcome.

Yes, I like this land of flowers and fruits, of birds and bugs. The mocking-birds, as they sing their witching music from the tall pine near my study, almost beguile me from my task, and make me feel as though I had no business to do anything but listen; but the

only boys and girls who know the full meaning of spring are those whose spring follows a long winter. Never has bird-note sounded so sweetly to me as when it told of winter gone and of the resurrection of spring.

X.

IT was in the spring of 1846, after a long and cold winter, that the great freshets came which did so much damage in different parts of the North.

I do not remember that there had been so much more rain than usual, but on account of the great amount of snow, when it melted there was so much water to be carried to the sea, that the means of transportation — that is, the brooks and the rivers — had more than they had room for.

The ice was very thick, and had not been weakened, as it often is, by the action of the sun and of the melting snow upon the surface, and of the fast-flowing current beneath. As it was, the ice was lifted from where it formed, and as the waters rose, when it parted, broke into large cakes or fields, lodged upon the banks, gorged the narrow places in the rivers, piled up, up, up, forming such a dam that but a portion of the mad waters could escape.

In the meantime, ice and logs kept rushing down and piling up till the huge mass looked as though it had come to stay. Then would the rivers overflow their banks, and ice and lumber many feet thick would spread out upon the farms along the shore, while the waters, rising higher and higher, would back up and do much mischief.

It was a case like this that raised the waters of the Penobscot and Kenduskeag in Bangor, till they made canals of the lower streets, and piled lumber and ice higher than the first story of the houses along the banks. Through the day there had been great excitement in all the city and vicinity. Lumbermen were doing their utmost to save as much as possible of their lumber before the "jam" or "gorge" below should give way, and the great accumulation of water, when thus set free, carry everything movable before it down the river.

Through the day the dam stood, holding its constantly increasing load, but in the darkness of the night it finally yielded.

"And then and there were hurrying to and fro."

Men leaped from the masses as they began to move, glad to escape and leave the lumber

to take the free ride, to go upon this voyage of discovery as it might, and find its own market, regardless of returns.

Up the stream a cooper-shop had been lifted from its foundation, and as the waters moved at the breaking of the "jam," this shop was seen to be moving also. Then some one thought it would be fun to set the shavings in it on fire. Soon the building was ablaze, a raft of fire shining out upon the strange scene, lighting up the waters, reflected from the broken and shifting ice, which ground and turned and changed like the stained and broken glass in a kaleidoscope.

With the first flash of the light came the cry of fire; with the cry of fire came the clang of all the bells of the city. Lurid blaze, clanging bells, crushing ice, breaking timbers, roaring waters and the cries and shouts of the multitude, made that night scene one long to be remembered.

It was not strange that a large portion of the bridge which spanned the Penobscot should have been carried away; it seems stranger that any of it was left. But one strange thing did occur.

To make this plain, I must tell you that within the city there were then three bridges across the Kenduskeag stream. On a pier in the center of this stream, just above and close to the lowest of these bridges, stood quite a large wooden building called the "market." This was near where the Custom House stands.

Now for the strange event. The water and ice carried the upper and middle bridges away down the stream, lifting the "market" building clean over the lowest bridge, so that when the flood subsided, there stood the lowest of these three bridges "alone in its glory," looking as lonesome as "the last rose of summer," for

> "All its lovely companions
> Were faded and gone."

I did not see all this, but was there soon enough after to see the track of the destroyer, and to hear some very strange stories connected with this flood. I am glad to say that, so far as I know, there were no lives lost at the time, though of this I am not sure, while there may have been those who afterwards suffered much in consequence of exposure then.

How many narrow escapes there were, no one knows; but one I did know of.

I had a friend by the name of Frank S——. We were not intimate, for he was much older than I, but as he came from the same place in which I was born, I knew him. He was a fearless fellow, and as I remember was a good swimmer. That night on which the "floods went out" he stood upon the upper bridge, having a small lantern, by the light of which he was watching the strain upon the timbers and the boiling of its floods, enjoying the risk of the exposure. Then came the break, and away went the bridge, now become a raft, affording my friend a chance to decide which he preferred, bridge or raft.

For a little way he had a pretty lively ride. He was not the man to "lose his head," nor did he fail to "keep cool," either literally or figuratively, but with lantern in hand kept upon his feet, as he was rushed down the stream.

Just above the lowest bridge was a ladder for the purpose of getting out of and into a boat in summer, made necessary because of the rise and fall of the tide. Providentially this ladder had been left, and providentially the

current bore my friend's piece of the bridge so near this ladder that he sprang upon it, and though it was wet and cold and slippery, he managed to climb it and escape.

As he came along a few minutes later he saw a group of men talking excitedly about something, so he stopped to listen.

