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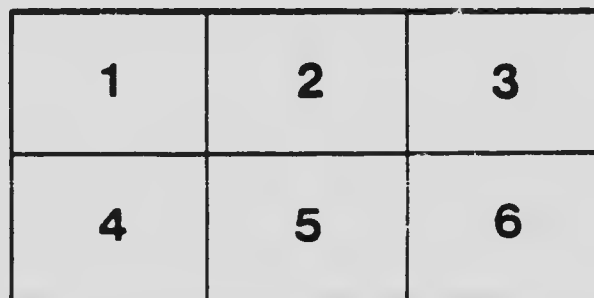
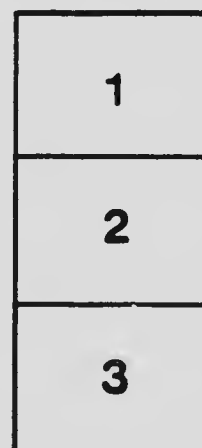
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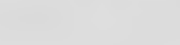
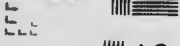
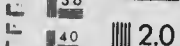
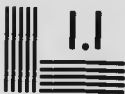
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Maple Core



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MAPLE LORE

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2000



SUGAR MAPLE - *Acer Saccharum*

MAPLE LORE

BY

ANNIE L. JACK

AUTHOR OF

THE CANADIAN GARDEN
THE LITTLE ORGANIST OF ST. JEROME



MONTREAL:
A. T. CHAPMAN
1910

To the memory of a nature lover,
whose busy hands planted
many maples.



MAPLE LORE

Canada's Cherished Emblem

A WONDERFUL tree is the maple, often reaching a height of 120 feet, and with over forty varieties, but of these thirty are found in Asia and but nine species in North America.

In Canada we prize most the Sugar or Rock Maple for its sweets, and the Red or Swamp Maple for its coloring. The classical Latin name is *Acer*, meaning "a point," on account of the wood being sought after to manufacture into picks and lances. The grain of maple wood is very beautiful and much used for violin cases, in fact, for all cabinet work.

England is very proud of her Oaks, poets have sung of the historic Elm, and spreading Chestnut tree, but Canada displays in mid-October the gorgeous coloring of the Maple forest that is an enchanted realm, with a beauty all its own.

This splendor, recognized as part of a Canadian landscape, is due to the brilliant coloring of the Swamp Maple as well as the Sugar Maple, each glowing in varying shades from scarlet to crimson yellow that grows dark and tints of purple amid the green.

The coloring of the leaves depends largely upon the summer's growth, for if these months have been dry and hot, the tints are not so bright as after a rainy season that has kept the leaves full of sap.

Forest leaves have their use as well as beauty, and it is within the memory of many a country boy of an older generation how they were gathered during the Saturday afternoons of October and stowed away as winter bedding for the animals on the farm.

This work of gathering the leaves was considered a pastime to be shared, and the boys with rakes and barrows, with plenty of coarse bags, went to the nearby woods for their load.

The golden sunlight shone over hill and valley, the earth seemed full of rich coloring there was a smell of decaying leaves among other autumnal odors, that remained in after-years a memory of the time.

Even walking the streets of the city in mid-October, when the leaves gathered along the edge of the sidewalk from the over-arching trees, there never failed to come a vision of woodland haunts and the delights of the dim but unforgotten past. A mystical charm is in those faded leaves, type of the autumn of the year and life.

The Red or Swamp Maple is a charming sight in spring as well as in autumn, for its scarlet flowers flush in the April sunshine and in the early summer it sends its winged seeds far and wide over the forest, where they sprout readily and form new shapely trees.

A peculiarity about the Swamp Maple that may be puzzling to a novice, is the fact that it is apt to vary in the shape of its leaves. For this reason it has been divided into varieties, but this inconstant character renders it uncertain. For instance, one red maple may have large thin fine-lobed leaves while the neighboring tree in the same soil may have thick leaves with only three lobes; all possess, however, the beauty of coloring that characterizes this variety.

It was doubtless from this attractive setting that the pioneers who made their homes in the uncleared forest were first induced to adopt the maple tree and its beautiful foliage as their national emblem.

