

The Free Press Short Story

WALLY GETS A BIRD

FRANK FARRINGTON

It was Porky Wilson's afternoon off. As he and Wally Waldo walked down the street he had on his arm a battered basket filled with useless old bottles that had been discarded at the drug store where he was employed as errand boy and bottle washer.

The men who buy game from him can't be much better. "I'd think you'd hear him shoot and go get him," said Wally.

"He's too smart for me. He hunts with a rifle with a silencer on it, and he doesn't have anything else to do, so he just lies around there in the bird cover, hidden, and picks off the birds without any noise. I can't stay up there and watch all the time. Well, you boys go on and hunt all you want to, and before you go home come up to the house; I want to see what luck you have. You'll probably find the birds working in the beechnuts over the hill."

The boys thanked Mr. Tanner and went back to the woods. Over the top of the hill there was some good partridge cover—scrub hemlocks and thorn apple bushes and a few beech trees, a piece of semi-cleared land. It was there that the boys on their hikes had often seen partridges or heard them drumming.

"Porky, I had to get him a book and his newspaper," Wally said. "He sits up in bed and reads. I told him what we're going to do, and he said, 'If you were as good a hunter as I used to be, you'd go out and get your father a partridge to tempt his appetite. When I was your age I could pick 'em off the line of a tree with a rifle. Many's the partridge I've shot with a rifle in the woods back of the old place.'"

They proceeded in hands and knees under some low bushes, keeping quiet, moving with great care and listening for the occasional drumming. After some time they got within thirty yards of the clump of hemlocks. They lay almost flat on their stomachs so they could see ahead under the low branches.

"Well, he must be some shot all right, but I s'pose you can hit 'em better if they aren't flying," observed Porky. "It isn't being a good sport to shoot a bird sitting still," said Wally. "You ought to give 'em a chance. I told pa that, but he said he guessed all the partridges a feller'd get with a rifle would be fair game all right. I'd like to go and get him one. He can't eat much of anything, and he says a partridge would taste just right. The season's open to 'em now."

"I saw something more then," said Porky in a whisper. "Right in the middle of those hemlocks. It showed against the light in the clearing behind." Wally wriggled and twisted to see the spot. Then came another drumming. So close it sounded that the boys started.

"Let's go then," urged Porky. "It's just one o'clock. We've got all afternoon, and we can get over to Tanner's woods on our bikes in half an hour easy enough." Wally slipped a cartridge into the rifle and plugged the bottle at which Porky had been vainly popping with his sling shot. "It don't seem like much of a chance to get a partridge," Wally finally replied, "but prob'ly we might go anyhow."

At command Nick scrambled up on top of the pile of yellow ears in the corncrib, and Tanner shut the door and fastened it. "Now take that toy gun away from that baby before he hurts himself with it," said Nick through the bars of the corncrib. The farmer grinned as he looked at the rifle that Wally was still holding ready.

"I thought you put in another cartridge after you shot him!" exclaimed Porky. "I did," replied Wally, "but while you were fixing his hand I took it out. I was afraid I might shoot him again. I was nervous."

They made their way out of the tangle of brush and came into the open just as a man emerged from the hemlocks; he was bare-headed, and his left hand was holding his right, from which blood was trickling. "You've killed me!" he screamed when he saw the boys. "It's Nick Dibble!" said Wally. "O my!" exclaimed Porky. "What'll we do?"

"It's only a little way back down to his house," said Wally. "We'll go and ask him if we can hunt on his hill." Mr. Tanner was mending a fence beside the road near his house when the boys approached. "Hello, boys! Doing a little hunting to-day?"

"You're pretty near being a doctor; you work in a drug store," said Wally. "Fix up his hand. He ain't killed." To the man Wally said as they approached him, "We'll fix you up all right. It's my fault. I thought I saw a partridge."

"Well, we started to, and then we saw a sign that said no hunting allowed," Wally replied. "We wondered if you'd care if we'd go in your woods to hunt. You see, I wanted to get a partridge for pa. He's sick."

