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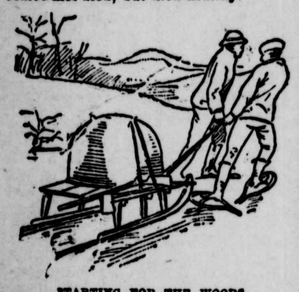
MAPLE SUGAR.

OLD-TIME AND PRESENT WAY OF MAKING THE SYRUP.

The Sugaring Season in Vermont is the Farmers' Carnival Month —Sugar Parties in the Woods.

SHORT time ago the young and old of Vermont realized that sugar season was at hand, and the long looked for picnic was within their grasp. In this, like all others, things are not as they used to be. An age ago the farmer and his boys, in the fall of the year when the harvest was ended, would take their axes and hie to some hard-wooded locality well stocked with maples and lay out for a spring campaign. Headquarters would be established near some mammoth rock; oft-times this was so located that it furnished shelter in time of storm and gave a bed for the night. A plan of operations was then decided upon. Young trees about one and one-half feet in diameter were cut down, cut up about two feet in length, and then dug out, making troughs holding not far from four or five gallons. When 200 or 300 of these had been manufactured large maples were selected, and by the side of each was placed one of these troughs. Then a cord or two of wood was gathered and piled up against a rock, two big logs —called back-logs—were placed in position to support the kettle, and some large tree near by was cut down and that dug out into one immense trough for storage. This work would use up the best part of a week, one of the number going home at night to look after the stock and bring back in the morning the brown bread, pork and beans. In those days these articles constituted the staff of life and an age ago there was no dyspepsia, chronic complaints, or loss of appetite among the average Vermonter. To be sure they sometimes died, but died healthy.



STARTING FOR THE WOODS.

About the middle of March the old "five-pail kittle" was unearthed; the hand-sled which had been doing service all winter was ordered up; pork, beans, a few potatoes, and several loaves of home-made bread, with a few dozen of eggs, were gathered together, placed on the sled, and the kettle turned over them; and two young men, with snow-shoes, an ax, two or three pails, the family flint-lock, some powder and shot, and a good supply of "punk"—an article found in decayed wood, which is about as combustible as tissue-paper or young oratory—and two blankets, started out for nearly two months of "sugaring." Upon reaching the rock the first thing in order was a fire, but there were no matches then, so the old musket was brought into service. One man held the "punk" near the flint hammer and caught a spark. This he nursed, and soon had shavings from a shingle ablaze, and later a big fire, which was never allowed to go out until of no further use. At once the old troughs were looked up, an ugly gash was made in a fine maple, then "gouged," and a spout was driven in to carry the sap to the trough, and when the sun shone sufficiently the tree gave forth its sweetness. Then the manufacturers of sugar saddled their neck-yokes and gathered in the sap, ofttimes walking one-half a mile to secure two pailfuls, which made about one-half of a pound of sugar, such as it was. An early breakfast, dinner as near meridian as the eye and stomach could judge, and "tea" when work was done comforted the inner man. For Java or Mocha syrup was a substitute, for sirloin of beef a fine slice of pork or the best of ham broiled on coals, and an ample supply of brown bread and roasted potatoes made up a repast that would do the stomach of royalty good. For dinner a few

BRINGING THE DINNER.

boiled eggs broke the monotony and "at tea" most anything that was left was eaten. There is no place in the world where you can cook beans which equals the woods and this is how they used to be cooked in the sugar-bush: An old earthen pot well filled with beans, a good "hunk of pork," and some native molasses furnished the foundation. Almost beneath the kettle of boiling sap a pit was dug and the pot and contents were buried in it and in the morning out came a dish that no hotel or restaurant in all Chicago can duplicate. At the end of six weeks, when the party took account of stock, they usually had, all told, 200 pounds of sugar as black as Ethiopia and flavored with snow, rain, everything that could come off the trees, with now and then the body of a forlorn mouse or daring chipmunk who ventured too near the trough. This was pure Vermont maple sugar something like 100 years ago.