For the leaf in its autumnal shading has long been Canada's cherished emblem, and there is now in the Chateau de Ramezay in Montreal, a flag that was carried by the

patriots of 1837, on which is displayed a branch of nineteen maple leaves as part of its national characteristics.

It was first proposed by Ludger Duvernay, founder of the St-Jean-Baptiste Association, as its insigna, in 1833.



IN THE HEART OF THE SILENT WOODS

Finally it was adopted as the special emblem of Canadian nationality, at a public dinner presided over by the Hon. Jacques Viger, then Mayor of Montreal, which was held in Mr. John McDonnell's garden, in St. Antoine street, on the 24th June, 1834, and fresh leaves of the maple, taken from the trees, were worn by every guest.

From that small company has spread the national spirit that later adopted "The Maple Leaf Forever."

The Flowering Maple Tree.

Ere dandelions dot the grass,
When Maple buds are blowing,
To scarlet tassels as we pass
And fresh young leaves are growing,
With soft spring air by breezes fanned—
Wafted o'er land and sea,
We say " God bless our native land
And the flowering maple tree."

In summer where the branches meet
In woodlands' shaded bowers,
Its healing whispers ever greet
And breathe of peaceful hours,
And when the autumn waves its wand
And gorgeous tints we see,
Once more we bless our native land
And the flowering maple tree.

Ah! bare it stands in wintry blast,
Serene and unafraid,
Though storms will beat 'neath skies o'ercast
The tree is not dismayed.
Type of the sturdy Northern band,
Such loyal hearts they be,
Who love so well their native land
And the flowering maple tree.

“The Sweet o’ the Year.”

COUNTRY life in Canada has a rare charm in the month of April, bringing as it does forgetfulness of the winter storms, and compensation for waiting.

There dawns a morning with the suggestion of spring in the air, some one hears a bird, the maple trees seem ready to waken with gently swelling buds, and bare spots of dark earth are seen along the hillsides amid melting snow.

It is not the fault of the generous maple tree if the world is not well sweetened, for it dispenses its sap with lavish generosity during these April days.

If you break a twig the sweetened water follows, if you tap the trunk of the tree your thirst can be quenched by a draught of pure sap fresh from its heart.

Then it is that the work of syrup and sugar-making begins, and to the uninitiated there is a weird charm in changing this limpid water into the sugar of commerce, in the open air factory of the woods.

Have you ever been to the maple wood lot, reader, when a gay party of young people tramped through the slushy snow to a sugaring off?

If not, you have missed some of the exhilarating pleasure that forms the wine of life. For the spring air gets into your blood, the laughter of the light-hearted is contagious, and the world seems newly born.

Life in a sugar camp induces appetite, and at a sugaring-off picnic, nothing sweet is needed, for one imbibes it in the very air.

But in the ashes of the great fire-place, where the sap is boiling, you can roast potatoes, and in a little of the sap eggs are boiled. The stomach craves acids and salts in such an

atmosphere, so pickles or herrings are welcome dainties, while ham is broiled on a crotchet stick before the blazing fire. Tea and coffee from the most delicate china never tasted half so delicious as when made in a tin pail hung by a string from a rafter of the cabin, just low enough to reach the pan of boiling fluid, being made with sap instead of water.

With a big run of the precious water it requires constant attention, and as night comes on the fire tender replenishes his bed in the driest corner, with fresh hemlock boughs; but it is not safe to be caught napping for the syrup has a trick of boiling over.

By this time the guests are ready to leave, but before starting there must be a farewell feast called "waxing," each one having a small wooden paddle and a dish holding snow from some belated drift.

The thick, hot, brown syrup poured upon this cools quickly, and can be eaten, or carried away on the paddle, as a treat to less fortunate friends.

How pleasant the homeward journey only those who have experienced can describe—probably there has been enough frost to make the road paths passable, and the trees look mysterious, rising in the dim light like pillars of an endless cathedral, with their grey white trunks.

If it is one of the clear moonlight evenings there will be a fascinating charm of light and shadow that enthralls the senses, and the stars flash and glitter through entwined branches.

