

out to the Sugar bush, a beautiful stretch of maple woods back of the gardens and orchard.

"Do whatever you like and have a good time," he roared hospitably, as they scattered in every direction.

The air was balmy and clear. The leaves underfoot, just barely released from most of the winter snow, smelled damp and spicy. There was still some snow in the sheltered fence corners. The first wild flowers were timidly putting out leaves and blossoms.

"Oh, lookee! I've found a trillium!"

"See my purple and yellow violets!"

"Here's a blood-root---watch it bleed!"

The shy little "spring beauties" had to be searched for in the hollows. The boys found "adder-tongues," and letting them hang out of their mouths, went hissing around to scare the girls, who gave little squeaks of pretended fright. Everybody picked leeks which were stored away for lunches later.

At intervals, the stone boats--flat, wooden, sled-like contraptions carrying the barrels of sap--were driven up to the crude shanty. There the sap was poured into huge barrels which let it flow through pipes to the shallow vats, under which burned hot wood fires. It took nearly all one man's time to gather wood and keep the fires replenished. A few of the large boys fell too and added their armloads to the waiting mound. This would have been a boring task at home, but here it was like a game and they vied good-naturedly to see who could find the biggest logs and carry the heaviest load. Some of the younger children rode back on the sleds to watch the sap gathered. At