

Green Mountain Freeman

MONTPELIER, VT., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1881. VOL. XXXVIII. NO. 32.

"I saw the sled straining there, and I couldn't bear to see it so all through Sunday."

Mr. Morse was the possessor of an old ram which, without just provocation, had more than once caused Daniel to realize the hardness of his head. Daniel's discriminating sense of justice urged him to inflict some punishment. Venturing one evening at dusk to pass through a corner of the sheep pasture, he spied at a little distance what he made out to be the old ram asleep. He saw his horns and knew just where the head lay. What a chance!

The ram was so near the fence that Daniel could give him a good kick and scamp out of reach before the old fellow would recover from his astonishment. The boy crept up cautiously and inflicted a good rousing kick upon the ram, but a granite boulder. Oh, the poor bare foot! But "mammy" had compassion and bound it up tenderly. One thing was gained, however.

Never afterwards did the boy's imagination, as that of most children will, magnify imperfectly discerned objects into terrible animals or uncouth shapes. He would always announce his cool reason to his aid.

In 1799, as Mrs. Morse and Daniel stood in the doorway one day, Mr. Morse came riding home from "the meeting house," i. e., the village at the center of the town; they noticed he was crying.

"Mother," thus he always addressed his wife, and now his words came broken, "the father of our country is dead."

"What! General Washington is not dead?"

"Yes," he said, "the father of our country." And he went upon his horse. Mrs. Morse burst out crying, and Daniel, from sympathy, cried too.

The happy state of affairs with this household was not to continue. To be sure they lived very simply—there was not a china plate in the neighborhood. Mrs. Morse possessed two or three large pewter plates which she scoured bright with rashes gathered by Daniel; but further than this, besides iron pots, could set forth only a few wooden trenchers. But Daniel had found a mother in Mrs. Morse. The youngest daughter had married a Dr. Dennison, and the old people had made the oft-committed error of thinking that they would be happier if relieved from all cares of property, and had only an assurance of support for life. The farm was conveyed by deed to Dr. Dennison, and trouble began. As Daniel lay in his trundle bed at night, he heard Mr. and Mrs. Morse talk over their grievances, chief among which was his own ill treatment by Dennison. Mrs. Morse, too, would frequently go out into the field and help him finish a hard stint set by his master. Question soon arose as to Daniel's support, and rather than surrender him to the severe treatment of Dennison the good old couple felt called upon to part with him. He was then nine and one-half years old, and went to reside in Berlin (Vermont), with his sister and her husband, Israel Dewey.

The new home on Dog river in Berlin was reached, as already signified, in the year 1802 (February). Daniel's brother-in-law had begun here in the wilderness only a short time before. He had effected a clearing of four or five acres, and had erected a log house and barn. It was the first farm in Berlin on the west side of Dog river, as you come from Northfield, and seven miles from Montpelier, then a vigorous settlement, though it had but two houses west of Worcester branch. The road to and beyond the house towards Northfield Falls was impassable to wagons, supposing there had been any, which there were not. It was such a road as the farmer makes into the woods for his logs. The nearest neighbor down the river was Seth Johnston, one and a half miles. Up the river two miles was Mr. Carpenter. East, on Irish hill, it is true there was a habitation distant only one mile, but for all practical purposes it was further away than the other, for there was no road. Passers-by, of course, were rare. The tones of wild animals were heard more frequently than was the human voice. Daniel slept in the garret, reached by a ladder, close under the bark roof. Snow drifted in through the ill-fitting bark. He covered his head at such times and in the morning found the drifts tick on the bed clothes. There was great need of work in this kind of life, and boys began early to do according to their capacities. The first spring Daniel assisted at a netting sugar. The boiling was done in a kettle in the open air, and for sap tubs halves of basswood logs were hollowed out and placed to prevent leakage through the pores. The regular business directly after the "crops were in," was to clear a new piece. The number of acres freed from the forest marked the pioneer's prosperity.

In the summer it was one of Daniel's duties to observe when the sun reached the top of a certain tree and then drive home the cows from the woods, where they ran in lieu of a pasture. One night after a long search the boy suddenly realized he had lost his way. Two or three attempts to follow a straight line in what he thought the homeward direction had resulted in a return upon his path. It was growing dark alarmingly fast. Lion, the dog, was fortunately with him. He made up his mind he must pass the night in the woods, climbing a spruce tree, made as comfortable and safe as he could as possible among the branches, and tried to make Lion, who was whining at the base of the tree, understand he was to remain and not desert his young master. How still that night was! The dog was quiet! "Tink-tink-tink" came very faintly to his ears. Surely that was the bell on old "Lineback!"

"Hear the bell, Lion? Can you fetch the cows?"

He bounded away. Daniel called him back, descended, and, by listening carefully to the whining of the dog, he pushed forward to the top of the spruce tree, and was finally found lying patiently chewing their ends. The regular movement of "Lineback's" jaws had caused the bell to send forth the faint notes. The cow knew the way home and started off in a direction contrary to Daniel's judg-

ment. He trusted them, however, seized lightly hold of "Lineback's" tail, and did not relax his grasp till he reached home.