Another generation realized that the world moved, and we find a shanty in some fine grove of maples filled with 300 or 400 buckets and sometimes more. Outside is an arch for a kettle, not built of cut stone, but of material easiest at command. This is not an isolated spot; people here come and go; the "sugar place" is near-by home; the wife or daughter at noontime brings up the dinner, and a good dinner it is; there is a small kettle at command and a "sugar off" is then in order and an hour's sport that king, prince, or potentate might envy, but not covet. To the assuming daughter of papa, to say nothing of the complacent manipulator of the type-writer, the idea of a girl tramping a mile or two in the woods, carrying dinner for men dressed in coarse woolens, may not be pleasant, but could they see that girl with her dinner-pail or "waxing sugar" with honest, hardy men, they would realize that there is such a thing in life as enjoyment. Ofttimes it is found necessary to boil sap all night in order to catch up with the flow of sap, and during a "big run" this sometimes lasts for a week. Then nearly the entire family moves to the bush. The

MAKING SAP TROUGHS.

head of the house gets a little sleep while the wife or some of the children keep the kettle full and the fire "a-humping." A "humping fire" is what the sugar-maker always enjoys. Ofttimes these sugar orchards are near each other, and family visits are in order and some love-making is indulged in. Lads and lasses play "high-low-jack," and watch the fire, kettle, and each other.

In the old days a very respectable quality of sugar was made, but only a little more than necessary for home use, although 100 pounds or so sometimes was exchanged for store pay. The farmer who then controled a sugar orchard of 300 or 400 trees was then recognized as one of the biggest men in town. At the present time the farmer is not content with less than 1000 trees, and he holds them as precious as the owner of an orange orchard does his fruit trees. Every young maple is carefully looked after. If there is a scrub oak, beech or birch to impede its growth it is cut into firewood. Many an orchard to-day is so cleared of fallen timbers and under-brush that in the summer months one can drive over nearly every portion of it with a horse and buggy. The small streams are bridged and good roads are found on all sides. If there be a cheerful spot on earth during the summer months it's the farmer's sugar-place. Here are the finest songsters in the world and the squirrel is the prince of the field. Many farmers will not allow a gun to be taken into a sugar-bush, and oft-times in the spring they place within easy reach of the squirrels near the sugar-house a few ears of corn, because they enjoy the company of the lively creatures, which often are quite domestic.

THE OLD-TIME SUGAR-HOUSE.

To-day the maple sugar-bush is in every way truly home-like. Near the center of fifty or more acres of hardwood timber land—mostly maple, a few beech and birch—you find a commodious sugar-house, one room of which is much larger than the entire house of seventy years ago. In this well-floored room are stored the buckets during the summer, and in the springtime it is used for kitchen, reception room, parlor, or dance hall. In it you will see a fine brick arch, an evaporator, and ample storage-room for the sap, while outside is a thrifty pair of oxen yoked to a gathering sled, on which is a tub holding from twenty-five to forty pails. Like the rest, the oxen take their dinner in the woods, and five or six "rounds" are considered a good days work. Three hundred pails a day is called good work. This sap is drawn to the sugar-house, and from a long spout is conveyed to large storage-tubs, and thence to the evaporator, or pan, kettles having long since been discarded. The evaporator is of malleable iron partitioned off. The sap, entering at the head of the arch, meanders across the pan a dozen times or so, and on reaching the foot a heavy, clear, pure syrup is produced. This is carefully set aside until "sugaring-off day" comes, when it is cooked still more and is ready for the tub or caking.

