CHAPTER V

THE FENTON RIVER

"....and many other wild and noble sights...
such as they who sit in parlors never dream of."
Thoreau

The spring of 1935, following the Sanctuary summer, found my umbrella tent in a spot on the east bank of the Fenton River, about four miles north of what was then the Connecticut State College, but which has long since been the State University. I put up my tent in mid April and remained out under canvas until snow came in November.

The State Fish and Game Department hired me at the sum of five dollars a week, the equivalent of about twenty-five dollars today, the money coming from a small research grant, to make an ecological study of the state's trout streams. Emphasis was to be put on the Fenton, a typical Connecticut brook trout stream, and some data to be collected from the Mt. Hope, where brown trout predominate, and the Natchaug, a rainbow trout stream. Stream improvement work was

Sherwood

being experimented with by the CCC on the West Branch of the Farmington River in the State People's Forest in the western part of the state, and I was to visit that river also, from time to time, and check on the stream bed conditions there. All of this stream work was new, in the earliest days of conservation work in this country. Amy data obtained was original, as no such studies had ever been made in the east. The earliest such work had been done in the Great Lakes region, especially in Michigan. Under the progessive head of Connecticut's Fish and Game Dept., Arthur L. Clark, stream studies were initiated in Connecticut. No funds were as yet available, but Clark hoped that my pilot study, when presented to the state legislature, would produce funding to put a professional aquatic study team in the field.

The State College collaborated in many ways. Some of the forestry students came down and set up one of the smaller work tents which belonged to forestry camp. They made a sturdy job of it, sinking posts into the ground, erecting two center uprights with a ridgepole across them, and side framework to which they guy ropes were hitched. The students also built a work table inside the big tent, with attached benches, and also a picnic table on the bank above the river, under a huge maple tree which reminded, becuase of its size, species and location, of the big maple at Bloomfield in which I had hung up an eel. To this outdoor table they also hitched benches, with one built just right for leaning against the tree.

Inside the tent they placed a large wooden box, something like an over-size tool box, which had a padlock. In it were a binocular microscope, a monocular one, a barometer, thermometers, including a maximum-minimum theremeter, and the many little odds and ends needed

for such field research, including pads of graph paper, and note-books.

One item of equipment which was again in camp with me was that same old, despised, inevitable gun. Before the summer was out I would have thrown it into the deepest hole I knew in the Fenton if I'd had the money to remiburse the state for it.

My umbrella tent was erected under the big sugar maple limbs, just a few feet from the picnic table. This year I acquired a small wood-burning stove, which fit so neatly into tent life that I look back upon it as one of the most marvelous possessions of my long camping life. It was about two feet long, and a foot wide, and stood on collapsible metal rod legs a foot or so high. Two transverse mteal rods could be swung back down over the ends of the stove, out of the way, or they could swing up to meet above the center and act as handle. This permitted carrying the stove in or out of the tent whether there was a fire in it or not. Most of the summer the stove stood outside, as the weather was too warm to need its heat inside. I cooked on it out under the open sky, even though I also had an outdoor fireplace, because it took so little fuel. When it was raining I prevented it from rusting by setting it just inside the work tent.

Its flat top was in two parts, of fairly heavy cast iron. The back half contained the chimney hole. The front half could be readily pushed up, in an open position, by leaning on a special handle, so that the stove could be easily stoked. When the front half was down it was an excellent griddle, or held pans for boiling or frying. A drawer, only about 1½ inches deep, ran under the fire box, which latter had several round holes through which ashes dropped into the drawer. All I had to do to empty it was to pull it out.

In order that the tent could accomodate the stove I cut a square hole out of the lower left corner of the back netting window, and had a tinsmith cut a piece of galvanized metal the size of the hole with a round piece cut out of the center to fit brooder-size stovepipe. He also punched small holes around all four edges of the metal so I could sew it into place in the netting. Two pipe elbows brought the stove smoke up from the firebox out the window and up into the air. It was easy to unhook the small diameter stove-pipe inside the tent, at the inside elbow, leaving the piece of pipe that extended through the window, and its elbow and upright on the outside. That, of course, freed the stove to be taken outside.

This little stove took wood up to four inches in diameter, but what I liked about it, just a handful of twigs , an abundant fuel in this woodland area, gave quick and fairly lasting heat. When the burning twigs died down it was a simple matter to stuff more in. As the stove body wasn't quite a foot deep the burning twigs were close to the lids, heating them faster than you'd expect. The thinner sides of the stove radiated heat rapidly, just moments after lighting.