One day Daniel was picking blackberries on the west side of the "Falls" in a new-burnt place. He heard the brush crack under a heavy tread. He looked up. There stood a bear. The boy screamed, and the bear, the more frightened party of the two, tore away through the woods at a furious rate.

"I've seen a bear! I've seen a bear!" shouted Daniel running to the house.

"Have you?" said brother Dewey. "How long was his tail?"

"So long," replied Daniel, measuring the length of his arm. The boy had caught a glimpse of the bear's hind leg as he leaped over a log.

Mr. Dewey, however, was not long to possess the advantage in banter, which this incident afforded him.

Dog river at this time was full of magnificent trout. There was a dam of drift wood near the house which prevented the large fish from getting any further up stream. Mr. Dewey and Daniel, seeing those large fish below the dam, had frequently tried every kind of bait to induce them to bite, but in vain. One noon, while Mr. Dewey took his afternoon nap, Daniel strayed in the direction of the river. As he neared the dam, he heard a splashing of water, and discovered that three large trout, alarmed at his approach, were floundering in great haste towards the river from a cold spring near the bank, the outlet of which furnished their scanty means of locomotion. An idea occurred to him in a moment. The weather was hot and the trout would be attracted to his cold spring again. He fitted a wide piece of hemlock bark into the channel of the outlet so as to operate like a sliding water-gate, and left it up. The next day, at the same hour, taking his fish pole, he crept thither cautiously, by a roundabout way from the other side of the river across the dam, drove his bark gate into place by a quick blow, and found he had three magnificent trout prisoners. He captured them in his hands, marched triumphantly to the house, and answered Mr. Dewey's wondering inquiries by saying he "had got so he knew how to catch fish." Mr. Dewey was immediately possessed with a great desire to feel some of these spotted beauties on his own line, and betook himself to the river. He did not make his appearance in the field where Daniel was making hay for two or three hours, and gave the pursued a chance to gain a little distance on them, but soon the whole pack came howling on again. The poor boy had now run a mile and was almost ready to sink with exhaustion; the perspiration poured down his legs. He had reached the foot of a hill about a quarter of a mile from home, and made up his mind that, unless he could keep off the wolves with his firebrand, they must eat him; he could not run further. The infuriated animals were close about him, but still dared not come within the magic circle of the firebrand. Arrived at the top he struck up a trot till he reached home. As he neared the clearing the wolves fell off, conscious they had lost their prey.

Mr. and Mrs. Dewey stood at the door.

"There, I told you he would come." She had urged her husband to go down the road to meet Daniel; but having no gun, and saying he was sure Mr. Johnston would not let the boy attempt the passage, he had not gone. Old "Lion" was so frightened he could not set a rod from them.

They made the cattle and everything about the house as secure as possible and went to bed. The next morning there were tracks of the brutes about the house, and, following them to the river, they found hair and blood-stained snow where a deer had been killed and eaten.

Out of this incident grew the "great wolf hunt" on Irish hill, which took place the next Saturday.

Mr. Dewey was a cabinet maker by trade and, in the winter, Daniel worked with him in the shop. The dog river farm, however, was not a good location for business and, in the fall of 1803, Mr. Dewey sold out and moved to Berlin Corner, into a house—the only one within half a mile—situated on the east side of the pond at the farther end of the present little village. There was a saw mill near the outlet of the pond, where the saw mill now is. Mr. Dewey opened a tavern, and was appointed postmaster. The meeting house was about a half mile west of the corner, and there, also, was the school house, where Daniel attended that winter.

The tavern business, by reason of proximity to Montpelier, was not extensive. The first regular stopping place on the way to Boston by this road was Judge Paine's in Willimansett. Daniel, however, was frequently called to wait upon customers. The charges were three cents for baiting horses with hay, and twelve cents for four quarts of oats. He also attended the postoffice. The postage to Burlington was ten cents; to Boston, eighteen and three-fourths cents; to New York, twenty-five cents.

About this time it was discovered that Berlin pond was well stocked with trout, which had all sprung from a few introduced by James Lynde four or five years previous.

The military spirit, which makes the early history of Vermont so interesting, was still strong in the neighborhood, and great pride was taken in the militia company of which Daniel was made orderly sergeant. The other officers were: A. Green, Wm. Perrin, lieutenant; Luther Stewart, ensign. On parade day at the Corner, the juvenile company made a good show. There were many people present, and the sons of "Squire" Bailey came on the grounds and peddled apples. The idea of peddling apples did not suit the notions of the rough but open-handed yeomen. Daniel and his companions, moreover, had learned to look with slight disfavor on the Bailey boys, because they went to a church different from their's—such was the Puritan strictness in those days. Anyway, Daniel and his friends, having determined to put a stop to the peddling of apples, procured a horse and cart and drove to the house of Capt. Ayers on "Bible street." Mr. Ayers gave them all the apples they wished; and the captain, who drove up before they got away, put an additional barrelful into their cart, told them to drive straight on the grounds, pour their apples out on the grass and invite everybody to help himself.