About twice each week the owner of a sugar bush has a sugaring-off party. First all the old folks for miles around come in on ox-sleds and on foot, and a good old-fashioned time is enjoyed. No one seems to realize that they are growing old. Later on the coming generation are on hand and buxom girls, hopeful young men, maidens, and boys gather at the sugar-house. They are in for a good time. First there may be a tug-of-war, with snow-balls, in which the girls take an active part, and a Vermont girl can throw a snow-ball with hitting effect. She uses more precision firing at a young man for whom she has no admiration than when she tries to "shoo a hen" off the garden patch. When the war is over the manufacture of paddles is in order. To eat sugar with a spoon in the woods would be regarded as a violation of all the rules of etiquet. So the young man takes his "best girl" one side, and selecting a sofa—usually a large log, or if lighter furniture is required two buckets are inverted—they sit down and commence work on their paddles. The paddles being made, down to the sugar-house they go, secure a pint or more of the syrup, and start for a snowbank, upon which they pour it. This at once hardens and furnishes a sugar repast that can not be excelled. For a quarter of a mile about the sugar-house you will see these pairs cooing and eating maple sugar in its primitive state.

The pure Vermont maple syrup is an entirely different article from that vended

THE MODERN OUTFIT.

about the streets of large cities, which is mostly made of glucose and foreign sugars. Pure maple syrup to-day readily brings $1 a gallon the woods, and when it reaches Chicago it is sold for seventy-five cents and often less. The first make of maple sugar sells for fifteen cents a pound, and here you get it for seven or eight—a reconstructed article but not improved.—*Chicago Herald.*

AMBITION'S END.

BY ABBIE C. M'KEEVER.

The Egg—Here am I so white and pretty; I wouldn't be a rough ear of corn for anything.

Ear of Corn—Wouldn't you? Dear me! Wait until your mistress comes and takes you into the house for breakfast.

The Egg—She won't find me; I'm half hidden by the nice clean straw, and besides, she'll see you first; there you hang, right before her eyes.

Ear of Corn—Much you know, my dear Egg, in your soft nest. My mistress has other and far higher uses for me. Here she comes with her apron full of eggs, and not a single ear of corn. Your time has come!

The Egg (faintly)—Has she gone? I was never so frightened in my life. She came and filled the nest with a dozen or more of eggs, and before she left us, marked our pretty white coats all over in horrid scratches with a bad pencil.

Ear of Corn—I do not understand myself. Hush! Here she comes again with a great flopping, clucking hen. Ah, she has placed her on your nest. I suppose to keep you warm. How funny! I'll keep one eye open day and night and see what comes of it.

The Chick—Peep! peep! peep!

Ear of Corn—Who's that?

The Chick—Peep, peep! Oh, dear, it's me, your old friend, The Egg. Don't you remember? I'm so hungry, I must go with my other little brothers and sisters and scratch awhile. Mamma Hen has promised to teach us, peep, peep!

Ear of Corn—Wonders will never cease! and now comes the master with a great sack and in I go.

The Chicken—Ah, I'm in the garden. Tommy forgot to fasten the gate, luckily. Won't I have a good dinner, with all this tender little corn before me?

The Little Corn—Don't scratch us up and eat us, please, Mr. Chicken. We're just beginning to grow, and we're old friends. Don't you remember us?

The Chicken—Beginning to grow, are you; so am I. Don't you see I'm nearly half-grown? Hear me crow! (Crows lustily.) There, now; I've worked hard and I've scratched up every hill I could find and ate all the sprouted grain. Don't I feel well and full! I'll crow again, the other chickens will know where I am. There's plenty of weeds for them. (Crows again and again, is heard by the mistress at last, who rushes out toward the garden with Rover.)

Rover—You bad chicken, to spoil the nice garden! Now, you just keep quiet under my paws or I'll bite you. See, here is my mistress ready to receive you.

MORAL.

And while in the garden the corn lay a-dying,
The chicken in the pan was a-sizzling and frying.

Sally Conquered.