Inside the tent the stove fitted in the aisle between the two cots and just missed hitting the center pole. As I never built a roaring fire in it there was sufficient space between its sides and the cot blankets. Of course if I had ever let its sides get red hot it would have been a fire hazard. I always kept a container of water in the tent, just in case it did set fire to something. This little stove spelled luxury, for at night and on rainy days, and in the fall, the canvas walls of the tent efficiently caught and re-flected back its heat, giving me a snug home.

I kept old newspapers and piles of twigs, and some real cord-

wood, under my cot. Before going to bed at night I mixed a pan of cocoa and sugar, and set it on the cold stove out of harm's way, and kept a bottle of water for it under the cot. In the chill of the early morning I had only to reach an arm outside the covers, pour water in the pan an stir with the spoon already in it, open the stove, stuff in paper and twigs, drop in a lighted match, release thelid brace, and within a very few minutes I had hot cocoa and a warm tent. I could sit up in bed in a warm room before stepping out of bed, and sip the first installment of my breakast without even stepping out of bed. Such comfort most people in houses in the North Temperate Zone never knew, for central heating was still uncommon then or at least did not have finger-tip thermostat control. If the stove were not hot at bedtime, I could lay the fire in it shead of time.

This little, very flexible, adaptable stove was my most prized possession. It was a mail order surprise, from Ohio, which I'd seen advertised in a newspaper. I have never seen another anything like it since.

The campsite here was ideal. I was on private property with permission of the owner, arranged by the State College. The house belonging to the property was only partially visible on the top of the hill to the east, above the river valley, as it was mostly screened by shrubs and lawn trees. Thus I had privacy while at the same time there was a guardian, as it were, at the entrance to the only lane into the place. This system of camping behind some house, on private or restricted land, has often been the key to my being able to camp out alone with any degree of safety over the years. It doesn't insure against all danger, but it does minimize invasion by the irresponsible fringe of our civilization. It has often made the

difference between my being able to live my lone kind of Indian type life or stay home, or go to a state or federal park or forest where there would be so many people milling around the wildlife would be scared away. The primary danger in the outdoors is not the wild animals, as to a person camping alone, but our own species.

The local section of the Appalachian Mountain Trail passed along the crest of the bank on the opposite side of the river, bringing me an occasional select type of visitor. It seems to be an axiom of human behavior that only responsible-behaving humans hike for pleasure

Facing the Fenton River from the middle of my camp, the umbrella tent was to my left, the picnic table and the big maple tree just in front of me on the bank about six feet above the stream, the woods across the Fenton was a living wall of breathing trees and shrubs, the work tent was on my right, and behind me, and extending from the bottom of the house hill and southward almost an eighth of a mile along the Fenton was an open meadow crowded with many of my favorite weeds and wildflowers, including a low damp spot in which grew great swatches of wild iris, boneset, and raspberry-colored Joe-Pye-weed.

And thanks to the glacial rocks and boulders in the stream, the Fenton music played light tunes which were wafted on air currents above the river day and night. The Fenton was a great joy. I could hear it, I could see it, I could smell it, I could feel it by stepping into it or dipping my hands in it. After lugging water the previous summer at Shade Swamp Sanctuary, all the way up to the plateau, this stream was much appreciated as as

the center of my personal life as well as of my work day. I carried dishes down to it and washed them there and then, having learned that the current and volume of flow of the clean river water permitted such effective rinsing that hot dish water wasn't necesary. Also, the crumbs from my dishes added food to the stream for the many little things fish feed on. The current flushed away the surplus so there were no stagnant pools to be of concern.

I dammed up a small pool with rocks just below the picnic table, for use as a laundry. I did wash my clothes in a large pan of hot water, using ample soap, on the table, however, and dumped that water in the meadow; but the pool was e xellent for rinsing. One of the most relaxing activities I know of is to sit on a rock in a stream and rinse clothes. Your reflection, mingling with the water-mirrored trees and sky, bring to life artist's pictures of biblical scenes; it also crystallized for me my visions of American Indian women washing in just such streams as this one for thousands of years before my kind arrived.

One silly but beguiling stunt I learned here, and have since indulged in from one end of this continent to another, is to wash my hair in a basin which is up on something low like a bench so that I have to bend down over it. I try to keep soap out of my eyes long enough to look at the world upside down for colors and details are more enahnced when the trees are in the sky and the river or pond is in the sky and the trees are upside down at my feet. The deadness of walls, ceilings and floors is apparent when you compare an upside down scene outdoors with one in the house.

Since my camp was on the east side of the river, sunrises were priceless glory, and being an early riser I witnessed most of them. Sunsets I seldom saw, as the wall of trees across the stream blocked the view of much of the western sky. There were times here when my inability to watch weather approaching from the west bothered me alittle, but other than thunderstorms there isn't much weather activity in the sky in summer.