The crunching of the ice under the footfalls, the hoot of an owl disturbed by the unwonted sounds, breaks the otherwise intense silence, soon the open is reached and the pleasant hours in the very heart of the "sweet o' the year" are over.

It is not really known when the Indians first discovered that the maple tree possessed such treasured sweetness, though there is a story that an observing brave, watched a squirrel

taking a drink from a broken branch and was tempted to try it himself. But it is known that in the latter part of the 17th century the red men made diagonal cuts in the trunks of these trees, drawing a concave piece of bark into its lower end, to convey the liquid into a bark trough.

The sap was boiled down in clay vessels, by repeatedly dropping stones into it that had been heated red hot in a brushwood fire.

A settler, captured by the Indians as far back as 1755, carried the discovery to others when he made his escape, telling how they stored the sap in troughs made of elm bark, often a hundred gallons capacity, and converted it into sugar by freezing it in shallow vessels of bark, throwing out the ice until sufficient water was removed to allow it to syrup and then to crystalize.

So the white settlers tapped the trees, using before long an auger in place of the destructive axe; and wooden spouts, the work of the boys during the winter, were employed in the work. Wooden troughs were set to catch the sweet water as it followed, drip—drip, into the receptacle, and the big potash kettles were scoured and set in place against immense logs, then in a day or two gathering began in earnest.

Each boy or man wore a neck yoke and carried two heavy pails, stopping at each tree to collect the sap and filling large casks with it when the kettle was full. Sometimes there was a heavy flow of sap, often about Easter week, and the boiling had to be continued all night to make room for the next day's run.

There was a weird fascination in those experiences, for besides the task of chopping the wood was the fun of poking the fire, sending sparks up into the darkness and hearing the sticks crackle, while the bark of a fox or the screech of an owl sounded eerie enough to the listening boys in the otherwise silent forest, as they dozed and worked.



SAP GATHERING

The boiling liquid had to be skimmed with long handled ladles and then came the fun of sugaring off. More sap was added and the brown stream thickened and threatened to boil over, but was prevented by pouring into the seething mass a little cold sweet milk kept in a bottle and always at hand as a calming influence.

Then was wafted a delicious odor that spread over the woods a long distance, the syrup thickened, the kettle was swung off the logs and its contents strained through flannel cloths and ready to be carried home in pails.

It was a gracious boon to the white settlers when cane sugar was scarce and high-priced.

Now-a-days there is a shining tin bucket at each tree and a patent galvanized spout conducts the sap to it.

Iron pans were used first in place of the old kettle and a roof made for shelter with a fireplace built in.



BOILING

But modern ingenuity has reached the maple bush and an evaporator, generally about 6 inches deep, 40 inches wide and from 10 to 18 feet long, has been established. The sap flow is carefully regulated, going from the storage tank to the evaporator at one end, flowing slowly across the pan from side to side and around its partitions till it reaches the far end, when it has gained the density required.

The old fireplace has given way to the portable arch made of iron and lined with fire brick, while the neatly built sugar house is more comfortable than was the living one of our ancestors, and the gathering is no longer by neckyoke and buckets, but with a team of steady horses drawing a tank on the sled.

But with the commercializing of the maple tree the charm of sugar making is no longer known, and the pale limpid liquid somehow lacks the flavor that went with the woody sweetness, darker and richer of that earlier making.

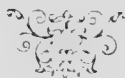
Trees that are thirty or forty years old are considered most productive, though there are instances of some that have yielded sugar every year for a century and are still full of vigor.

India has a bread tree, South America boasts a milk tree, but Canada grows for us the purest sugar and the most delicious syrup.

Resurgam.

In woodlands when the maples glow,
Loosen their leaves, that fluttering fall,
Their crimson banners lying low ;
Sadly we question "Is this all?"

But Nature squanders not her powers,
Like trees—when past earth's storm and strife ;
Comes—after winter's silent hours,
"The Resurrection and the Life."



The Maple Family.

THEY were quite a large family the maples, and the several branches differed very much in their position and usefulness in the world. Though their name was "Acer" there were many distinguishing titles among them that told their character or history.