Many of the first settlers of Illinois were rude in speech and rough in manner. Money was scarce with them, and service was paid for in produce. Governor B., according to the New York *Ledger*, used to illustrate these incidents of frontier life by the following anecdote: One day when he was justice of the peace there came to his office a young man, accompanied by a young woman.

"Be you the squire?" asked the manly youth.

"Yes, sir."

"Can you tie the knot for us right away?"

"Yes, sir."

"How much do you charge?"

"One dollar is the legal fee, sir."

"Will you take your fee in bees wax?"

"Yes, if you can't pay cash."

"Well, go ahead and tie the knot, and I'll fetch in the wax."

"No," said the squire, thinking there was a good chance for a little fun; "bring in the bees wax first, and then I'll marry you."

Reluctantly the youth went out to where was hitched the horse upon which, Darby and Joan fashion, the pair had ridden, and brought the wax in a sack. On being weighed its value was found to be only about half a dollar.

"Wall," said the anxious groom, "tie the knot and I'll fetch more wax next week."

"No, sir; I don't trust; that's against the rules of this office."

Slowly the disappointed youth turned to go out, saying:

"Come, Sal; let's go?"

"I say, Mister," answered Sal, with a woman's wit, "can't you marry us as far as the wax will go?"

"Yes, I can, and will," replied the "squire," laughing; and he did.

Explosion in a Vest Pocket.

An explosion in his vest pocket was what Mr. Fowler of Agawam experienced the other day. He had bought some chlorate of potash tablets, and had put them in the vest receptacle with some sulphur matches. The mixture always causes commotion. But unmindful of this fact, Mr. Fowler sat down in his home to have a quiet smoke. Pretty soon he felt something warm in his pocket; he stuck in his fingers to see what was up; the matches ignited, the potash exploded, blowing open the front of his vest and burning his hands severely. Mr. Fowler jumped high in the air, and the work of stripping off his vest took but a moment. Now he carries his hand in a sling.—*Springfield Union.*

A Dog with a Keen Scent.

PARTY were seated in the office of a hotel in an Illinois town one evening not long ago, whiling away the time with genial chat, when a big Newfoundland dog belonging to the night clerk woke up from his comfortable nap near the stove and yawned dismally. "I have got the smartest dog in the country, for money," said the hotel clerk. "He can do anything but talk." A well-dressed, middle-aged stranger, who was a member of the party, said:

"I wish 'Spot' was here; he'd show you something worth seeing. He has got the keenest scent of any dog I know."

Being pressed to tell about "Spot," the stranger continued: "'Spot' is an English setter. I paid $500 for him and $1,000 won't buy him. I was hunting prairie chickens in Iowa last fall, and stopped at a well-known hotel at a certain town in that State. One evening a traveling man from New York dropped into the hotel office. He took a fancy to 'Spot' and wanted to purchase him immediately. Of course I laughed at the proposition, and at the same time took occasion to expatiate upon the dog's wonderful sense of smell. 'He can find anything that you are a mind to hide from him.'

"'I'll wager twenty-five dollars he can't find my handkerchief in this house if you'll let me hide it where I wish to,' replied the New-Yorker.

"I immediately covered the money, with the proviso that Spot should have free access to every nook and corner of the house when in search of the hidden article.

"The New-Yorker left the office, and was gone for a half hour. Spot remained asleep on the office floor, near my chair. When the New-Yorker returned I called out: 'Spot, this gentleman has lost his handkerchief; find it at once.' Spot jumped up, wagged his tail, and went over to the New-Yorker. He smelled around the man's clothing and shoes for a moment and then started upstairs. We waited patiently for ten minutes, and then a chambermaid came down in a hurry to inform the clerk that an awful racket was going on up in the garret. As the clerk was posted he said: 'All right, I'll see about it.' Just then Spot came downstairs with a handkerchief in his mouth. But I was the maddest man for a minute you ever saw. The dog's beautiful brown coat was inky black with soot. Didn't I swear? You see, that infernal New-Yorker had hid the handkerchief in an old-fashioned drum-stove in the garret, and then shut the stove door. In getting the door open 'Spot' had overturned the stove, but he crawled in just the same and got the handkerchief. I gave a colored boy five dollars of the stake money to wash 'Spot' off."