About thirty paces behind my work tent, northward, was a wire fence , extending from the stream almost up to the house on the hill. It separated my field of heavier weeds from a small meadow inside the fence which was open and grassy but surrounded on all sides by trees and shurbs, the shrub line on the western edge, of course, screening the Fenton. The wire between the large and small open areas was a left-over from days when cows were kept in the big meadow. Just beyond the small meadow's northern edge was a dirt road; and right across the road was an old mill pond, and dam, with a shed-like building which housed the mill itself. This was the oldest up-and-down saw mill still operating in the United States. It was powered by the Fenton, whenever the dam was opened and water allowed to pour down over the paddle wheel.

The family which owned the mill no longer made part of its living by working it, but for history's sake they liked to keep it in running condtion. They put out about a thousand board feet a year, and often notified people who were interested when they were going to run it so people could come and take pictures. At the far north end of the mill pond, up a steep slope, parallel with the dirt road, was a main through highway.

But to the south of my camp, for four to five miles to the tiny town of Gurleyville, there was only unihabited woods, mostly

Owned by the college or the state. The Fenton ran down through the middle of, with rather steep, terrace-like banks much of the way.

Except in spring the Fenton River is usually low enough to wade across its stony bottom when it is not much more than a foot deep, except in a few pools from two to three feet deep. But when the button mill at Daleville, four miles above, north of the old saw mill, which was also run by waterpower, let its water downstream the stream quickly reached a minor flood stage. The sawmill pond was not large enough of a retaining pond for a great surplus of water. But when there was release at the buttonmill the river current became too swift ~~or xxxfxxxxxx~~, and unsafe, for wading on the slippery rocks at the bottom.

The effect of such water level fluctuation on the condition of the stream as a trout habitat was one of the problems I was to investigate. The scouring effect on the presence of trout food on rocks and bottom, the sudden murkiness of the disturbed water, the sudden flushing out of organisms in the water, temperature changes, depth and current changes, the effects of the suddenness of these changes, are environmental influences which were suspected of having deleterious effects upon trout, especially brook trout which demands cool, clean water and relatively stable living conditions.

But on most days during the summer I was able to wade across the stream, which made it a simple task to go over to the spring , for drinking water, in the woods on the other side without having to walk up to the dirt road and the bridge to get over there. This spring had the deepest, coldest, sweetest water of all of my woods acquaintance, even better than the Bloomfield one.

The spring was situated about two hundred feet or so into

the woods westward from the river bank, not very far from a small pond. Even in those days many springs were pretty well dried up due to lowering of the water table caused by man's intervention with drainage. But here, on protected college property so near to the river and the pond, the water table was well maintained. Even after a protracted dry spell in the fall, when forest duff was powder dry, this spring was still full to the brim. And because of the existence of several springs along the forested route of this river, the Fenton never completely dried up. There was always a trickle of cold, clear water from them, and many natural small pools survived the dry season in the river, permitting small fish, like dace, and aquatic insects to survive.

This largish spring, which I could sometimes detect bubbling up from the bottom, was a novelty to me. I welcomed reasons to visit it. At times I was contented to just sit and look at its crystal clear small pool; it had a mysterious quality for all one's knowledge of water table, rock layer contours and earth pressure. If sitting looking idly at a small pool of water in a woodlot seems a stupid occupation, consider the death rate today from hypertensions, and the crowded condition of mental institutions where people have been driven by frenetic civilized life. Indigenous people, like the Indians I was so a part of, understood quiet, sweet water pools, which had a more soporific effect.

For awhile I found it difficult to accept the fact that this spring water was safe to drink, as local authorities assured me. I was as accustomed to faucet water as the next citizen, which came from official reservoirs or wells properly tested. But it din't take much reconnoitering to ascertain for myself that neither pastures

nor privies were near enough for dangerous seepage. So drink it I did, spring, summer and fall, with impunity, and with great relish on hot days when it frosted my drinking container.

The other two streams which I checked on an average of once a week were a few miles to the east, the Mt. Hope and the Natchaug, which, with the Fenton, joined at Mansfield Hollow to form the Willimatic River. I still didn't own a car, which was one reaon why, with no rent to pay, and food costing only three dollars a week, I could live on five dollars a week. My trips to the other streams were thus dependent upon the sporadic good will of college folks and other good friends, and occasionally upon my sister.

