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SPRING

In deepest woods there is a vernal stir,
While earth is quickened with the tender green;
Blue waters send their crystal sepulchre
And there is life where death like sleep hath been.

Bird voices haunt the golden lighted days,
And snowdrops glimmer whitely 'mid the grass,
While in the twilight of the hidden ways
All greenly veiled Persephone doth pass.

—Canadian Magazine for May.

When the Boys Took Hold of the Sugar Camp

BY J. MERVIN HULL

A SOFT snowball struck Nathan Wentworth fairly between the shoulders as he was closing the ponderous doors of the big barn, where he and Arden had been taking care of the cattle, and talking over the scheme as they did so.

Nathan turned his six-foot frame, muscular, but not yet firmly knit, and looked for the thrower of the ball. But he had disappeared.

"Free shot?" The question might have come from the cloudless blue above him, or from the spotless white around him, but the one who asked it couldn't wait for an answer. Arden sprang up from his trench in the snowdrift with his hands full of snowballs.

"Look, Nate," he cried, "the sun begins to soften the snow on the south side! It's time to be getting out the buckets."

Nathan looked soberly at the tense, boyish figure of his younger brother, his face so radiant that he seemed a part of the brilliant March sunshine. "How are we going to manage about mother?" he asked.

Arden waved his hand airily. "Leave that to the eloquent orator," he said. "I'll persuade—hi! Indians on the warpath!" And he began to fire his snowballs swiftly at a figure coming along the road, a tall man, with a beaskin cap and fringed deerskin leggins. As he drew near, Arden's arms fell to his side.

"Simon Daggart!" he gasped. "I've been training my guns on my best friend. I didn't know it was you."

"Nobody wounded yet," chuckled old Simon, "but say, boys, there's been a bear seen over on Old Cherry. I'm arter 'im, and you want to be on the lookout for him."

"All right," and Arden threw another snowball. "I know what you are after; you want to have your picture, sitting on the bear, in the Daily Press, and a story about 'Champion Bear Hunter adds Another to his String.'"

"Oh, I do, hey? Wal, you be careful there ain't a piece in the paper about Arden Wentworth bein' c't up by a bear. They're apt to be ructious when they first come out," and old Simon strode on his way.

The two brothers walked slowly across the road, and entered the sitting room of the farmhouse. Their mother was sitting at a table, poring over a heap of yellow papers.

Arden gathered up the papers, put them away in a pigeonhole, and said:

"School's dismissed, mother. You ought to run out with the other little girls." And he planted a kiss between his mother's anxious brows.

As Nathan watched the scene the color stole up over his cheeks. "What taking ways the boy has with her," he thought. "I'd give almost everything I possess to be able to talk to mother that way." But Nathan knew his ways were very different from his rollicking, bubbling-over brother. "I just seem bound hand, foot and voice when the loving things need saying. But Ard—Ard, he can do any amount of that sort of thing." And right there Nathan resolved, as he had often resolved before, that his young brother should have a chance, and a good chance in life, if he could manage it—just to pay him for standing so by mother.

Mrs. Wentworth smiled wearily at her younger son's antics. "Sit down, boys," she said, "now is as good a time as any to decide the matter. I've looked over all the bills time and again. Your father's sickness and death left us in debt. All of the accounts have been running six months, and some of them a year. I don't see any other way but to put a mortgage on the farm—or else sell. I don't know but that would be the better way. But your father had a perfect terror of debt, and I have, too, for that matter. I would rather suffer—"

"Now, ma, don't you go to worrying," said Arden stooping over his mother and giving her neck a gentle brushing. Then he straightened, took off an imaginary tall hat with great dignity, and said with profound bow:

"Permit me to inform you, madam, that your eldest son has a plan which will obviate the necessity of your troubling yourself as to bills for the present. Honorable Nathan Wentworth has the floor."

Nathan's face grew red. "I—you know, mother, I can't put things as Ard can. I wish Arden'd tell you. But, well, Ard's going to sell maple sugar at the hotels, the same as he did the summer father was sick."

"Mrs. Wentworth," broke in Arden with another bow and move of the imaginary silk hat, "it will be the finest sugar ever placed upon the market. It will, let me assure you, be made under the shadow of Mount Washington, from maples that have stood the storms of centuries. It will hold the fragrance of the pines, and will bring to the mind of the one partaking the song of the hermit thrush." Then the imaginary hat was thrown down, and Arden was by his mother's chair. "You know, mother dear, that I sold every pound you could make at thirty cents. At the hotels the people just tumbled over each other to get it, say nothing of the children. Mr. Atkins of the 'Storm King House,' said my visits to the hotel were—what was it?" Arden straightened. "Oh, a 'valuable asset.' And at the Mapleridge House there was one girl who used to ring a bell to call the others when she saw me coming. And you know, mother, there was a long piece about it in the White Mountain Echo. Why, we could have sold tons of it, if we'd had it."