"You boys are on your way," said Nick. "I'll get myself home best I can if I don't bleed to death on the way. You've no business here hunting on posted land anyhow."

"Boys, I've had to do it. Hunters from town got so they didn't have any regard for my rights. You'd think they owned the woods. They'd break down fences getting over 'em, and they'd start fires in the woods any place and not put 'em out when they left; and they'd overrun the place till there wasn't any hunting for me. You see, I like to hunt a little once in a while myself. So I posted her up, and now it's better; I was out this morning a couple of hours. The village sports think I'm a pretty mean man, but I'll let most any feller hunt if he'll be decent and ask me—except one pothunter in town that I won't let on my farm. It's that Nick Dibble, and I've warned him to keep away or I'd have him arrested. And yet he comes when he knows I ain't on the hill, and he shoots the game and then goes and sells it. He breaks the law hunting on a posted farm, and he breaks it selling the game. The law don't mean anything to him, and

"Just a minute," said Wally, a little nervously, but with sufficient determination. "You stand right there, Mr. Dibble."

"Well, I guess not. What'd you mean?" demanded the man. "Don't pull any of that stuff on me. Put that toy gun down!"

"It's only a twenty-two," Wally admitted, "but it shoots awful strong. If you don't stand right there, it may go off in your direction. Now, Porky, you go in the bushes there and get his gun and anything else he left there."

"I didn't have any gun," protested Nick. "I ain't left anything. Come on out of there. Who'd you kids think you are anyhow? Jesse James? Put that gun down! Point it the other way!"

But Porky was already in the hemlocks, and soon he came out, dragging a rifle with a silencer on the end of the barrel, and a small wooden box about the size of a drumhead stretched over one side. Porky thumped the drumhead, and it told the story how the poacher had been poaching; he had been using the contrivance for imitating drumming in order to bring the partridges to him.

Nick's language became suddenly violent, and at last Wally said, "You've got to stop talking, Mr. Dibble. Your language ain't fit to hear. Now you go right ahead of us down the hill, March!"

Nick hesitated as if inclined to attack the boys, but the muzzle of the twenty-two did not waver, and he could see that the hammer was drawn back. He started on ahead of the boys, and Wally soon directed him to an open wood road that led down to the highway, where they emerged after a slow journey. There Nick was about to turn to the left and go into town, but Wally ordered him to turn to the right. The trio went up the road to where Mr. Tanner was still mending fence.

As he saw the group approaching he dropped his hammer and stood open-mouthed. "Well, I'll be teetotally dinged!" said he. "You got him, didn't you? Some bird you got!"

Wally told the story, and Porky gave Mr. Tanner the poacher's rifle and box by the wagon house. "We'll stick him in there, and you boys just send out the constable when you get to town. I'll take care of the rest of this deal."

At command Nick scrambled up on top of the pile of yellow ears in the corncrib, and Tanner shut the door and fastened it. "Now take that toy gun away from that baby before he hurts himself with it," said Nick through the bars of the corncrib. The farmer grinned as he looked at the rifle that Wally was still holding ready.

"You don't need to worry about it," said Wally. "There ain't any load in it."

DOMINION EXPERIMENTAL FARMS Weekly News Letter

Seed Crops Early The importance of early seeding cannot be stressed too strongly. An experiment carried on for 10 years by the Field Husbandry Division at the Central Experimental Farm, shows that wheat, oats, barley and peas seeded as soon as the land is ready to work give higher yields than when sown at later dates.

Lime Materials Ground limestone, slaked lime, and marl are employed as soil dressings to correct acidity and furnish lime for plant growth. Of these sources of lime ground limestone is the most commonly used. When purchasing ground limestone, its composition and fineness should be considered; a good grade material will contain at least 80 per cent. of carbonate of lime and for a prompt action in the soil 60 per cent. should pass a sieve of 80 meshes to the linear inch and all should pass a 10 mesh sieve.

