

stake, bit off a goodly chew from the fig of black tobacco which he produced from his hip-pocket, and strode away up the grassy wood-road.

For perhaps half an hour the porcupine dozed in the hole among the stones. Then he woke up, crawled out, and moved slowly along the top of the wall.

There was a sound of children's voices coming up the road; but the porcupine, save for a grumble of impatience, paid no attention. Presently the children came in sight, — a stocky little boy of nine or ten, and a lank girl of perhaps thirteen, making their way homeward from school by the short cut over the mountain. Both were barefooted and bare-legged, deeply freckled, and with long, tow-coloured locks. The boy wore a shirt and short breeches of blue-gray homespun, the breeches held up precariously by one suspender. On his head was a tattered and battered straw; and in one hand he swung a little tin dinner-pail. The girl wore the like blue-gray homespun for a petticoat, with a waist of bright red calico, and carried a limp pink sunbonnet on her arm.

"Oh, see the porkypine!" cried the girl, as they came abreast of the stone wall.

"By gosh! Let's kill it!" exclaimed the stocky