Mrs. Wentworth drew a long breath that held a sigh and shook her head doubtfully. "I've been thinking about that for the past week," she said. "But you and Nathan could not manage that great sugar bush of a thousand trees alone, and to hire competent help—even if we could find it to hire—would take off the profits. I don't think we ought to try to make any sugar this spring, boys."

"Lock the door!" said Arden jumping to his feet. "The time has now come to reveal the secrets of our great enterprise, Nathan—at least in part."

At this a laugh broke apart the mother's lips. "You ridiculous boy," she said, "what are you two up to now?"

"Brother Nathan, as the eldest son," said Arden meekly.

Nathan shifted uneasily in his chair. "It's this way, mother," he said, getting up to go over by his mother, "we think we'd like to tap the trees nearest the pasture lot; they're handy to the sugar house, and— Of course, we wouldn't undertake more'n we could see a way clear for. But there's sure money in it, mother."

"I'm afraid you'll go in too deep, boys," said the mother.

"Listen, my lady," said Arden, "we have a scheme for making nearly a ton of sugar from the trees that are nearest at hand and hence can be the most economically handled. You have two sons, and at least one of them is stalwart. You just turn the whole thing over to them. Don't come near the old sugar bush till the sugaring is over, unless you want to."

Mrs. Wentworth leaned back. Her face was losing its look of care. "Will you promise not to run up a pile of bills?"

"Honest Injun," cried Arden, while Nathan simply said:

"We'll be very careful, mother. We'll tap only as many as we can handle ourselves."

"Get out the spouts and buckets," cried Arden. "The old sugar bush it is—the end nearest home, and our tap, tap, tap will be as music to our mother's ears, if she chooses to listen."

The end of the maple bush that was only part of the great maple grove that constituted one of the best sugar lots in the township of Kimball, sloped towards the south. The sugar house was just over the wall from the extreme end of the bush and contained a full equipment of buckets and spouts, and an excellent, though not the most modern, evaporator. The trees were mostly in small scattered groups.

Two or three days after Nathan and Arden began tapping, old Simon, gun in hand, came up through the big lot, thinking of nothing but the bear which had unaccountably kept out of his way. As he came out into the sugar bush and looked around, he stopped short, and let his gun slide to the ground.

"What be them boys up to now?" His eyes had taken in the many trees with buckets suspended, and the air of thrift and enterprise that had fallen upon the deserted camp. Then he heard back of him:

"Whoa! Hi—ah along there." Turning, he saw Nathan and Arden coming along, driving a yoke of oxen attached to a short lopsided, on which set an enormous tank for gathering sap.

"What ye think you're doin' on?" called Simon. "What you hanging so many buckets to one tree for?"

"Because that's the way we're running things," laughed Arden. "Come along here and see Old Faithful."

And Arden came to the old man and taking him by the elbow walked him to a big tree, fully a hundred feet tall, with widely spreading branches, soon to be covered with thick foliage. Simon walked around and around it, counting the buckets.

"You'll drown the tree dry," he said.

"Come closer, and see for yourself," said Arden.

"Wal, I never!—If every blessed bucket ain't full—an inch of the rim, too," and old Simon lifted a bucket from its hook and took a deep drink. Putting down the bucket and drawing his hand over his lips he said, "Just as sweet as any sap I ever tasted on. Boys, how'd you get on to it?"

"Oh, we've been reading up and writing the Government, and all that for some time," said Arden. "It's Nathan's head. He's a great fellow for getting hold of things."

"We've got nine trees over there with a lot more buckets hung to them. We'll see what they will do for us. Look in the tank. You see it is marked off for the number of barrels it holds. Four barrels in there now."

"Lo'mme take a holt with ye," said Simon. "I'll just enjoy giving you a lift." And as good as his word, he took two pails from their resting places and marched with them to the tank.

A half-hour's work and Arden cried as Simon's last pails were emptied:

"The tank registers six barrels now."

"Simon sank down on a bowlder that was near by. "If ever I thought to see this day. Why, you just suck the sap right out of a tree. Don't never tell nobody. They wouldn't believe ye, unless you brought 'em right over here as you have me, and show 'em. You'll be sugarin' off mighty near as much from those trees around at this end as you would if you had tapped the whole big lot the old way."

