Sketch

Volume 6, Number 2 1939 Article 10

From My Journal

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From My Journal

Frank P. Rust
Arch. E. So.

JUNE 3, 1933—I gained a good deal of respect for dad today. We had been up in Randolph's woods to see how the calves pastured there were getting along. As we were leaving, dad left the wagon to shut the gate, one of those barbed wire contraptions with poles and wire loops at each end. While he was fixing the last loop over the pole, a big limb, weakened by yesterday's storm, fell on the top wire a few rods down the fence. The fence tightened instantly like a giant snare and caught his hand between the pole and the loop. I stood there shocked, for a moment, then put my shoulder to the pole and pushed. I could not budge it. The log was too heavy. I looked up at his hand, where the fingers were turning blue. I could see where the wire was buried deep in his hand. It frightened me.

He wrapped his other arm around the adjoining post and said, "Let's push, boy." Well, I pushed. I put my shoulder to that pole and pushed with all my strength and whatever added strength comes of excitement or necessity. I felt the fence give a little, then come back to its former position. I could not move it far enough. I looked up at dad. His face was pretty white. It was heartbreaking to try with all my will and strength and still be defeated. I was frightened; I started to cry.

The futility of it was what was so heartbreaking, to try with all my strength, to want to move that pole as I had never wanted to do anything in my life before, and then to find I could not, try as I might.

Dad said rather faintly, "Let's try again, boy." When I put my shoulder to the pole for this last attempt, I could feel the blood from his hand running down the pole, and I could feel it hot and sticky on my cheek. I resolved to move that pole or push until I dropped from exhaustion. So I pushed. I pushed until the pole bit into my shoulder like a knife; I pushed until the blood was pounding in my temples like a thousand hammers;
pushed until my back and every muscle pained from the effort. I pushed to no avail. It seemed as though some giant was pulling at the other end of the fence. He would let me gain a little headway; then he would tighten the wire tighter than ever. It was hopeless. But when the fence gave a little, dad jerked his hand out.

It was horrible; cut to the bone where the wire had lain, and lacerated by the wire when he jerked his hand out. He didn’t scold me, nor lose his temper. His face didn’t change expression throughout the whole incident. He just stood there for a minute looking at his bleeding hand; then he put his good hand on my shoulder for a second and said, “You did fine, boy. Let’s go home.”

Whiskers

Kay Warner

Ex. ’42

Cat wear whiskers
On their faces—
Not like father’s—
With more spaces.

Mice grow whiskers
Rather sparsely,
Like green onions
More than parsley.

Lions and leopards,
Squirrels and rabbits
Also have
Whisker habits.

But my father
Would look funny
With just several,
Like a bunny.

December, 1939