My job was a dream, since it involved only activities concerning my own interests. There were hourly water temperatues to take, and barometric readings to record. The water level had to be checked hourly the days I was in camp. The foresters had driven in graduated-markers stakes from which I could take depth readings; these were placed at several stations down along the iver so that whenever there was a change at my camp marker I'd go down the trail to the other markers. There was regular periodic collecting to be done of aquatic and animal life samples; these I gathered by a standard procedure, using such simple tools as a yardstick and laboratory sieves of different sizes. The samples gave a fairly true picture of the abundance of species present as well as what forms there were present and where. Also I had a secchi disc for testing the turbidity of the water, but as the clarity of the water seldom changed, even when the buttonmill flooded the stream, I seldom got any readings from it.

I had many taxonomies on hand for the identification of species,

, and as already indicated, hand lenses and the binocular and monocular ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ microscopes. Not being a professional limnologist, however, I frequently took my samples up to the college zoology department to corroborate or correct my identifications. But since I didn't need to run the forms down to species in most cases, I was able to determine the families, and often even the genera, on my own, which was all that was needed.

The part of my job which envied many of my friends was having to take samples of trout from all of the streams, both within and outside of the trout season. This was necessary in order to check the contents of trout digestive systems, to determine what and how much they were eating, and when. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the food situation I had begun taking trout during the previous winter, while ice was still locking in much of the local streams and encasing many of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the large stream-bed boulders. In some places the stream was completely ~~x~~ frozen over though water would be seen running under it; or, there were small holes here and there in the ice.

It is not an easy matter to catch trout under winter conditions; not only is there the problem of getting hook and bait into the ice hole, and floating it to a likely spot, but even brook trout, which prefer to be cold, are so torpid it is almost impossible to tempt them to eat anything. A classmate and I had a year-around permit to make this food study of trout, but I was the one to continue it throughout the rest of the year. My job on the Fenton was an extension, and elaboration, of that year-around trout food study as no one had ever done it in this part of New England before.

The things that live in streams which most people don't know

about! And I am speaking of clean, clear streams. Caddis fly larvae never cease to amaze me with their cleverly built houses, which each lives in a lone, made of sticks, sand grains and bits of leaves which they glue into a sort of cocoon around themselves. They and the stone fly larvae, and mayfly larvae, which live naked on the wet mossy rocks, have marvelous ability to be active in icy cold water.

The caddis fly larvae walk about on the rocks or stream bottom with their heads and front legs protruding from their protective cases, and pull their houses after them. But, unlike crabs or turtles, they can't pull back in when disturbed. Trout swallow them cases and all, which accounts for much of the small debris found in their stomachs and intestines.

The larvae, or nymphs, of mayflies are the soft, flat-bodied creatures you see running over a slippery or mossy rock when you lift it out of a stream. These nymphs feed mostly on dead or living aquatic vegetation, including the fabulous one-celled diatoms. Their feathery tracheal gills which fringe the sides of their abdomens, and equally feathery antennae, and their tail plumes, make for easy recognition of mayfly nymphs. They spend two to three years in the water in that form before hatching out as adults if a fish or a wading bird doesn't get them first. The attractive adults, with gauze-like wings which fold straight up over their backs like angel wings, live but a few hours to a day or two, just long enough to mate and lay eggs for the next generation. Mayfly adults are the models for many dry flies used by trout fishermen.

The most startling water insect which I worked with was the hellgrammite nymph; the larval forms, which live in water, are no

dainty specimens. They average two to three inches long, are about an inch across, and have a pair of legs per every one of their many segments. The many legs, plus a large, vicious-looking set of mandibles which can give you a good nip, make the creature look truly formidable. Hellgrammites live under stones in water and normally keep out of your way; I have never heard of anyone being bitten by one when wading. They feed on the other softer nymphs, however, so they would seem to compete with fish for food if it weren't that they themselves can become a nourishing food morsel for a fish large enough to swallow one. The adults are huge, scary looking but really harmless, dobson flies, which fishermen treasure for bait. The dobson fly is one of the larger of our northern insects; it has great gray folded wings over its body like a shed, and strong mandibles. Only here and there do you come upon an isolated one as they are not very abundant compared to the smaller stream insects, but I certainly did not need a hand lens to identy one in either adult or nymph form.

Dragonfly nymphs also live in the water, and are good-sized nourishing fish food. They look somewhat like a grasshopper as to body, but have only slender delicate legs all placed up front. They walk about on stream bottoms, catching other small animals for food. Some of them require several years to hatch into adult dragonflies and nature compensates for this by producing more of them every year than is true of many other large insects.

Adult dragonflies are gorgeously colored creatures, as most people know, but few people realize they live almost exclusively on mosquitos. It is sad to me, that so many people, in this enlightened ago, persist in believeing the foolish myth that a dragonfly, erroneously dubbed a sewing needle because of the shape of its body, can sew up your ears and mouth. Their soft mouth parts, and total ab-

sence of silk glands, makes this feat technically impossible. The first proven mouth sewn together by a dragonfly will make both scientific history and newspaper headlines.