The party of listeners looked at one another in silence, and the night clerk whistled softly to himself.

Cruel, but to the Point.

Miss Bored—"Mr. Dolley, you seem to lead an inactive life; why is it that you never do anything?"

Mr. Dolley—"I'm waiting for an impulse."

Miss Bored (looking at the clock)—"I wish you could have one now."

Mr. Dolley (eagerly)—"Why?"

Miss Bored—"Because people are usually carried away with impulse."—*Philadelphia Press.*

A Paris thief stole the horse out of the shafts of a cab while the driver slept, and mounted it, was riding off, and would have got away if a passing citizen had not awakened the driver.

Chief Engineer Martin, of the Brooklyn Bridge, said that on an average 110,000 people pass over the bridge every day on the cars and 10,000 on foot; 8,000 vehicles pass over every day. On the last foggy day the cars carried 120,000, and the largest number they ever carried was 180,000. The greatest rush is between 5 30 and 6 30 p. m., when 12,000 an hour are carried on the cars. In the morning 10,000 an hour are carried. The receipts for toll amount to $3,000 or more a day. During January they averaged $3,100.

Twenty years ago, Mr. P. R. Penny, while at work in a mill in Minnesota, was caught in a shaft, and his arm was broken in 13 pieces, his right leg in three pieces, and three ribs fractured, injuries that crippled him for life. Notwithstanding this fact, he has cleared up 100 acres of land in Aroostook, Me., from the green woods, and last year raised 4,100 bushels of potatoes from 23 acres first crop, and eight acres of which was in standing trees the 4th day of May.

A lady in Marlette claims the proud distinction of being the possessor of the oldest canary bird in that section. The bird is nearly 27 and has lost nearly all its feathers, but when it comes to singing it gets there just the same.

Miss Larkins was bilious and feeble and sick,
And it seemed as if nothing would ever relieve her.
Her liver was clogged with impurities thick,
And her stomach was constantly burning with fever.
Of the great G. M. D. she bought a supply,
And directions for taking pursued to the letter.
'Twas the best thing on earth she could possibly try,
And soon, very soon, Miss Larkins was better.
The G. M. D. which she took was Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, the great remedy for bronchial, throat and lung diseases, sick headache, scrofula, dyspepsia and all diseases that have origin in impure blood and a disordered liver.
The cleansing, antiseptic and healing qualities of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy are unequaled.
They are talking of a World's Fair for 1897 in Berlin.

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An Iowa doctor killed a butcher for not trusting him.

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Wallace Watt, a Reading, Pa., five-year-old, has been left entirely deaf by the grip.

The U. S. Government makes regular purchases of "Tansill's Punch" for the army.

Copyright, 1896.

Said Sarah to Mary:

"Pray, tell me, dear cousin, what can be the matter?
Sure, a few months ago you were fairer and fatter.
Now your cheeks, once so rosy, are sunken and sallow,
Your thin, trembling hands are as useless as tallow;
Your nerves are unstrung, your temper is shaken,
And you act and appear like a woman forsaken."

Said Mary to Sarah:

"Your comments seem rough, but the facts are still rougher,
For nobody knows how acutely I suffer.
I am sick unto death and well nigh desperation,
With female disorders and nervous prostration,
I've doctored and dosed till my stomach is seething
And life hardly seems worth the trouble of breathing."

Said Sarah to Mary:

"Forgive me, my dear, if my comments seem crusty,
And, pray, try a cure that is certain and trusty.
'Tis needless to suffer, to murmur and languish
And pass half your days in such pitiful anguish,
For 'female disorders' of every description
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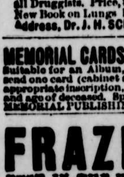

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