



His Last Shot

Two men, guests of a rural hotel, had just come from the dining-room and seated themselves at the further end of the veranda. The day was fast drawing to its close, the golden sunset foretelling fine weather for the morrow.

The elder of the two was commonly known among the patrons of the house as "The Colonel," probably because of his military appearance, as no one knew of his ever having been connected with any military organization.

The other man, a recent arrival, had manifested a desire to get together a hunting party, for the neighborhood was known to afford plenty of sport at that season of the year for the hunting of small game.

Colonel Poole thanked his companion for the invitation to be one of the number, at the same time intimating that such sport did not appeal to him.

"Well, Colonel, you don't seem to be much interested in hunting? Surely you have at some time or other, indulged in it?"

At this juncture they were joined by a third gentleman, who evidently had overheard some of the conversation, as he drew up a chair and addressed the younger man.

"It is evident that you don't know that the colonel used to be a fine shot. I well remember when hunting was about the only recreation he had. It has of late been a matter of some surprise to those who have known him from away back, that he is no longer an enthusiast."

"Well, I'll tell you," rejoined Colonel Poole. "It is some years since I last went hunting, and it is now my intention never to go again. I'll relate a little experience if you would like to hear it. You will then understand why it is that I consider the wanton shooting of game most inhuman and therefore unbecoming in a man."

The speaker paused a moment, noting the look of curiosity on their faces.

"And you would really like to hear my story, the story of my last shot? I assure you, gentlemen, to me it was a most impressive incident, and one that would touch the heart of any man, providing he had a heart not entirely insensible to pity and remorse."

"By all means," said one, "let's hear it. I don't mind shedding a tear or two on occasion."

Colonel Poole waved his hand before his face, seemingly to lift the veil from his memory.

"Ten years ago," he resumed, "I was in a southern city on some business that did not require all my time. So I had plenty of opportunity to get out in the open with my rifle. I was not at that time a confirmed hunter, but I will confess that I enjoyed the sport as well as anyone else. And all the hunting I ever did was merely for the pleasure of killing something. The shooting of a bird, a fox or a rabbit had enough of the adventure in it to pay for the physical exertion and the money expended on such trips."

"One bright afternoon with my gun on my shoulder, I started for the woods. I walked about for some time without seeing anything in the shape of a live target. I finally gave up all hope of getting a shot. Retracing my steps I came out into an open space and immediately heard a bird-call."

"Looking in the direction of the noise I saw two wild doves flying about in the most playful manner, happy and fearless. Quite mechanically I raised my gun and shot one of the birds. I fell to the ground within twenty feet of where I stood. The broken wing and a crimson spot on the breast told too well that my shot had been fatal. I

immediately took aim to bring down the remaining bird. I had scarcely got a bead on him when he suddenly flew to the side of his dead mate, crying in such a piteous manner that I was actually sickened, it so touched my heart. I never heard such sounds come from any creature but children in great fear or distress."

"I placed the stock of my gun on the ground and meditated upon the scene. The male bird fluttered close by the dead body of his dear mate in a futile attempt to arouse her. I was conscious of a sense of condemnation, really feeling guilty of having caused this tragedy. The efforts and continual crying of the bird trying so hard to coo notes of encouragement and assistance—excuse my emotion, but, honest, it was a most pitiful sight. A thousand thoughts ran through my mind, and I asked myself how I would like to have someone shoot my dear companion at home, and thus deprive me of her for the rest of my life."

"Feeling a lump in my throat growing larger and larger, I turned to leave the spot. As I walked away the continual and piercing cries of the widowed bird rang unpleasantly in my ears. I stopped. I could not help it. I returned to the opening, walking directly to within a few feet of the birds, but my presence did not seem to be at all noticed by the male, who, with bill and claws was trying to lift up the dead body. Tears I could not suppress trickled down my cheeks."

"I realized that the all-seeing eye that notices the fall of the sparrow was at that moment looking down upon us, and an unseen finger seemed to be pointing to me as murderer. I had committed a crime in the sight of heaven; I had broken one of God's commandments and killed one of His creatures."