Diatoms, which are one-celled plants, are the exotic beauties of the water world; but you need a microscope to enter their realm. They resemble pill boxes, or jewel cases, because they are constructed of two parts which look like a tiny box with a cover; and they have the most amazing decorations of colorful lines and beads arranged in a great variety of patterns. Why they should be so beautiful one can't conjecture, for the tiny animals which see and feed upon them don't have brains for aesthetic appreciation; they don't even have color perception, and mankind has lived close to diatoms for millenia without ever having seen one until the microscope was invented just a few human generations ago. But now that we can observe beautiful diatoms with microscopes only botany students and a few plant specialists ever see them, and of those few have time to just sit and admire the decorative aspects of the diatoms. In fact, too many scientists live in holy terror of getting caught expressing aesthetic response to anything in nature.

These microscopic bits of plant life have evolved their way through eons of time into unbelievable designs; in addition to looking like pill boxes, ornate wheels, elaborately carved wedding rings, piano keys, accordians, mandolins they also have some designs as yet undreamed up by man. Only snowflakes rival them in exquisiteness and variety of design. At least five thousand species of diatoms have been identified, and sometimes it seemed to me that at least three thousand of them were in the Fenont.

But they are plants, for they are alive, reproduce, and have cholorophyll. The plant tissues is squeezed inside the double box, the box, no

matter the deign, being a sort of shell as it is made of silicon, the substance of which sand and mdoern silicon chips are made. As the plant grows it needs elbow room, so it pushes the box apart. Being a one-celled plant it reproduces like most good little one-celled live things do, by just dividing itself into two. When this happens each new cell has only half a box and each must grow the other half. This business of dividing, accomplished by a normal splitting up and dividing of chromosomes, can happen in just a matter of hours, or even less.

There are some places on this earth where diatoms have occurred in such numbers that their discarded shells are found today in deposits as thick as three thousand feet. Richmond, Virginia, sits on an eighteen-foot layer of diatoms, deposited there in the eons when the sea came much further inland. When you recall that most diatoms are too small to see with the naked eye this is a ponderous consideration.

The importance of diatoms in fresh water streams, however, lies in their schematic position at the bottom of a food chain. Since diatoms are plants they are able to manufacture their own food out of sunlight, water and carbondioxide, no one of these commodities being in short supply in a shallow stream. Then small creatures like mayfly nymphs or stonefly larvae come along and gobble them up; then larger creatures feed on the larvae, such as fish or birds. Thus the native fish, like trout, are dependent, indirectly, upon the diatoms and other microscopic algae. And there you have a food chain. The food chain which spans the smallest to the greatest in size, is the one from salt water diatoms to whales.

The discarded shells of diatoms in our brooks, those from diatoms which died naturally or the shells were ejected from insect

or fish digestive systems, eventually wash down to the sea by stream currents, so they don't pile up and give us deposits of diatomaceous earth as happens on many shallow, quiet warm waters. Humans saunter by these lovely forms of life every day, or even wade among them; they drive or walk over bridges without ever suspecting their handsome presence. I often hung over the rail of the bridge by the mill, looking down at the river, lightly tinged amber by a brown algae, and wished I could see the diatoms from up there.

This was a more amenable summer, as to company. City friends brought their children to picnic, and play in my stream. My sister appeared more often, and even slept in the tent overnight with me more than once. One of my young friends, a favorite because she was country reared, as refreshing as the daisies, and unspoiled and girlish as bluets, came to stay for a week to recuperate from a mysterious ailment, thereby bringing a little drama into my retreat.

Alice was normally talkative and as transparant as window pane. This time, however, she was talkative but furtive. More than once, as we lay in our cots by candlelight, watching the flickering shadows on the canvas walls and umbrella cross-arms, she seemed on the verge of telling me something of import. But just as the right psychological moment seemed to have been reached I lost my hold on her faith. The day before she was due to go home, two of her brothers suddenly appeared to take her back. The older one, using inquisitiveness about my work as a pretext, crossed the Fenton with me and we alked downstream to one of my data stations on the hemlock trail. We picked and nibbled at the abundant wintergreen berries whose dark green shiny leaves grew in a dense mat along there. When we were well out of sight and sound he said "Alice is married! She eloped!"

I could feel my jaw drop in surprise. She was such a fairy-

story little princess that one unconsciously hoped to keep her in that fixed stage forever. "She was so ashamed of deceiving my mother she couldn't tell anyone about it," he added. What a jolt! Out here so remote from the frenetic behavior of most human life.