"Yes, he was on the bridge, and was carried away with it."

Said my friend, "Oh! I guess not."

"Yes, I saw him go down myself; there is no question about it."

"No, sir, I guess not," my friend replied, "for I'm the chap, and here's my lantern. I swung on to that dock-ladder as we came down, and I've just crawled out from under there," pointing to an opening under the stone.

At first they were disposed to doubt, but when they looked at his clothes were convinced.

XI.

THIS was how I came to be there:

During the time of the high water, my brother had worked by the hour helping to save the lumber which was in danger of being carried away when the gorge should finally yield. Of course the water was wet and the ice was cold, so he became wet, and took a heavy cold, and soon lay very ill of typhoid fever.

The flood was gone, but the fever burned on for many days, until there seemed but little hope of its stopping until death should lay his icy hand upon it.

Under these circumstances mother sent for me; and so, at the age of fourteen, I was to have my first experience of travel.

Yes, I was sorry my brother was ill, but glad that so long as he had to be sick, there was so much good coming to my lot because of it.

It did not take long to put my clothing in

order, for there was very little of it. How well do I remember the little old seal-skin trunk in which my few treasures shook around.

These were very inexpensive, but I had one treasure that I thought very precious, which unfortunately was not in the trunk. This was a pair of gloves; no ordinary ones either.

Kids? No. Dog-skin? Not exactly.

My cousin had a dog, white and woolly. His hair was like worsted. From this dog's back came the material which the skillful fingers of my cousin formed into the precious warm gloves that I so much prized!

If only I had packed them in my trunk, instead of putting them into my pocket, I might have enjoyed them longer; but alas! I had them only for the first day's journey.

After all, I did not go from the place where I had lived for fourteen years, without some pain at parting. Especially sorry was I to say "Good-by" to the kind friend who had been to me so much like a mother. Her memory is very dear to me.

Into the back of the wagon went the little trunk, and we were off. Well do I remember how my heart beat, and how I looked back at

the old home which was never to be my home again.

When I saw it last year it looked the very same as when I left it, so long ago.

On over the hill we drove, till we reached a shady place on the "post road," where we waited for the stage.

Would it ever come? Should I ride on it, and be called a "passenger"? These and many other thoughts filled my mind, till we heard in the distance the rumbling of wheels, and there it was, the wonderful stage!

Yes, it stopped; all those horses, and the stage, and the driver and passengers, stopped for me; and my trunk was piled with the others upon that queer place on the rear end of the coach, and I was a passenger!

It would not now seem far from Green Corners to Augusta, especially should one go by rail, but to me it then seemed a long journey.

Augusta was only a medium-sized village; but to my eyes it was larger than it looked last summer, though now quite a city.

After disposing of the mail, we first stopped at the "United States Hotel." This was the hotel — the "stage house." Here the law makers

put up, and as the next term of the legislature began the next morning, many of its members were guests at this house, and might be seen upon the piazzas, in the office, reading-room and parlor.

Late in the evening my driver, of the afternoon, found me, took me to the register of the Bangor stage, and showed me how to secure a seat for the next day's coach.

For this kindness I felt very grateful, and remember, that among all these strangers, he seemed to be my only acquaintance. I had known him for four or five hours!

But I had yet something to learn.

Sauntering through the rooms, I found a fellow whom I greatly envied. I suppose he was about one year my senior, and he sat with his feet upon the table, while he read the paper.

When should I be so much at home in a hotel that I could sit thus?

But tastes differ as we grow older. It would not now make me proud of my boy to see him sitting in that position.

But I learned something from him, nevertheless; for as he was young, I did not fear to speak to him, and in the conversation I learned

incidentally that I must also register for a room, if I were to have a bed.

But how, and where?

I did not care to ask about that which I was supposed to know, so, with apparent unconcern, I entered the office again; but with eyes and ears open. It was not a long task to discover the process. Then boldly stepping up to the register, I wrote my name.

As I did so, I discovered upon the page the names of towns which were familiar.

"Yes," I said to myself, "those are the towns from which the guests hail; and if I am mistaken about them, it will be all right in my case." So I unhesitatingly wrote "Greene."

As others had asked to be called, I did the same, requesting to be awakened in time for the Bangor stage. I was informed that I would room with the driver of that stage, so I would surely not be left.

As we had slept together, so it was in my heart to ride by his side upon the box. I had known him longer than I had the passengers, therefore he seemed to be the only one of our company who was not a stranger.

How I envied his skill with lines and whip!

I greatly enjoyed the journey, but would have been happier if I had been less hungry. I think I envied the passengers, when with the driver they stopped for dinner. But that was an extravagance my purse would not permit.