"What was I to do? The agony of the situation became unbearable and in desperation I resolved to put the remaining bird out of misery. Taking up my gun, I gently poked the live bird with the end of the barrel, wishing to frighten him into flight before shooting him. But the bird actually seemed to invite death, for he persisted in clinging to his dead mate. I did not prolong the agony of the hero of this affair, nor my own discomfiture. I pulled the trigger and shot him dead."

"In the great beyond, if there are animals and birds in eternal paradise, as Martin Luther told his children once when they cried over the loss of a kitten, I trust those two doves are re-united, safe from the heartless wretch who shoots and kills for the fun of it."

For many minutes after the Colonel had finished his story, the silence was broken only by the songs of the distant whippoorwills.

The owl cannot move its eye in the socket, but in order to compensate for this absence of motion the bird is able to turn its head round in almost a complete circle without moving its body.

The following wireless message has been received by Mr. George Rowland, Connecticut: "Indian Harbor, via Cape Race, Nfld.: Arrived safely—How are you all? (Signed) JOHN ROWLAND."

This is the message flashed by wireless from Indian Harbor, Labrador, telling of the safe arrival of the daring young Yale man who had the forty-foot hospital tender 'Yale' built along lines suggested by himself, raised the cost of construction by personal subscription and then with a crew of students took the boat from Booth Bay, Maine, along some of the worst coast in the world, and turned it over to Dr. Grenfell, the Labrador missionary, as a wedding present, to be used in the Labrador work.

WHAT EDUCATION DOES THE FARMER NEED?

Dear Editor:—I suppose the rest of the fellows are like me—they cannot keep their eyes open long enough to write a letter to the club when they come in from harvest work.

I quit school in June and guess I won't go back again. I guess I've got enough schooling for a farmer, though the editor will know I can't spell very good. We had a dandy teacher last year. She wasn't one of your scared kind. She could play baseball, and she didn't mind snow-balling in the winter. I liked her because she called me "Bill," and the other teachers always said "Willie," as if they were talking to a baby. She lent me a book called Silent Places, that would give some of you hunters an idea of what life in the woods is like. It is all about Canada, too.

This is about all for this time. Sask. BILL. (Your spelling wasn't just the very best I have ever seen. It seems a pity to stop school before it is absolutely necessary. By the way, I'd like to hear the opinion of the other boys as to how much education a farmer needs, and what kind of education. Need the farmer be an ignoramus?—Ed.)

WESTERN WIGWAM

THE HANDY TELEPHONE

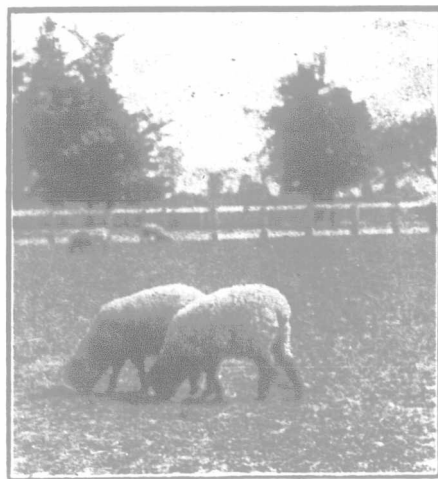
Dear Cousin Dorothy,—I live on the farm and like it very well. I have a cow of my own and I milk her every night, but not in the morning. We have four cows milking. We have two pigs and eight oxen, fifty-five cattle and three calves. We have the telephone, but we did not have it in a month yet. Mother and father went to town to-day and I phoned up to them. The telephone is very handy. Man. SUNFLOWER.

DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE PICNIC

Dear Cousin Dorothy,—I go to school every day that I can but now it is summer holidays. We have three miles and a half to go to school. Our picnic was supposed to be yesterday but Mrs. W— took sick and Miss W— had to go and nurse her. They are both a great help to a picnic and we couldn't do without them. They think we will have a little picnic this year. Alta. GLADYS McRAE.

