

castes my father generally deputed my mother to make the practical application. I remember but one occasion when I suffered corporal punishment at his hands. I was about eight years old and had revealed a family secret to some of my small cronies. It was of very little importance but the revelation was a titbit for hungry gossips and incited mischief in the neighborhood. I was orally dealt with by both father and mother, and then each took their turn with the rod. There was a tearful trio when the punitive act was consummated and so deep was the impression on my mind (and body) that I never again "let a family cat out of the bag."

Of the general character and success of my father's Christian ministry, I am scarcely qualified to offer an unbiased judgment. While he lived and preached I gave little thought to prevailing creeds other than what he taught, but I have since noted that his was much broader than the denominational creed which he was supposed to represent. I knew him to be absolutely sincere and was often thrilled by his stirring sermons as by none other that I have ever heard. I am happy in my belief that he was instrumental in many genuine conversions. His daily prayer at the family altar was, that our daily lives should be not only consciously but so perceptibly imbued with the spirit of the religion which we professed as to be a strong and constantly promoting influence for good. He never thought it inconsistent with his vocation to interest himself in politics. He was a staunch republican; so was my mother, and their joint discussions of principles and methods were edifying and often very spirited. They anticipated the war between the North and South. Father did not live to see the actual outbreak, and mother survived only long enough to die in the midst of it, greatly depressed by doubts and fears.

The Lure of the Sap-Bush.

The lives of pioneers are commonly marked by privations and hardships which may make stern and rugged characters, but cannot wholly blunt the natural perception of ludicrous associations and happily, life even under such hard conditions is sometimes dotted with amusing incidents which greatly alleviate the severe tedium and constitute a sunny side to otherwise dark experiences.

Among the early settlers of the great Northwest was a colony of Vermonters who, greedy for the quick and easy fortunes promised in the fabulous stories told by unprincipled speculators, left comfortable homes and prospects behind them and after weary journeyings pitched their tents in the central wilds of the Peninsular state. The usual sufferings were heroically endured. The

ardor of enthusiastic anticipation was soon cooled by bitter realization, for the country was not the "promised land" of their excited imaginations. But their sobered senses acknowledged that it was indeed a goodly land and of reasonably fair promise. So every man, brave in the purpose of making the best of the situation, bent his neck to the yoke and plodded laboriously on toward his financial destiny, what yet that might prove to be.

The routine of events in this remote settlement was extremely monotonous, seldom anything occurring to mark one day as different from any other, except the weekly return of the Sabbath; and even this day was often in danger of being lost sight of, owing to the almost exact uniformity of intervening days.

These ambitious colonists, being also religiously disposed, were accompanied in their emigration by a minister, sound in the Congregational creed and exemplary in practice. He had voluntarily cast his lot with this self-exiled community, and while conducting his regular ministrations of Gospel service was compelled to depend largely upon the labor of his own hands in order to supplement a salary unavoidably meager and quite inadequate to the absolute necessities of his family.

Among his most immediately available sources of worldly subsistence was his "sap-bush." Early one bright spring morning, after a night peculiarly favorable to a copious flow of sap, he sallied forth intent upon securing a large measure of the precious liquid. Eager to make ample provision for storage, he first dispatched himself to a cooper's shop at the opposite extreme of the village whither he had previously taken for repairs a capacious barrel. Finding it in an open shed he quietly shouldered it without disturbing the proprietor and bore it to the "sugar camp." He began to gather from tree to tree, but had not made many collections before he felt an uneasy sense of something which at first he could not define, but which gradually shaped itself into a more distinct consciousness of a Sabbath-like stillness, almost oppressive; and finally into a keen and painful suspicion that possibly it might be the Sabbath (he had supposed it to be Saturday). So strong grew this impression that he hastened home and communicated his apprehensions to his wife whom he found in the yard engaged in a noisy frolic with the children. She laughingly expressed her doubts as to his sanity, assured him it was only Friday and resumed her part in the children's game.

Returning to labor, he tried to satisfy himself with his wife's positive assertion, but failing in this, and under the now firm conviction that it was a day not to be thus profanely employed, he again went home. The wife was still confident, and to make "assurance doubly sure," hurried to the nearest neighbor's house and was shocked to discover at a glance the family engaged in the finishing touches of the customary preparations for going to church. The anxious husband was quickly apprised of the result of her expedition, and in mortification and dismay repaired as speedily as possible to the house of worship.