"That's it," cried Arden, pointing toward Nathan. "It's Nathan got hold of the idea. Nathan's great!"

Simon picked up his rifle. "I'm so taken back I've 'most forgot what I was goin' about myself. That bear sets me on edge, Ard; here to-day, and there to-morrer, a' I hain't seen hide nor hair of him. He's a savage one, too. Drove Lekiel Boynton out of the woods, day before yistiddy. You boys want to keep a sharp lookout, or he'll have you a'c't up, sugar and all."

With the sap running so abundantly, the boys were obliged to stay at the house nights, taking turns at keeping the fire going briskly underneath the evaporator. Nathan had been tending the fire the latter part of the night. About sunrise he filled the arch with fresh wood, and turned toward the warm corner where Arden was sleeping on some robes and blankets in the sugar house. "I guess I won't disturb him," he murmured, "he will wake up before the fire needs fixing again." Then he went outside, took a handaled to which a hazel was fastened, and drew it away to gather sap from some of the trees that were not too far.

As Arden, a little later, drowsily stretched himself he thought he heard a sniff somewhere right there in the sugar house.

Instantly he was on his feet.—What was his surprise to see a big black bear making for the bench where stood two deep long rows of tubs of sugar and cans of syrup which they had already made.

With a terrific yell Arden sprang forward and picking up sticks of wood, shouted, as he threw the billets of wood swift and fast as ever he could, to attract the bear's attention from the precious sugar, for the tubs were covered only with a thin white cloth laid over them.

The bear turned turned, rose on his hind legs, and with an angry growl began to stalk toward Arden.

"Come on, if you want to, you old thief!" cried Arden as he backed out of reach of the bear's waving paws. "Take that—and that!" and he threw a couple of knotty pieces of wood one after the other in quick succession. One piece struck the bear on the nose. Arden jumped through the open door, hoping the bear would follow him, then he would rush and barricade the door.

But the bear was too wily to be caught that way. He evidently had caught the odor of the sugar, and purposed getting his share. As soon as he saw Arden running away he dropped down upon all fours and started for the sugar again.

Arden quietly stopped back into the sugar house. "I'll fix you this time," he muttered. He caught up a ladle and filled it with hot syrup and poured it over the top of the bear's head.

With shrieks of pain and rage the intruder clawing at his head, tore about blinded by the scalding, sticky syrup. Finally, he ran howling into the woods.

"Farewell, kind friend," said Arden as he stood it the door, "next time let us know when you purpose visiting us, and it'll be 'Polly put the kettle on'."

"What you up to, Ard?" came in Simon's resonant tones, as the owner of the voice made his appearance around the corner of the sugar house. "That was sure the bear, wasn't it?" And he lowered his voice, "Your mother see me traipsin' this way after the bear, and I'm afeared she futtered along." Yes, there she comes now. But Nate's just over there, he'll look after her. I'm off—I'll give ye his af the bounty old boy."

"All right, mother," Arden sang out as he swung his arms to show that he was unhurt. Then he gallantly escorted his mother into the sugar house.

"Much more pleased to see you, madam, than the visitor who has just departed beating his burned head with his paws. He's left things somewhat in disorder, madam. But you'll excuse him. He doesn't know just how to behave inside a house. But we wish to call your special attention, dear Mrs. Wentworth, to our display—fifteen hundred pounds of first-class prize sugar and syrup, and we are sure to make two or three hundred pounds more."

His mother looked around upon the display of sugar, and then at the smiling face of her younger son, and her lips quivered.

"There, mother, we understand. It's coming out all right," said the impetuous boy. "And the bear didn't get just the kind of a reception he was expecting. Next year, mother you'll see this sugar bush taken in hand in earnest."

"What boys you are!" said the mother leaning back and wiping her face free of the tears that came in spite of her determined wish.

"Yes," said Arden, "but it's Nathan's head that works things out."

IMPEDIMENT IN HIS SPEECH

An amusing story is told of the Rev. J. Towyn Jones, M.P., the Junior Lord of the Treasury and Welsh Liberal Whip.

He once officiated at a deaf and dumb wedding in Carnarthenshire, the bride and bridegroom making their responses by means of the finger language.

After the ceremony a lady who had witnessed the affair said to him. "Very nice quiet wedding, sir, but did you notice an impediment in the bridegroom's speech?"

"No," the minister, said.

"Oh, yes," replied the visitor, "the top of one of his forefingers was missing."

WHEN POET MEETS POET

A number of literary men, and also a number of others with literary aspirations, had assembled at a dinner. Two minor poets engaged in conversation.

"I saw your 'Spring' poem in the Wonder Magazine," said one.

