

Joe-Dad's Bee Tree

AN EPISODE IN WOODS AND WATER EXPLOITS

By Ernest McGaffey
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"See that," said old Joe-Dad, as he rose from the skiff and peered into the surrounding timber. "Mmm," went on the ancient "pusher." "I reckon they's a bee-tree round here somewhere's. How'd some honey taste on them flap-jacks we're havin' at camp?"

"We've got plenty o' rope," said the "pusher," knocking the ashes out of his short-stemmed pipe, "and two good axes. We may have to build a 'smudge,' and agin mebbe we won't have to."

"You must have been an interested party in some bee scrape, Joe," was my answer.

"Fur awhile, fur awhile," was the "pusher's" response. "Yes, I reckon I was about the most pizenously interested feller in a chunk o' rope that ever happened into the timber."

"Why, that sounds like a story, Joe," said I, "tell me about it."

"Well," begun Joe-Dad, it was this-a-way. I was young, an' I wuz green as to bees. I wuz the best climber next to a squirrel that ever shinned up a saplin'. I'd lived in the woods, an' yit I wuz so busy huntin' an' fish-

figgerin' roun, an' then he sez, 'We'll fell that thar saplin' so'st it'll fall across the dead limb, sez he, 'an' if it don't bust her down, one o' us 'll have to climb the saplin' an' cut away the limb.'

"So Bob an' me lays our axes into the saplin' an' when the saplin' is about ready to go, Bob throws the rope over one of it's limbs an' hitches to a tree close up so'st the saplin's bound to come down on the dead limb. Well, sir, down comes Mr. Saplin square across the dead limb a few feet from the big sycamore itself. But it didn't bust the limb. Some o' the bees they come out but went back agin, an' Bob an' me we jist stood an' looked."

"It's a case o' climb, sez he."

"Now bein' that I wuz nacherly the best climber in the world, I allows I'll go up. Bob sez 'Cut her off as near the butt as you kin, an' I'll sling you the rope up after the limb busts off, an' you kin tie her to the green limb you'll be standin' on, throw down your ax an' slide down the rope. I'll cut loose from the green limb with a couple o' bullets an' there you are."

"So I ties the ax tight to me an' up I goes. It wuzn't very hard, an' I gets up to the spot in a few minutes. Then I unties the ax an' begins choppin' on the dead limb. I hadn't got her half off when the weight o' the saplin' weakens the limb an' it tears off an' falls, takin' with it the left o' the honey, but leavin' about seven bushels o' bees at the butt o' the limb an' along on one side o' the limb where it had fetched loose from. Well, that looked all right, but in about three seconds the bees appointed a committee to investigate. Something like twelve or fifteen thousand bees wuz on this committee, an' the first thing they did to me wuz to jist sting me once for good luck. 'The rope,' hollers I, an' then I shet my mouth an' eyes fer fear the bees'd start in on me there. They cert'ny did sting me awful. I thought I'd fall off'n the limb. I wuz skeered to try to slide down the sycamore, cuz I'd a dropped



THE ROPE! HOLLERS I.

in' that I'd never been huntin' fer bee trees more'n four or five times."

"So one night over comes Bob Early to the cabin, an' he's got a bee tree sighted that's plumb full o' honey to hear him tell it, an' nothin' do but fer him an' pap to git out after it next mornin'." But the old man's got a line o' traps he's got to 'run, an' he says fer me to go 'long 'ith Bob. So bright an' soon the next mornin' Bob an' me's pinte'd fer this here bee tree. Bob's got an ax, I've got an ax, an' Bob's carryin' a long rope."

"What's the rope fer, Bob," sez I.

"Jist to hang ourselves of we miss 'ndin' that bee tree," says Bob.

"I didn't say nothin' to that, fer I wuz Bob Early was raised on bees, that he wasn't packin' that quail rope fer fun."

"An' so perty soon we got to a clear-down in the timber, an' Bob took quint through the bresh, an' at last sez, 'straight out from this here to'rds the river.' So we starts to hgh through the awfulest tangle ever seen. Buck-bresh, blacky briers, pieces o' swamp, old logs the devil's own mix-up o' wood an' er. Finally old Bob halts clost to the river, an' lookin' up at the edge in openin' in the woods he sez he hit fer, here she is."

When I squinted up, an' there was biggest and slickest sycamore I ever seen, no branches no down, 'bout forty feet or so there outtrible big dead limb stickin' thar the main trunk. An' from god'imb you could see the bees 'Thar comin' out, an' says Bob, 'Thoney!'

stickt another good-sized limb dead 'om the tree clost to the goin' theryly I sez, How're we sycamothis here honey? That to climb t'ough a grey squirrel climb it'r a man, he couldn't rain-bow he could climb a

"Bob nothin' but jist kep'

WAR REMINISCENCES

RELIVING HIS WAR DAYS.