For instance, the Striped Maple is often called Moosewood, because moose are very fond of the bark and branches, completely stripping them on account of the sweet taste in the young and tender shoots.

The Mountain Maple is very similar, indeed to the novice in tree lore, the fruits of all this Acer family are very much alike, and the seed wings are thin and papery on the upper margin and thick on the lower, so they do not fly far but settle in the ground to fulfil their mission by germination.

The two varieties of Acer here mentioned in "Maple Lore," as of most importance in Canada, are the Red and Sugar Maple, that ripen their seeds at the end of a few weeks after blossoming, while other varieties are ripened in the autumn, or even the following spring.

Of the beautiful Red Maple that Nature loves, Thoreau wrote :

"A small Red Maple has grown perchance unobserved at the head of some retired valley, a mile from any road. It has faithfully discharged all the duties of a maple tree, all winter and summer, neglected none of its economies, but added to its stature in the virtue which belongs to a maple by a steady growth for so many months, and is nearer heaven than it was in the spring.

"It has faithfully husbanded its sap, and afforded a shelter to the wandering bird, has long since ripened its seeds and committed them to the winds.

"It deserves well of Mapledom. Its leaves have been asking it from time to time in a whisper, 'When shall we redden?' and now in this month of September, this month of travelling, when men are hastening to the seaside, or the mountains, or the lakes, this modest maple, still without budging an inch, travels on its reputation, runs up its scarlet flag on that hillside, which shows that it has finished its summer's work before all other trees, and so withdraws from the contest.

"At the eleventh hour of the year, the tree which no scrutiny could have detected here when it was most industrious is thus, by dint of its maturity, by its very blushes, revealed at last to the careless and distant traveller, and leads his thoughts away from the dusty road into those brave solitudes which it inhabits; it flashes out conspicuous with all the virtue and beauty of a maple '*Acer rubrum*.' We may know its title, or rubric, clear."

The Norway Maple is a city tree quite at home growing by the curbstone, and somewhat resembling the Sugar Maple only the leaves are thicker, which causes the shade to be more dense. It holds its leaves two weeks longer than native varieties, as does the Sycamore Maple, a tree that belongs to Central Europe, but was introduced into England in the time of Queen Elizabeth. It does not take kindly to our climate however, and is short lived where winters are rigorous. A very democratic tree is the Box Elder or Ash-leaved Maple, that is so largely planted in the treeless West, being quick of growth, and on the plains it cheerfully waves its compound leaves and becomes a benediction to the inhabitants.

A tree that responds to fair treatment with marvellous rapidity, and thrives in shaded places, we may as well give it credit for good intentions in spite of the wiseacres who judge it plebian, for after all it fulfils its mission, giving of

its best in places where many trees would not survive, and what more can we ask of tree or man?

The maples are famous for the curled and bird's eye markings of the timber that is especially found in old trees.

Alas! for the cupidity and carelessness of man, who allows the destruction of the forests that contain such useful and beautiful trees.

In the days of the early settlers they were cut down for firewood through ignorance of their value, but in this century there is no such excuse, for it is well known that the lumber is much sought and valued for steamship interiors, for railway cars, and for house decoration, bird's eye maple being an especial favorite.

And the large family of Aeer have made themselves famous and beloved, but all admit that among the many charming and useful varieties Aeer Saccharum is without a peer.



THE OLD CABIN



EXPERIMENTS IN PRESSURE.

The Professor in the Maple Woods.

THE Forestry Professor was appointed to take his students to the mountains for practical demonstration the last of March and the first week in April.

They were to camp out for ten days in the "forest primeval" and he did not much relish the idea, being troubled with more than a ghost of rheumatism and a sincere love for home.

But the "powers that be" had decreed that there was much to learn in the great forest, and the maples were selected for special observation.

Robins were there already, crows saucy and mischievous made themselves heard, and when they reached Farmer Broadland's hillside sugar bush, he and his two sons were busy collecting sap for the making of maple sugar.

