

"More Boyhood Stories" by R.N. Rowsell

Source: From "Life", a hand-published book by R.N. Rowsell

"Look See"

Reuben Chappell came to our home one evening at Pilley's Island. He and dad had it in mind to go to Burton's Harbour in the morning in their motorboat for a load of firewood. They talked about it for a considerable time and finalized their plans.

When Reuben was going out the door he said to dad. "Now den, Art'er boy, we'll go to Burton's Harbour in de marning, if de Lord spares us, and dat 'e will, look see."

That "look see" is precious to me. What Reub meant was that the Good Lord who had gone with them every day of their lives would be with them on the next morning, too. No doubt about it.

"Great Potatoes"

One day in early fall, I was standing on the public wharf at Pilley's Island. A motorboat came in from Card's Harbour and was tied up to the pier. Looking down at the boat, one could see quite a few sacks of potatoes which somebody had for sale.

When the two men who had arrived in the boat stood by us on the wharf, someone said, "Tom, I s'pose y'ave some good spuds d'fall?"

"'Deed I 'ave, boy," said Tom. "'Deed I 'ave. Gert taties, boy, gert taties big as de boot an' dat dry dey'd choke 'e."

"Mr. Minister, Sar"

A young Methodist minister was calling on one of his families in a log cabin district.

He had friendly conversations with the family and when he was leaving, his host followed him to the door.

They walked on from the cabin door to that location in front of the dwelling where the wood-horse and the chopping block were lodged.

Here they talked some more. As the minister began to walk away, the man of the house said to him, "Now, Mr. Minister, Sar, when you comes round our way, Sar, don't be 'fraid to come in. No difference what I be 'ome, or what I be 'r bant, de missus she'll be thar. She'll give 'e lassy doughboys to lick 'e chops wi' I'm bound to spake far 'er."

"Bows and Arrows"

As boys at Pilley's Island, we used to have great fun with bows and arrows. We were the boys from the harbour and the boys from the route. There seemed to be dissension between the two groups. I cannot recall for the life of me why this was so.

The route, by the way, was the name we gave to an area where people lived west of a causeway. To reach this area by boat one had to pass through an opening in the causeway under a bridge both ends of which were fastened to piers. So many times I have stood on that bridge and watched the flow of water until it became motionless immediately before the changing of the tide. At the rising and the

falling of the tide, that causeway had quite a river flowing through it.

We made our bows from young birch, ash and elder trees or from a limb of an old white spruce tree.

Our arrows were nearly always made from board obtained from wooden crates. In one end of the arrow we placed a sharpened nail and in the other end of the arrow we put the most suitable feather we could find.

I remember one day "in over the hill" the boys of the harbour met the boys of the route. We spent considerable time practicing at various targets, trees, tins and targets made from cardboard. We always kept an eye open for a partridge or two which were often seen on these hills.

When the outing was over and we were separating to go to our homes, one of the route boys show an arrow into our group. That was a signal for both groups to start shooting at one another. We were lucky that no boy had more than three arrows.

The engagement continued for a minute or two, but it suddenly ended when one of the boys, my brother, Bill, began to cry out, "Stop it. Stop it."

When I looked at him, I saw an arrow sticking out of his face. The arrow had hit him in the right cheekbone about half-way between his nostril and his eye.

I pulled out the arrow and we set off for home in a hurry.

When mother was treating the wound, we were telling her the story. Mother said, "There will be no more bows and arrows."

When dad came home and heard about it, he seconded mother's motion. And the motion was carried unanimously by the boys.

"Like a Child"

The minister was telling the children's story as they sat together at the front of the church on Sunday morning. The minister held up a road map about which minister and children had some discussion. "What do you use a road map for?"

Said one child, "It tells you where you are going from and where you are going to."

Holding up a Bible and speaking of it for a moment, the Minister asked, "If the Bible is also a map, how does it help you?"

Said another child, "It helps you get where you are going when you don't know where you are going."