Old Soldier Camps Before His Fire in Fairmount Park.

What is the secret of the magic power of a crackling fire to conjure up memories of days that are dead? The answer to this abstruse question may be left to psychologists. Few will deny that a crackling fire has such power. In the leaping sparks and the reddening logs one finds that stimulus to muse and to meditate in moods that range from melancholy to merriment.

This, in brief, is the line of thought that obsesses Maj. James H. Workman, a civil war veteran, who recently determined to become a hermit. In the winter of life his mind harked back to the days of battle and sudden death. He longed once more for the alluring freedom of the simple life of a



Maj. James H. Workman in Camp Again.

soldier. He determined to live once more, as nearly as possible, the life of his soldier days by camping in the open, beside a roaring fire, to prepare his own meals, to bid defiance to cold and wet and, in imagination at least, to campaign again with Sherman and Grant.

Had the old soldier been friendless and alone he might have buried himself permanently in some secluded spot and reveled in his campfire dreaming until "taps" sounded for the last time. But the major is blessed with a devoted wife and a host of friends, and no one would listen to his suggestion that he retire to the woods to end his days with the birds and the squirrels for companions. So he compromised by pitching his camp in an out-of-the-way ravine in Fairmount park, Philadelphia, says the New York Tribune, where he is as completely off the beaten track as he would be in the wilderness. The park authorities humored the old soldier's whim.

Joyfully the major selected his campground, in a picturesque spot, where the trees shelter him to some extent from the wind, and here he can be found, no matter how severe the weather.

In the many battles in which his regiment, Rush's Lancers, took part. From the heart of the fire sad faces rise to greet him once more. Some are marred and red with wounds. He sees them as he last saw them, lying dead or dying on a hundred battle fields. Old comrades of the camp and the field, fellow veterans of the Grand Army who have preceded him into the beyond, privates, captains, majors, colonels, a great army of them, they rise up before the old man, as he muses in front of his campfire, salute him gravely and pass upward with the smoke.

The soldier hermit says he will live by his campfire all the winter, no matter what the weather. Although he hasn't been heard to say so, those who know him believe he would be quite happy in the thought of being found dead by the fire in the ravine, for in so dying his last hours would be softened by the presence of his comrades of the days when the lancers fought for the union. The old man's glazing eyes would see them to the last, coming out of the heart of the fire to salute him gravely, this time not to pass upward with the smoke, but to form his bodyguard into the other world.

AN INSPIRING SIGHT.

The Fighting on Lookout Mountain and the Charge Up Mission Ridge.

I carried a gun and took an active part in both battles of Lookout Mountain and Mission Ridge, writes a correspondent of the National Tribune, being in Carlin's First brigade, First division, Fourteenth corps, which was the extreme right of Thomas' line in the valley facing Mission ridge, from which position I watched the advance of Hooker's men as they drove the confederates around the north face of Lookout mountain. The lines on the side of the mountain were occa-



Hooker's Men Drove the Confederates Around the Face of Lookout Mountain.

sionally obscured by the lowering clouds. But Hooker's brave men were running out of ammunition, and our brigade, being the nearest, was ordered to his assistance, carrying an extra lot of cartridges. We climbed directly up the steep sides, and were in time to assist in the final charge, as darkness closed over the scene. The confederates fell back, abandoning the mountain during the night, a fact we did not discover until next morning. It

was not long before we saw the glorious old stars and stripes being waved from the very highest point above the palisades. Never was there a more inspiring sight, which was cheered again and again by the boys in blue, who were each personally and deeply interested in our success. I expected we would now view the charge on Mission ridge, which we instinctively felt was the next move. From our elevated position we could see the line of blue stretched northward up the valley for miles, facing the ridge, while on the ridge and along the west foot extended the lines of gray, entrenched, awaiting our movements. But we were destined to take an active part in that fierce charge. Our brigade was formed after eating a hasty breakfast of hardtack and coffee, marched back down the mountain's side and took our former place on the right of Thomas' line. Our line then charged double-quick across the plain under a musketry fire from the confederate infantry, and the artillery that lined the top of the ridge. It seemed like advancing into the jaws of hell. But that was an army of seasoned veterans; no halt or waver. The confederate line at the foot of the ridge could not stand it, but clambered back and tried to form and make a stand behind some earthworks half way up. This was now the moment and the place where the boys took matters into their own hands; each with his own thinking general, and with one impulse followed with a yell, and kept the rebel line on a run to the top and over on the other side. It was a soul-inspiring sight, on reaching the top, to view the whole confederate army in precipitous flight down the other side, followed by a plentiful shower of loyal musket balls.

Hooker did well, but his part was confined to the storming of Lookout. It was Thomas' brave old Army of the Cumberland that drove the confederate army up, over and beyond the ridge, and which so alarmed Gen. Grant by their spontaneous charge up the ridge without orders.

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