

The Family Circle

SURPRISED POOR PA

Now father in his garden takes a proper pride indeed,
And loves experimenting with outlandish sorts of seed;
One day he met a horticultural expert in the bus,
Who said, 'You really ought to grow Raphanus Sativus.'

'I'll take the hint,' said father, though he'd never
heard before

This highly-sounding title, still he hurried to the store,
And with confident assurance he addressed the shopman
thus—

'I want a shilling packet of Raphanus Sativus.'

And after weeks of waiting came some little shoots of
green,

But father nearly fainted as he gazed upon the scene,
For radishes were sprouting with a growth luxurious
In the spot where he had planted the Raphanus Sativus.

He hurried to the expert in a state of wild alarm,
Who when he'd heard his story besought him to be
calm.

'They're coming up all right,' he said, so why make all
this fuss?

The Latin name for radish is "Raphanus Sativus."

UNCLE NATHAN'S ADVENTURE

In my young days my father's family lived far
back among the mountains of Vermont. Indeed, in
one direction, we were the last settlers; and beyond us
the big woods stretched away, so far as we had any
knowledge, without inhabitants.

I soon acquired some skill in hunting and trapping
squirrels, rabbits, woodchucks, and such game; and
when I was thirteen my father gave me a small rifle.
I was delighted with my gift, and wanted to be trying
it all the time. As father would not allow this, I felt
I was abused, and I used to talk to the younger chil-
dren about running away. I thought it was too bad
that a young person of my importance, and such a
mighty hunter, should have to chop wood and hoe
potatoes like any ordinary boy.

Well, one day when I was about fourteen, I was
picking apples in the orchard behind the barn, when
two men came up in hunting attire. I knew them
by sight and reputation as men who made a business
of hunting, but had very little personal acquaintance
with them. Now, however, they seemed to make them-
selves very sociable. After telling me a good deal
about their hunting exploits, they said they were going
to start in the morning for a big hunt through the
woods, away up into Canada, and ended by proposing
to me to go with them.

Father and I had had a little difference of opinion,
I'll call it, that very morning about how I should
spend the day, and I was still surly; so, before they
left me, I had agreed to meet them at a neighbor's
sugar-camp in the morning, prepared to make the trip
in their company.

I had a good many qualms to choke down that
night; but I was on hand according to agreement, and
we struck into the woods at a pretty rapid rate, which
suited me well at first, as I was afraid father would
follow me. But this was kept up most of the day, and
I got very tired, and my courage kept oozing in spite
of all I could do. When it was evening, the men
stopped in front of a ledge of rocks, and told me they
would camp there that night. They started a fire, and
then ordered me to keep it going, and get together
a lot of wood for the night. They then took their guns
and fishing lines and left me, while they plunged into
the woods again.

It was dark when they came back, and they brought
a large string of fish, which they directed me to dress,

while they roasted some of the game for supper. I
was dreadfully tired and hungry, yet I could hardly
eat for thinking of home. After supper I was ordered
to bring a lot of hemlock boughs and spread them on
the ground for a bed. Then they gave me a blanket,
and we all lay down, with our feet to the fire. I think
I must have sobbed, for one of the men called out
roughly: 'Stop that noise now, and let us go to
sleep!'

I was afraid of the men by this time, and had to
keep still, and in a little while I was asleep. In the
morning it was the same thing over. The men had
nothing to say to me now, except to give orders about
the work, most of which fell to my share. We started
off again, and travelled till my feet were blistered,
and it seemed to me that every bone in my body was
aching. In the afternoon one of the hunters shot a
fawn, and they stopped and dressed it; and then,
hanging the carcass to a limb, they directed me to
watch it, and at the same time prepare the camp the
same as the night before.

'The wolves will likely want that venison,' said
one of the men; but if you keep a good fire, maybe
they won't come very close; and if they do, you must
shoot them.'

So I was left alone again; and I assure you I
didn't have a good time. It seemed to me that I had
been gone from home a month, and I would give any-
thing to be back there again. But I did not dare to
speak of this to my companions, and I had no idea how
to get back alone.

The men did not return till after dark, and I was
terribly afraid of the wolves; but they didn't come.
The night passed somehow, and we started on again in
the morning. I half believed I should always have to
drag myself through woods over rocks and fallen trees,
in punishment for my wicked conduct. I carried my
rifle but I had no more chance to use it.

The men walked so fast I had all I could do to keep
in sight of them. I found out afterward that we passed
some places that morning which I should have known if
I had not been 'turned around,' as people are when
they are lost, so that all things look strange, no matter
how familiar they may be to us. A little before noon,
however, we came to a clearing.

The men got into a pasture, for better walking;
and I stopped at the fence and stared at the house and
farm buildings for some time, when all of a sudden
things began to look familiar; and, sure enough, this
was my very own home! I sprang over the fence
quickly, and ran to the house. I saw my baby brother
at the kitchen door, and caught him in my arms, while
I rushed in and found my mother getting dinner as
usual. I don't know all I did; but I know mother and
I cried and hugged each other. When father came
in to dinner he shook hands with me, and simply
said: 'Why, Nathan, how are you? You look hungry.
Come to dinner.'

After dinner, father went out again, and mother
told me to lie down on the lounge and rest, and the
first I knew I was fast asleep. They waked me again
at supper time, and afterward I was ready for another
long sleep. At breakfast next morning I did not feel
altogether easy; for I expected one of father's whip-
pings, and I knew just how they felt. But he did not
scold or punish me: he only said:

'Nathan, you may finish picking those apples now.'
So I went back to work, but I could hardly believe that
I had ever thought home a hard place.

None of our folks ever teased me about my trip,
though the youngsters were very inquisitive about
my adventures. I had to catch it at school that winter,
though; for all the boys and girls had heard about
my running away. But I gradually made up my mind
to two things. One was, that I had got wisdom enough
to pay all the cost of my runaway; and the other was
that father knew more than he told me about the
original arrangements for my trip to Canada. As a
matter of fact, it developed later on that the two men
had been hired by father to take me with them, and
to give me so much work to do that the experience
would utterly sicken me of hunting and its accompani-
ments. They earned their wages, too.—*Ave Maria.*