SOME MEMBERS MISSED

Dear Cousins,—I saw my last letter in print in the Wigwam and I think I will write another. I think we had better hurry if we want to leave the Boys' Club behind. I guess the boys will leave our club for a while now. They ought to help us out yet a bit, I think. The Western cousins know how bad a year it is for the grain. Our fall wheat is very good but the other grain is not. How many of the cousins were careless enough to lose their pins? I lost mine and I am very sorry. I think some of our good letterwriters must have passed the age limit. I miss Fizzle Top's letters very much. I am reading the new story, "The Green Paper Doll," and I enjoy it very



THE TWINS.

much. I did not read "The Golden Dog" because there was so much French in it. Our school opens August 15th. I think our holidays passed very quickly. I suppose many of the cousins had two months. How did you all spend the vacation? My cousin is visiting us now.

Did any of you go to Winnipeg to the exhibition? I have not much news this time but will write soon again if this letter misses the wastepaper basket.

I would like to correspond with Clarence Dobbin if he is willing to do so. I will write first if he wishes me to. I am twelve years old. Alta. JENNY WREN.

A FUNNY NAME

Dear Cousin Dorothy,—This is my first letter to the Western Wigwam. My father has taken THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE for about four years. I have four brothers and one sister. We have twenty-one head of cattle, twelve head of horses and colts, and a pony whose name is Polly. I am sending a two cent stamp for a button. We have a lot of garden in this year. Alta. MR.-STICK-IN-THE-MUD.

RAILWAY THROUGH THE FARM

Dear Cousin Dorothy,—I wrote once before but did not see it in print, so I suppose it reached the W.P.B. We live on a farm sixty miles from Moose Jaw, and the railway goes through our land. I go to school, and my studies are arithmetic, reading, spelling, grammar, geography, history, writing and composition. I will tell you what we have on the farm: Five horses, four cows, eight pigs, two calves and some poultry. There are 28 scholars at our school now and it is increasing. Good luck to the club! Sask. GOLDEN LEAF.

HER FIRST LETTER

Dear Cousin Dorothy,—This is my first letter to your club. My brother has taken the ADVOCATE for a long time and he likes the paper. He has a farm of his own. My father is dead, and I have a brother seventeen years old that looks after the farm. I am twelve years old and I am in standard four. I have three sisters and four brothers alive and two brothers dead. I will close for this time, hoping to receive a button. Alta. CLARA CORBETT.

A GOOD RECORD

Dear Cousin Dorothy,—This is my second letter to THE ADVOCATE, and as I saw my first one in print I thought I would write again.

Our school is closed now for the holidays. Our teacher's name is Miss P—. She is an English lady. She is going to teach our school another year. The children like her very much. We had an examination at the close of the school and my average was the best of anyone in school. It was 92 out of 100. I was examined in nine branches. I have one sister and two brothers and we all go to school. My grandma lives near the school and when it's cold we stay with her.

We spent Dominion Day at a large lake near us. We children went in for a wade. I am sending a two cent stamp and would like to get a button. Alta. OLD SPECK.

ON A SCOTTISH FARM

Dear Cousin Dorothy,—This is my first letter to the Wigwam, and I hope to see it in print. I am very fond of reading the interesting letters. Mother gets the FARMER'S ADVOCATE sent from a friend in Canada. We have a nice farm here of about 300 acres, and grow wheat, beans, barley, corn, potatoes, turnips and hay. We have eight work horses, two colts, and a pony, which is used either for driving or riding. I go to school, and am in the sixth standard. I got second prize for an essay on kindness to animals. I would like to correspond with any girl about my own age (twelve). I am very fond of my lessons, and of reading. I play pianoforte and violin, and have just passed my elementary exam. in piano, obtaining a first-class certificate.

I have no brothers or sisters. Scotland. ANNIE D. H. ANDERSON. (Hope you'll get some nice correspondents.—C. D.)