When Daniel was fourteen years old he chose for a guardian his brother Sylvanus Baldwin, who was ten years his senior and was then a prosperous carpenter and

joined in Montpelier, whither Daniel came to learn the trade. Sylvanus lived in a house built by himself, which stood on Main street, where the residence of Mr. Geo. Jacobs now is. Directly opposite, on the now vacant lot, next to Mr. David Fuller's residence, lived Captain Thomas Reed, father of Thomas and Ezekiel Reed. The next year, which was 1807, Mr. Samuel-Goss moved into the house which is now Eneas Hubbard's. The academy stood about in the center of the triangle of these three houses. A forest covered the hill. A forest covered the hill. A forest covered the hill.

Daniel, therefore, was fitted out with a horse and cart for receiving the provisions, and began a canvass of the town. Duty's name had been erased, and Daniel's inserted in the warrant. When he came to Samuel Rich, that gentleman cheerfully paid the whole of his tax in money. In fact, almost everybody paid, and the \$1000 was collected. The acquaintance with all the inhabitants of Montpelier, and their places of residence which this collectorship afforded, was a great help to Daniel six years later, when he engaged in trade.

It was the boy's business that summer to raise the money for the purchase of the academy building, which was to be completed in 1806-7, the academy, James Dean, principal, numbered him among its pupils, and the following winter the same privilege was accorded to him. There was a drawback about those last three terms, however, which caused the boy to feel forever afterward that he received but little benefit from them. His brother Sylvanus owned a pair of bay scales which stood on Main street in front of what is now Bethany church yard. The winter was the time when the public patronized these scales the most liberally, and it was Daniel's business to attend them. He was so frequently called from school for the purpose that his attention was much distracted.

It will be remembered that a condition annexed to the permanent location of the capitol at Montpelier was the erection, by that town or by individual persons, of a suitable building, which was to be completed ready for use the first of September, 1808. The old wooden State House was accordingly framed and raised by David Pickering in 1807, and in the spring of 1808 Sylvanus Baldwin was engaged to finish and put a cupola upon it.

Sylvanus employed in the work eight or ten journeymen who slept in a large shop near his house. They began work in March. One Sunday evening "Sam" and Daniel observed three men sauntering in a body up Main street. Mr. Thomas Davis owned a large sugar place where the "log pasture" now is, on the hillside above the Lane Manufacturing Co.'s works; and the boys immediately suspected the men were bent on mischief on Mr. Davis's sweets. "Tom" and Ezekiel Reed, Mark Goss and E. P. Walton were drummed up, and all laid their heads together for some fun at the expense of the young man. They waited till about 10 o'clock and then, taking some pills, made their way by a circuitous route towards Mr. Davis's boiling place. They formed a plan by which "Tom" Reed was to represent Mr. Davis and the rest were to be presumably his hired men and neighbors. Coming down to the boiling place from above, and reconnoitering the learned by the conversation of the men that they had been boiling down some syrup and were about to remove the fire from under the kettle. The boys got ready and made a grand rush for them; "Tom," in a stentorian voice, shouted: "You rascals! You rascals!" and all made as much noise as possible, beating about with poles as though they were forty. The men did not stop even to gather up coats and hats, which several had laid off, but fled down the hill as though they believed a posse comitatus would soon lead them as culprits through the village and lodge them in the county jail. One of the boys remained behind to draw away the fire, while the rest augmented the terror of the men by pursuing them to the edge of the woods. Then they went back, transferred the sugar to their pails, and went home, taking with them as trophies the hats and coats. All was quiet, when Daniel and "Sam" reached home, in the shop where the men lodged, but they knew the men had gone to bed. They proceeded to their own bed, which stood among those of the men in the same building, crawled in, talked a little while about the conference meeting, and soon began to snore, but not in sleep.

The sun around them began to glisten and complain. "Oh God, how my skin aches!" said one. The posture through which they had had was full of stumps and they had suffered many bruises. They finally agreed they must settle with Mr. Davis, and appointed a committee to wait upon him in the morning. The boys did not let the joke go so far as the committee, but early in the morning brought in to the astonished work-men their coats and hats. Ever afterwards Daniel and "Sam" got an early invitation to all their sports.

Before the State House was completed the committee found themselves short of funds; moreover, the subscription, generously given by the inhabitants of Montpelier and vicinity, was payable in neat, stock, grain and lumber, and money was now needed to pay nails and glass. It was thought the town might better vote a tax than lose the State House. At March meeting a motion was made for a tax of \$1000, half cash and half provision. It was pretty unanimously voted and Constable Nathan Doty soon had the tax bills in his hands. Having a writ to serve at North Montpelier the next day, he stopped at the tavern of Samuel Rich, who greeted him with:

"How do's do Mr. Doty? Got your tax?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Doty, "want to pay yours now?"

"I've been looking over the constitution since we voted that tax," rejoined Mr. Rich; "and I don't find any provision by which a town can vote a tax to build a State House, and, without an act of the legislature, I believe it unconstitutional. I think I won't pay my tax now."

It all flashed upon Doty. He hastened to Montpelier and rallied the representative men. Judge Binkley was astonished they had not thought of the limitation that might be attached to a state object, but on reflection he agreed with Mr. Rich. Sylvanus Baldwin was present, and all

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