Nestling among the mossy roots of some giant trees were the starry eyes of *Anemone Hepatica*, where a dozen slender stems were rising from the liver-colored leaves, the blossoms opening shy and lovely in all the delicate tints from white and mauve to purple. The Professor stopped to admire them and said, "This is surely the flower of the resurrection with its persistent vitality, the silvery buds furry as the paws of a white kitten—and its flowers arising out of the earth. Our Dutch ancestors named it "Paas Blumtje," and it blossoms early, the harbinger of spring."

The students gave a mild attention to the words of the Professor who was apt to be a little sentimental about flowers, and stood with his cap pushed back from his face, absorbing the sun's rays.

He was enjoying the pure air, the woody smell all around, and finding a sub-conscious joy in the tinkle of

the sap as it sounded a musical drip, drip into the shining empty cans.

For he was a farmer's son and the scene brought back many tender memories, but it is quite certain the students were more interested in the half-boiled sap that Sammy Broadlands carried round for them to drink, than in the words of wisdom that fell from the Professor's lips, or the taking of notes for later "exams."

"Gentlemen," he said, casting a lenient glance over the group, "You will observe that in spring as the snow melts away and the ground thaws, the rate of absorption by the roots is increased. But no leaves have appeared at this time, so there is no transpiration, and this leads to a more rapid accumulation, or gathering together of water in the warm days of spring, before the appearance of the leaves, than is found later in the season.

The greatest sap flow does not occur at the time the most water is contained in the tree, for there is more at the beginning of the season than at the close, though more water is at that time in the tissues.

Some students wondered about this flow of sap and if there was a known difference between "up" and "down" pressure.

Experimenting with one tree, by permission of the farmer, the Professor produced some gages that soon registered on their dials the amount of pressure, explaining that early in the season the greatest pressure and flow are observed from above, downward, while on poor days and late in the season, it is from below, upward.

Good sap days come immediately after a sharp frost, and such temperature develops strong pressure in the trunk of the tree, and ensures a movement of sap distribution.

There was an inquiry from the students as to whether the

sugar maples yielded more sap when growing on ridges and uplands or when located in damp, moist situations. This question was answered by the farmer, who stated that there was a large excess of sap, and consequently of sugar, obtained from trees located on lower grounds, and that sunshine affected the flow in either places.

A student who became interested in trying to distinguish the hard from the soft maple while leafless, asked if the sugar of the latter compared with that made from the former, and the farmer agreed that while they could hold their own in quantity, the trees of the soft maple did not endure tapping as frequently as the hard maple.

A junior seeing some frozen sap asked if it was of any use, and the farmer's son admitted that they threw it away. But the Professor called this a wasteful practice, as the average of many trials proved that about thirty per cent. of the sugar was contained in the ice.

Knowing this fact the Indians made thick syrup by repeated freezing of the sap, when they were sole masters of the silent woods, and so concentrated their work.

"How much sap to a pound of sugar? queried Farmer Broadlands, why it differs, a 16 quart pail full will do it, if the sap is rich in sweetness."