There was another memorable friendship incident at this trout stream rendezvous. It was a beautiful summer Saturday afternoon that I looked up from my data sheets which were spread all over the picnic table to see a young lady with a mass of brown curls all over her head ducking under the wire fence and approaching my camp from in back of the work tent. I was surprised, pleasantly so, for here was a person I had often seen on campus and had been waiting to meet for a couple of years. She exuded intelligence, yet she had an aristocratic, slightly-aloof bearing which kept my admiration at a distance. As a rule such genteel-appearing people make me wary; either they are putting on an act, or they are so unrealistic in their outlook on life that my nature world and simple life horrifies them. I had been told by a person who knew this girl, however that she was charming and delightful to know, that she was one of the secretaries at the college but loved the woods! How such an outstanding-looking creature could be an office secretary had puzzled me. She looked destined for higher things, and time was to prove that was a correct evaluation.

I was one amazed person, now, to have her walk right up to me deliberately, tell me her name, shake hands with me, and present me with a note of introduction. A formal note of introduction out in the wild, beside a tent, on a trout stream bank! Me in jeans and wind-tangled hair, she in jodphurs and precise curls! Well, if

this was the way to be a lady I could be a lady too, but all I could think of for a few moments was the British formality acted out by Stanley when he came upon Livingston in Africa.

I invited Betty to have tea with me, for that sounded appropriate, and tea is what I flavor my hot water with. Of course I did have tea on hand, and it's a drink acceptable in the nicest society. She graciously accepted.

Of course I had to heat the water, and as the previous night had been chilly the stove was in the tent. I went in and carried it out, not wanting to smoke her up with the fireplace. She had graciously accepted my seat at the table, with her back against the tree. Now she was so fascinated with the stove that she put her legs and feet up on the bench, leaned on her elbow on the table, and watched with downright delight the operation of the stove. I relaxed, too, no longer feeling like an Indian or a woodchuck before an elegant civilized creature.

Yet, fancy hairdo not-with-standing, there was one memory I had of this girl which modified circumstances. One Sunday morning when college was in session and I was living on campus, an odd sound approached toward my dorm. Several of us ran to the front windows, including our housemother, the person from whom the note of introduction had come today. We caught a glimpse of a truck coming down the road, and organ music was emanating from it, almost like from a calliope. We all rushed out to the front porch. The truck moved slowly by. There was the girl with the curls all over her head, dressed much as today, in the back of the open truck, seated at an old fashioned organ, playing a hymn like mad, with all the stops pulled out. Three men students, also in outdoor clothes, were brac-

ing the organ against the jouncing of the old truck.

As the truck passed slowly by we could see one more boy, sprawled on the floor, where he was pumping the organ pedals with his hands. Several women students, dressed in their best clothes, were coming out of the girl's dormitory next door, sauntering slowly out into the road and heading toward church. Some of the girls on the porch with me were dressed for church. Those in the road paused to look back at the truck as it passed by. A few were obviously amused, some acted puzzled, and we could see that others were indignant. But to me, rather than it appearing irreligious, the scene was fantastically unexpected and delightful.

Our housemother, who had been insisting that I make an effort to meet Betty, and was sure we had much in common, turned to me on the porch and said, "See? Didn't I tell you?" I had no suspicion of it then but the day was to arrive when that organ would come to roost in my living room.

But now, here was that head of curls and the Fifth Avenue poise, sitting opposite me on a warm summer afternoon on the bank of the Fenton River under the big shady maple, sipping tea with me. It was a Golden Day for me as it brought me the kind of friendship one doesn't find in the woods. A woman naturalist, like myself, has much in common with the astronomer. Both spend much of their lives on an isolated pinnacle. So few women shared my outdoor interests that I had to either turn to men for mental companionship, and thereby risk misinterpretation, or I must remain alone. Alone I remained most of the time, except in shared class lab work.

But now, in less than five minutes, I learned that Betty's curls were merely a concession to conformity and ~~feminixxxxxxxxx~~ femininity just

as lipstick and sometimes a bright ribbon tying back my hair was mine. She bubbled over with fellowship and a natural feeling for the outdoors which was a tremendous, delightful surprise for me. When, at one point, with a deliberately high pitched voice, she waved a hand over my campsite and said, "You get paid for this?", implying I ought to be the one paying for the privilege of being allowed to live in such a delightful place, she won my heart for all time. After the usual ubiquitous questions from all my female friends,- "Aren't you afraid to be out here all alone?" and "Aren't you afraid of snakes?" Betty's question was music to my ears.