The sun had been down some time when the suburbs of the city were reached. Never since have I experienced so strange a sensation as upon that night; nor shall I again, till my feet enter the "new Jerusalem."

I suppose we must have first stopped at the Bangor House. How big it was!

As I looked at it, a year ago, it seemed as though it had shrunken very much.

And then, there were so many houses! and lights in every window, it seemed to me!

Down Main Street the stage thundered, and upon either side were brilliantly lighted stores, such as I had never seen or dreamed of; across the bridge we whirled. I could see the vessels lying in the stream below, could smell the tar and the lumber, cedar, pine and hemlock; and from the fruit-stands came the odor of oranges and other fruits; from the market came the smell of fish and meats. All these sights, sounds and smells combined to give me strange sensa-

tions. If they did not thrill, they did certainly almost bewilder. On rattled the stage, all the other passengers gone.

Was it a dream?

What if mother could not be found! What if she did not live there, any way?

Perhaps my brother was dead, and perhaps —

"Who-o-o-a!" sang out the driver. "This is the place you want. Jump off and ring the bell, and see if it is all right."

I hurried to the door, but could find no bell.

Then the driver flung down his lines, and soon found the knob, which he pulled vigorously, and to which the bell inside responded.

"Why," thought I, "did he not say, 'Pull the knob,' instead of 'Pull the bell'?"

It seemed long, but really very soon I heard the click of the lock, and the door opened, and there, lamp in hand, stood my dear, dear mother to welcome her tired, hungry boy!

XII.

MY first summer in the city of Bangor, though long ago, is not, nor will soon be forgotten. Everything was so different from what I had been used to.

Perhaps it would not be out of the way to call attention to the fact that much with which all of us are more or less familiar now, would then have seemed strange to the most traveled.

This is a wonderful age, more wonderful than the boys and girls of to-day can appreciate, because they cannot remember when things were different.

One thing was known then which is much esteemed yet, and is always desirable, and convenient to have — that is, money.

A little would then buy more than it will now, but it was pretty hard to get; at least that was my experience.

Then, as ever since, the question with me, or

one question was, how to get it, not for the sake of the money, but for what it would buy.

I tried sawing wood, but with poor success, mainly because of the poor condition of my saw.

After some inquiry I was told that I could make money by "lathing"; that for every bunch of one hundred laths nailed upon the walls, I could get ten cents, and for those put upon the ceiling overhead I would be paid twelve and a half cents.

I deemed it a golden opportunity, but it proved to be a copper one, instead.

My first job was in the then new Freewill Baptist Church.

It was an "overhead" job. Just how high I could not say, probably about twenty feet; to me it seemed fifty. I was not much in the habit of standing in high places, and had never driven a nail sky-ward in my life.

My scaffold or "staging" consisted of three planks, upon what was called "high horses."

I worked with a will, and until the carpenters quit, and then calculated the wages for the day's work. Seventy laths at twelve and one half cents per hundred!

I leave the problem for the boys to figure out, hoping it may prove more satisfactory to them than it did to me.

The next day I did better, and there was some pleasure in receiving the pay for my hard work when it was done.

But there were other boys who wished to earn money, and at the same business. As there was considerable building going on, a small dwelling was soon found, the lathing of which I secured and then hired a few boys to help me.

This contract proved more profitable; not that the price for lathing was higher, for here as on the church my pay was by the bunch, or hundred. Nor was the profit in percentage on my "hands" which I hired; for all the profit made upon them was the pleasure of being the boss of the job.

That enabled me to secure a fair share of the work which could be done standing upon the floor, and of the plain work.

As this was rather slow business and brought such small profits, a companion and I began to plan for something which would pay better. We had heard much of the Boston newsboys,

and had an ambition to try our hand with the papers.

We interviewed the butler of the steamer Penobscot, which made two trips each week to and from Boston. He agreed to bring us each one hundred papers every trip. For these we paid him ninety cents, and sold them for two cents each. When the news was of unusual importance, we would sometimes charge three cents.

It usually took from two to three hours to sell the lot.

It will be remembered that telegraphs were then unknown, so we had the very latest news, and as the Mexican War was then raging, our papers found eager buyers.

The papers came in a roll, and were thrown to us from the upper deck into the dock before the steamer touched, and in time for us to open the bundles, glance at the summary of the news which the butler furnished, and be ready as the passengers came on shore, to cry, "Boston Daily Bee, Mail, Times, Sun, printed yesterday. Second edition, two cents. The latest news from Mexico, Texas and Oregon." Sometimes we cried, "Latest news from Texico, Mexas and Oregonsas."