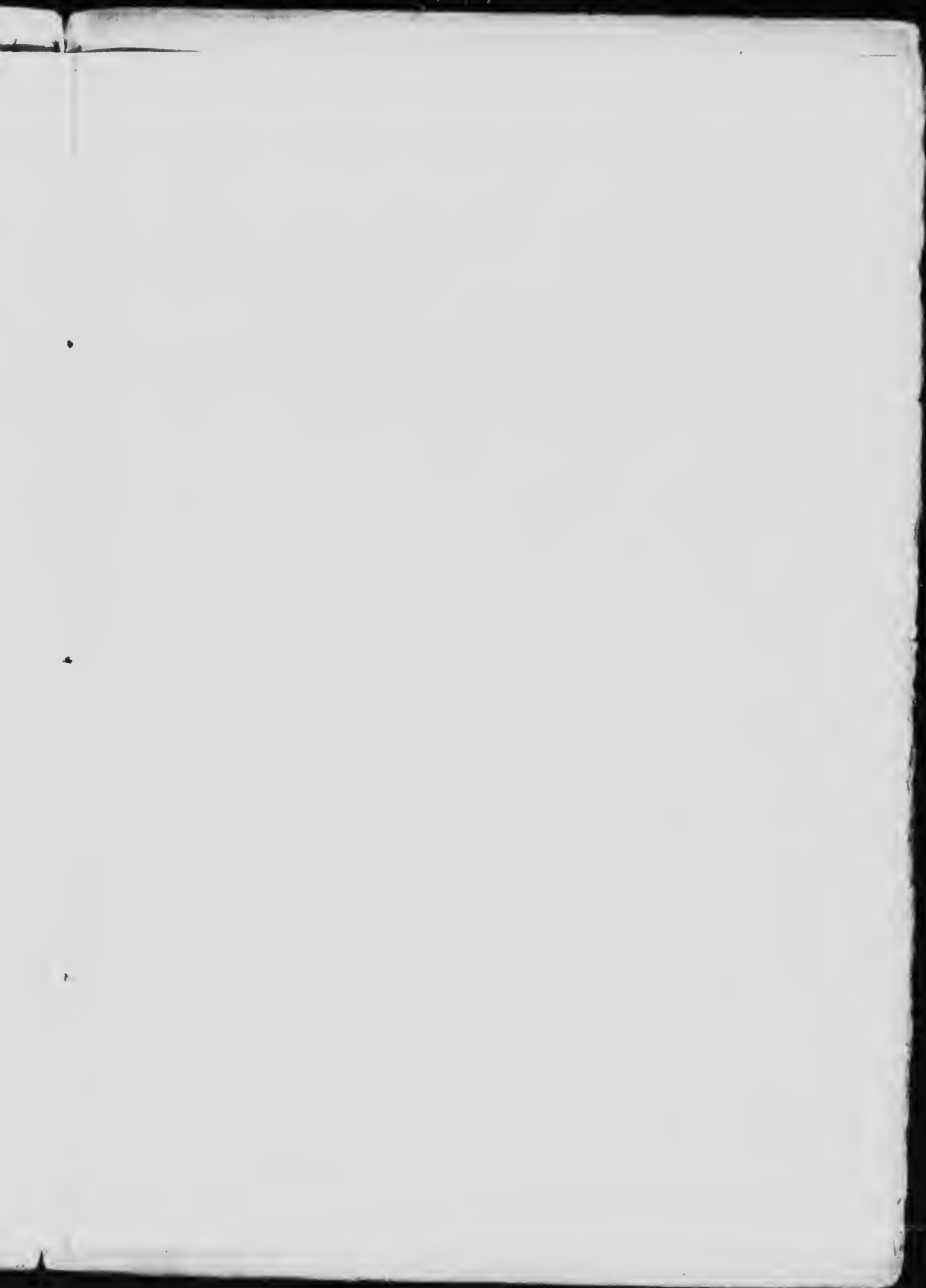
Gradually working their way to the sugar house the students lined up within its steam-laden enclosure and surveyed the different processes of turning the sweetened water into a toothsome confection. Here the farmer's two pretty daughters were found busily "sugaring off," while some of the boiled syrup was made into maple wax, as it is called, being a maple toffy hardened in the snow. If hard boiled it snaps in brittle strands when taken from the snow, if soft boiled it is a rich velvety confection, chilled, but holding the subtle flavor of the maple.

It was interesting to watch the boilers of steaming golden syrup advancing by sections towards completion.

Some hard boiled eggs, bubbling in a pot of sap, were laddled out by the girls, and they were demurely sympathetic if by chance an unwary student burned his fingers in an effort to grasp the coveted dainty. These with soda biscuits formed the staple of the sugar camp hospitality.

The Professor sat in a day-dream, with a lump of maple wax on the end of a wooden paddle, until the time came to return to camp, when he handed it to a junior with the remark: "I am not so hungry for sweets as when I was your age." This, with his slow alluring smile, was what endeared him to the students, the little thoughtful acts for others that few men remember. As they splashed through the woods the melting pools were turned into golden lakes in the gleam of the sunset sky, and more than one student was heard to remark that "Maple forestry was not half bad when it led to such pleasant results."





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