Betty had just returned from the funeral of her adored father, who had been a physician. I was touched. This walk to my camp had been her chosen diversion. But sadness couldn't prevail for long, out here in the woods. A chestnut-sided warbler twitted at us from the maple overhead, the brook gurgled gently like silver music. She was soon talking companionably to passing dragonflies, and her general conversation became downright effervescent. In fact, she eventually proved to be one of the most skillful conversationalists I have ever met. And, of all things, writing turned out to be one of her hobbies as it was mine.

On her next visit she remained to spend a week of her vacation with me. Now I had time to find out about that organ. "I bought it at an auction for a song," she said simply. "Several of the students in my department offered transporation for it that week-end; it was unpremditated happenstance that church-going time on Sunday morning proved the most convenient moving time for all of us."

"It looked like a staged tableau," I chuckled.

"Well," she shook her head, "it wasn't. I planned it. I wanted to ride out back with the organ, and since I was the only gal present the boys

insisted I have the only seat. You would have to lack a sense of humor to miss the opportunity to create a staged scene at that moment, with people streaming out of the dorms and up the road to church. If we hadn't put on an act it would have looked shabby to be moving in the midst of everyone dressed in Sunday clothes."

Shortly after we met, Betty moved to Hartford to pursue plans to enter medical school, a profession which she achieved many years later and became a leader in her field, fulfilling the promise of what she had always looked as if she could do. One week night in early September she was overcome by the desire to escape the city so she drove out to my Fenton camp, twenty-eight miles away, in her small old tomato-red roadster, preferring to get up the next dawn to sleeping another night in the airless city. At daybreak we were both amazed to step out of our stove-heated tent and see her red car now pure white with hoar frost. It looked like one huge hunk of fuzzy rock candy. "And it's only the second week in September!", wailed Betty. "How can this be?"

"We must be in a cold pocket," I mumbled, staring at the car.

"What's that?"

"Sometimes cold air slides downhill and collects in low ground depressions," I explained. "Cold air is heavier than warm air, so cold air must have slid down the hill from the house area up there, and lodged here last night. The river water is warmer than the air, which is why the river is steaming now. That steam wafted over onto the cold metal of the car and froze. The mist formed frost crystals, that's all. I bet the tent was white like this with frost, too, but our stove melted it before we saw it. Look." I pointed to the Joe-pye-weeds in the field nearby, and the bonesets, where soft white

frost, looking like a thickish layer of powder snow, lay lightly on their tall tops.

Betty didn't dare wait for breakfast, other than the hot cocoa we'd had in the tent. As soon as she left I went over to the table to get water for more cocoa and to make hot cereal. When I took the lid off the large aluminum kettle I expected to see a skim of ice on the water. But it was just clear liquid. Reaching for my cereal pan, I accidentally bumped against the table. By pure luck I happened to be looking down into the big kettle of water just as I jarred the table. Instantly, a strange phenomenon occurred!. The whole pan of water seemed to turn suddenly to ice, but in such huge crystals that their flat sides, at several different angles, slanting down in the pan from top to bottom, reflected handsome pastel rose, lavender and yellow tints.

"Super-cooled liquid!" I yelled out into the wild, cold morning all by myself. We had studied about this in our chemistry textbook. I had never seen it before and didn't know anyone else who had. My first impulse was to go to the house up above and telephone the chemistry department in case any student wanted to come down and see it.. Then I remembered it was much too early in the morning; besides the phenomenon would be melted by the time anyone could get here.

This super-cooled condition will sometimes occur to a liquid if it is chilled to below freezing when the atmosphere is dust-free and the air is motionless. Then, just a slight jar to the liquid, or sudden innoculation with dust or other small foreign matter, and the below-freezing water will instantly crystallize.

I hated to ruin the amazing spectacle, knowing I probably would never see it again even if I lived to be two hundred, but life had

to move on and also I was very curious as to what would happen when I tilted the pan for it sure looked as if I had a big kettle of solid heavy ice. I knew that water expands as it gradually freezes but this hadn't had time to do so, or, had it expanded before I disturbed the kettle? Cautiously I took ahold of the big aluminum kettle with both hands, and tipped it toward the cereal pan. Instantly the handsome crystal planes disappeared and slush poured into the small pan. I watched with no small degree of astonishment; I hadn't heard that super-chilled liquid turned to slush if disturbed before it melted. For all I knew, I was witnessing a unique, or at least rare, reaction.

About mid morning, when the sun was warm and high, the sky was blue and the air delicious with early fall scents, a snazzy sports car came down the hill to my camp. A truly handsome, tall, slender young man stepped out and introduced himself. He was an aquatic biologist from one of the Ivy League colleges, sent down to me by my superiors. I was delighted. Someone who could talk my language! In some ways I was still too trusting, was naive and daisyish as my friend Alice. With all the innocence of the unworldly wise, I chattered on about my work here on the Fenton, for that seemed to be what he had been sent down for.