Care of the New Pigs The nursing sow and litter require care and good feeding in order that the pigs will be strong and healthy, and the sow will be in fit condition to produce a second litter this year. Supply a milk-producing ration. It should consist of oats, middlings and skim-milk. Encourage the pigs to start eating at an early age by placing some feed in a low trough. As soon as weather permits, let them run outdoors in a fresh paddock.

The Rose Garden As soon as the snow has gone in the rose garden the mulch should be lightened with a fork and gradually removed. It is a mistake to take it all off at once. When the frost is out of the ground the soil that has been mounded about the rose bushes should be put back into place and the beds kelled.

In cutting off limbs from trees it is important to leave no stumps as they become very unsightly and are apt to collect disease germs.

Its Quality Sells It.—The fact that so many thousands of intelligent people continue to use Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil speaks volumes for its healing efficiency. Every since it was first introduced it has grown steadily in public favor, owing entirely to its manifold usefulness in relieving and healing sickness. As a specific for cuts, burns, scalds, and various inflammatory pains its record is beyond reproach.

WHEN ADVICE IS UNWELCOME The advice which is least valued is that which is always on tap. Some young people are too ready with advice. They do not stop to think of their lack of experience, nor of their ignorance of certain factors in the case. Advice bubbles out of them as water bubbles from a spring; but while spring water is always welcome, advice is frequently unwelcome.

If you want your counsel to be valued, wait until it is solicited. Do not volunteer to arrange other people's business. Do not be impatient to make suggestions as to the way your classmates or your neighbors should conduct their affairs. Even when your advice is asked, do not give it as though you believed yourself infallible. It will be more palatable if seasoned with modesty.

ALL KINDS OF BAIT The keeper discovered a stranger fishing in a private stretch of water and ordered the offender to draw his cast. The angler obeyed, and it was seen that his hook was baited with a piece of carrot.

The keeper burst into laughter and said: "If that's the bait you use, you can't do any harm. Get on with it!" Several hours later the two met outside the private grounds. "Great Scott!" exclaimed the keeper looking at the basket full of trout. "You didn't catch all these trout with a piece of carrot, did you?"

"No," replied the sportsman. "I caught you with that!"

A WORD TO HUSBANDS and FATHERS. Constantly before you — on your desk, perhaps, or at least in your imagination — is a picture of your wife and children. You are working for them. Their future comfort and success is your ever present anxiety and the inspiration for your best efforts. Are you saving all you can now to provide them with the means for comfort, independence and success in the years to come? BANK OF MONTREAL. Established 1817. HEAD OFFICE MONTREAL. TOTAL ASSETS IN EXCESS OF \$750,000,000. Acton Branch; H. I. G. FRASER, Manager.

ANNOUNCING The New 1934 PONTIAC STRAIGHT 8. A FLOATING RIDE WITH KNEE-ACTION WHEELS.

1934 — year of outstanding automotive achievement brings you Pontiac—a new model of extraordinary performance, comfort, and value! Time-proved features which brought fame to past Pontiacs have been retained. Important new refinements have been added... many of them actually suggested by Canadian motorists, through their whole-hearted co-operation with General Motors' Customer Research activities.

"Girder Box" frame... and new Multi-Beam headlamps. Pontiac's mighty Straight-8 engine has been correspondingly advanced. It's faster, smoother, more powerful, more economical... and, because of live rubber suspension, practically vibrationless. Then too, increase in wheelbase, in car weight, in body size, and in tire size, all tend to make this the roomiest, easiest-riding automobile ever to bear the famous Indian-head trademark!

BIGGER ROOMIER STURDIER FISHER BODIES. SMOOTHER KNEE-ACTION WHEELS MORE POWERFUL STRAIGHT 8 ENGINES. SMARTER NEW DESIGN AND MODERN STREAMLINING. SAFER NEW FENDIT BRAKES STRONGER FRAME MULTI-BEAM HEADLIGHTS. SILVER ANNIVERSARY OF GENERAL MOTORS. DAYMOND BROS. GEORGETOWN ONTARIO.

EDWARDSBURG CROWN BRAND CORN SYRUP. The economical and delicious table syrup. A nourishing sweet for the whole family.

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