"Did you?" questioned the other, he coming suddenly animated.

"Yes, and I heard rather a neat compliment passed on it by a young woman."

"What did she say?"

"She wanted to know if I had written it."

THE EASTERTIDE

GEORGE H. GVAN

The Eastertide is dawning,
The glorious sun appears
The day brings great rejoicing
And scatters all our fears—
The day on which Christ conquered
Grim death and all his foes,
To all the world proclaiming
"In triumph he arose."

The empty tomb is yawning,
The stone is rolled away;
The hope of man is dawning,
To dwell in endless day.
The Son of man arisath
With healing in his wing,
And all the world rejoiceth
And angels gladly sing.

As he arose triumphant,
We too shall also rise;
As he the throne ascended,
We shall ascend the skies.
And as he lives forever,
We too shall die no more,
But, with our Lord directing,
Eternal life explore.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, April 8th, 1897

Acton Bicycle Club meets three evenings each week in the Oddfellows' Hall.

The organization of a Junior League was effected in the Methodist Church on Tuesday evening with the following officers: President—Eva Matthews; Vice-President—Hattie Noble; Secretary—Bertie Speight; Treasurer—Edith Nicklin.

Saturday, May 15th, is chosen by Toronto City Council as the date on which to submit the Sunday car question to the people.

Rev. H. A. MacPherson gave to his congregation at Knox Church his first deliverance on the subject of amusements on Sunday evening. As a basis for his sermon he selected the text from 1 Tim. 4: 7-8. He expressed his admiration for athletic sport, especially baseball. Referring to other amusements the preacher gave a list of innocent pastimes and said that in all these amusements, whether in games on the green or at the evening parties, there should be studious care not to come in contact with the services of the Church. Mr. MacPherson's sermon was a frequent topic of conversation during the week.

At the Council meeting on Monday evening the matter of the danger at the crossing over the railway tracks on Mill Street was again up for discussion.

An exceedingly interesting union meeting of the Young People's Societies of the various churches was held in the Methodist Church on Monday night. Some of those who took part in the programme were, Rev. J. E. Howell, M. A., Geo. Vincent, L. R. Orr, Mrs. T. E. M. Secord, Miss J. Nicklin, Miss C. McPhail, C. Warren, J. R. Kennedy and Mrs. J. Oram.

A tramp, who had lodged in the cells Monday night, picked the lock, opened one of the water valves of the fire engine and had a wash, and departed without saying good-bye to Horace, the special officer in charge during Officer Graham's illness.

Now there's a mining boom in Nelson. It's not gold, but coal.

Mr. Frank Barber, of Georgetown, has gone South for the benefit of his health. He was accompanied by his father, Mr. John R. Barber.

Rev. Father Haley, of Acton, who has been ill at St. Joseph's Hospital for over a week, is now convalescing.

Messrs. James Brown and J. C. Nelson are exchanging residences.

DIED

Bews—In Milton, on Tuesday, March 30th William Bews, in his 63rd year.

FORBES—At Orion, Mich., on Friday, March 16th, George W. son of George Forbes, formerly of Acton, aged 21 yrs.

THE NATURAL COMMENT

London children certainly get some quaint views of life. An instance of this recently occurred in a London East-End Sunday School, where the teacher was talking to her class about Solomon and his wisdom.

"When the Queen of Sheba came and laid gold and jewels and costly spices before Solomon, what did he say?" she asked presently.

One small girl, who had evidently had experience in such matters, promptly replied.

"'Ow much d'yer want for the lot?"

A MEAN SUSPICION

After the wedding ceremony the newly-married pair sought their new cottage home. Then the bride held her wedding ring to her ear, as children hold shells when listening for the "waves."

"What are you doing?" asked her husband.

"Listening to the music," was the prompt reply of the lady, who had certain suspicions about her new ornament.

"Music? who ever heard of music in a wedding ring?" scoffed the man.

"That's as may be," retorted the bride; "that have you never heard a brass band play?"

THE CEDARS OF LEBANON

There are now only about 400 of the cedars of Lebanon left in the grove from which Solomon obtained the wood for the Temple at Jerusalem. The best preserved are about 100 feet high and 47 feet in circumference at the base. They are more than 2000 years old. There is a legend to the effect that they never die, having been planted by God on the third day of Creation and that they will perish only with the end of the world.

Asthma Doesn't Wear Off Alone—Do not make the mistake of waiting for asthma to wear away by itself. While you are waiting the disease is surely gathering a stronger foothold and you live in danger of stronger and yet stronger attacks. Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Asthma Remedy taken early, will prevent an incipient condition from becoming chronic and saves hours of awful suffering.