Well, this did not last long, for young Yankees as well as old ones are given to overdoing. So many went into the business that we who began it, soon abandoned it, as having at first sold one hundred papers we were not satisfied with a sale of twenty-five or fifty.

It is interesting to remember that at that time the entire express business between Boston and Bangor was conducted by one messenger, and the parcels packed in a "strong box," which I think was about three feet square.

The Bangor Daily Whig and Courier was then the leading paper of our city, and its copies of the Boston papers came in that said "strong box," which was taken from the boat and carried to the express office and opened before the papers could be secured, from which should be taken the latest war and other news for the next day's papers!

What changes have taken place since! Now if within reach of our city dailies, we can have with our breakfast, the news of yesterday from almost all civilized lands.

Would that the good news of the gospel had gained in proportion in the speed of its spread. But in this there has been great gain also.

XIII.

I DID not long reside in Bangor at that time. I would not pretend to say just why my mother planned for my return to the county in which I was born.

There seemed to be no especial need for my remaining in the city, and the river had great attractions for me; to play upon the rafts, ride logs and fish about, exposed me to many dangers which, I doubt not, were more appreciated by my dear mother than by me.

The vessels, too, had their attractions, and as one of her boys had early taken to the sea, and experienced some hardships and narrow escapes, she preferred to have her youngest remain on the land.

It was July, and harvest time for hay — also for boys who could make themselves useful.

I sought and soon found a job, with the promise of good pay, and went to work.

After a few days of this, my mother returned

from a visit to the old home, and told me that she had engaged me to a farmer, who was a stranger to me, and that I must start back by the next day's stage.

That would leave at two A. M., so I could work that day, get my pay at its close, go down in the evening after work and register for the stage, and so waste no time.

That I did. When I explained to Mr. Warren, my employer, he was kind enough to assent to the plan, and to say he should be pleased to have me work longer.

By ten o'clock that evening I was in bed. The packing of my trunk was left to the kind hands of her who spent her life for her children, as was also the responsibility of my awaking in time for the stage.

As late as it would do mother called me — not an easy task — and when I had dressed and come down, I found breakfast all ready for me.

It was too early for me to be very hungry, and besides, the thought of going away from mother and sister to find a home among strangers, was not calculated to whet my appetite; so I ate but little, and had not long to wait

before the wheels of the stage were heard thundering down the street, and I was off.

It was a big, four-horse affair, and contained but one solitary passenger besides myself. I remember well how he looked in the morning — a great, good-natured "logger."

I was soon asleep, with my head leaning over against the left side of the stage. On we went until we reached a piece of "corduroy road" — that is, a road made of logs laid side by side across the way.

When the stage wheels struck these logs, having but two passengers, the body bounced fearfully. The result which most interested me was, that my head hit the top of the stage, and that when I came down, not yet quite awake, my arms like wings came down upon my sides, almost knocking the breath out of me, and that then, to complete the job of awakening me, my head struck against the side of the door-frame, hard enough to raise quite a lump, and made it ache severely. It was not one bump of the wheels, and then quiet, but on it seemed to jump from one log to another for quite a distance, making it almost impossible for a boy to keep his seat.

I think that for once I might have been called a "wide awake boy."

Still it was not long before I began to nod again, and with an instinct to avoid another bump against the brass trimmings of the door, I soon surprised myself by tipping over against the big fellow-traveler by my side.

Then he astonished me again, not by pitching me out, nor by an ugly growl, nor by an impatient word of complaint, but by reaching one of his strong arms around me, and drawing me over against his broad breast, where I could rest steadily; then he said: "There, you just lean here and go to sleep, and I'll see that you don't bump again."

That was a new experience for me. Whatever ills may have befallen me, it could not be said that I had ever suffered seriously from cuddling. So I of course gently protested; but I could always be conquered by kindness easier than in any other way; and besides, I was too tired and sleepy again by that time to resist very much; so I was quickly unconscious, and knew no more till daylight broke into my face from the east.

I fear I was too bashful to thank the kind

man as he deserved, but I hope I looked my thanks, and that he read them in the morning light, if he did not hear them.

Somewhere we read of "angels unawares." Was this one, do you suppose, and did the loving Father send him to shield and hold his child that night?

I think so, for I do not believe all angels have wings. I do not think this was one sent from heaven; but I do think God knew I was to take that weary journey, and so planned to have a kind, strong man there, instead of one who would have no pity for his boy. I have never seen nor heard of that man since; I never knew his name, nor home, nor church, but if he was one of our Father's family, will it not be pleasant to meet him some day in heaven and thank him for his kindness that night so long ago?

I think that no small part of the joys of heaven will be in meeting and thanking those who have done us kindnesses on earth, and in meeting and being thanked for our words and deeds of love to others here.

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