CAN'T YOU HERE US CALLING, CALLING?

Can't you hear us calling, calling, from the trenches far and wide,
In Belgium's broken body and France's shell-torn side?
We've held them for a twelvemonth through mud and storm and rain,
And we think it's due to us, lads, you come and share the same.
For all must fight for Britain, shoulder arms and play the game.

Chorus—

For you're wanted, yes, you're wanted in the sternest kind of way,
To defend your country's honor and to save the world to-day;
'Tis you're duty to your God, lads, as well as to your king,
So take your place and save the race, be British, that's the thing.

Can't you hear us calling, calling thro' the gas fumes' choking breath?
Truly hellish kind of fighting and not a soldier's death;
Won't you think the matter over, for men, we look to you
To take your places in the ranks and see the matter through?
For Britain stands for honor, liberty and mercy too.

Chorus—

Can't you hear us calling, calling from the sun-scorched Dardanelles?
Don't you feel the message urgent when every moment tells?
One thousand fell in landing, dying shattered, heap on heap,
But we scaled the heights at last, lads, and what we hold we keep,
For Britain's sons are heroes still on land or rolling deep.

Chorus—

Can't you hear us calling, calling from the mansions of the dead?
Surely not in vain we gave our lives and for our country bled:
We're waiting here to meet you, with faces all aglow,
Can you ever bear to meet us if you still refuse to go?
For there's worse than death, my brothers, your conscience tells you so.

Chorus—

—Rev. Henry Earle.

Port Credit,

A GREAT CHANGE

Here are some of the transformations that prohibition has wrought in the use of buildings built for brewery purposes as reported in The Issue. It is an interesting catalogue:

GEORGIA—Augusta Brewing Company reorganized into the Augusta Ice and Ice Cream Company; old distillery at Macon, transformed into a modern dairy plant. Others are making soft drinks.

IDAHO—Coeur d'Alenes' Panhandle brewery converted into a cannery.

IOWA—At Iowa City, one brewery has become a cold storage plant; at Des Moines one is now engaged in manufacturing telephone devices; at Cedar Rapids, one now manufactures yeast.

MICHIGAN—Lansing plant sold to auto body company for a factory.

ALABAMA—Old plant at Birmingham, closed in 1909, has long been in use as ice factory.

OREGON—A few old breweries at Portland are making loganberry juice and other soft drinks.

TENNESSEE—Knoxville breweries have been turned into ice and cold storage plants.

WASHINGTON—Bellingham brewery now a cannery; Everett brewery now a wholesale grocery; Olympia brewery now making dairy products; Vancouver and Walla Walla breweries now making soft drinks; North Yakima brewery making grape juice. At Spokane, former breweries are now used as fish canneries, ice plant, packing plant, wholesale grocery and soft drinks bottling establishments. The Seattle breweries stood idle while their owners tried vainly to cajole the voters of the state into allowing them to resume their old business.

GENTLE HITS—QUERIES

Can a solid fact leak out?
When is it easy to read in the woods
When Nature turns the leaves.
Which is the largest room in the world?
The room for improvement.
At what age should young people get married? At the parson age.
Why did a number of dentists go to the war?" Because they had been drilling for years.
"What's honor?" asked Jones. "That's easy; any woman who sits behind another woman in church can tell what's on her in two minutes."

Isn't This So?

Full many a shaft at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant,
And many an egg quite fresh when laid,
Is sold when it is well decayed.

A curtain lecture now and then
Is welcomed by the wives of men.

A New York man has invented a remedy for taking the color out of a red nose. There ought to be a lot of money in that proposition.

We are told that centipedes do not have to wipe their feet before entering their homes.

In eating a bowl of soup always begin at the top and out downward, never the reverse.

On with beauty, cleanliness, and health.

Push, pull, and perseverance will make your town a model.

Quit criticising and begin working.

Request the town authorities to enforce the sanitary laws.

SAYS HORSE FAMINE IS COMING

At least a million horses and mules have gone to Europe from United States and are being destroyed in vast numbers. The war is not over and they are still going over. When the war ends every country across the sea will need horses to work its farms and replenish its depleted breeding stock. With our surplus gone, American breeders asleep at the switch, and our own enormous consumption of horses for farm and city going steadily on, a horse famine is sure to ensue.

A Household Medicine—They that are acquainted with the sterling properties of Dr. Thomas' Eclectric Oil in the treatment of many ailments would not be without it the house. It is truly a household medicine and as it is effective in dealing with many ordinary complaints it is cheaper than a doctor. So, keep it at hand, as the call for it may come most unexpectedly.