But he brought into my Eden a professional hissing with which I was as yet unfamiliar. I stated frankly my facts, which were emerging from my data. I displayed my instruments, stated my techniques, and asked for opinions. The charming young man listened with seemingly genuine interest; he quietly asked a few intelligent questions, which gave the impression he was observant. He then smiled in a disarmingly friendly fashion.

Then the sky fell! The first of many such experiences which were to takeplace throughout my life in my contacts and work with scientific men. Fortunately, at that moment, I was too green, too trusting of mankind, for the dull truth to sink in. Besides, I had the happy notion that well educated people were always kind and understanding.

It was the story of the super-chilled liquid which precipitated matters. The moment I finished telling the story of my morning's experience with the pan of water which had suddenly turned to ice because it was jarred, my nice visitor's smile turned to a sneer. His sudden scoffing was so unexpected I lost my tongue completely, To this day I shut up like a clam when someone with supposedly advanced training in my field makes a fool of himself or herself in trying to make a fool of me. He went on from the supercooled liquid to ridicule my equipment, the techniques I was using, the people who were sponsoring my work. And he tore the data apart as being too unscientific to be worth looking at. I held my tongue, walked him the few steps to his car, and was mighty happy to see him go off.

All I could think of at the time was that he was a spoiled brat, in much the same way an expensively dressed pretty girl is apt to be spoiled. Conceited, self-centered. Not for a long time was I to learn that this kind of behavior is a ploy used by people with an inferiority complex who want to bolster their own worth by ridiculing that which they would not, or could not, do as well. This was professional jealousy, which I had no reason then to recognize. I was to learn to consider it a curse, a deterrent to human progress, including other fields of endeavor besides science. Though such behavior predominates in men, women can stoop that low, too.

Despite the disparaging comments of my handsome visitor I continued collecting data. Now and then I took some of it up to the college mathematics people for help on setting up statistical tables which is the best way to "read" such data. Only by plotting it against coordinates can it be used in comparison with other data.

I knew it was doubtful that any of Connecticut's trout streams can ever be restored to their original conditions. Most of the decadence of our once famous trout waters is due to conditions which will continue to increase rather than diminish. The cutting off of forests, the encroachment of towns, and malls, scouring of stream beds by uncontrolled runoff, destruction of aquatic vegetation and fish food supply by too low or too high water, and the use of our streams for waste disposal prevent hope of any return to pristine conditions. With our explosive population, matters can only grow worse; but some management can modify the situation, at least for the rest of this century.

The fall before I set up camp on the Fenton, my college game management class put in some stream improvement structures not far downstream from my camp. Since the stream bed is liberally strewn with rocks it was convenient for us to pile the stones into low dams to impound water, on purpose creating aerating waterfalls and creating deep pools behind the dams, thus creating another habitat or two for trout. Except at flood time the water poured gently over the low dams; at flood periods the water slid high over the dams without piling up to form pressure behind the structures. Thus the structures were not pushed out and the expense of cement was unnecessary.

In a few places we did use chicken wire on the downstream side,

staking it at either end of the stream with deeply set posts that were cut from adjacent woods. The wire catches leaves and sticks, which help make the dam more efficient by filling in the chinks between stones; and, of course, the wire holds the stones more securely in place.

In sections where the stream ran shallow for a considerable distance in the sun, but had one shady bank, we built stone deflectors, which are partial dams that extend a few feet out into the stream and shunt the current to the shady side. The deflector can also be used to force a current to undercut a bank where heavy tree roots hold the bank in place and there is little danger of erosion. This forms a good hiding place for a trout along a stretch where there is no pool orother shelter for a fish.

In a few places where the stream was wide and the water spread out too thin we built a deflector in the center, like a dam open at each end. This completely changed the shallow nature of the area by splitting the current and concentrating the water over near the banks. When water swirls around such barriers it digs holes at their ends; this means new little pools are dug for trout shelter and it also makes for cooler and better aerated water. Where a current has been speeded up by such a deflector riffles result; this adds to the cooling and aeration of the water. Trout need a higher oxygen content in the water than most fish. Every such aerated and cooled pool created means another unit of stream more valuable to fishermen.

We created further natural-type fish shelters by many devices. The simplest was a pile of stones erected to form a cairn out in a deep hole. When you stack such a pile, loosely, yet make it with sturdily arranged largish rocks, the many quiet, sheltering holes ~~in the~~

in the pile offer shetler to a fish. We tried sinking a board, resting its ends on stones to raise it a few inches off the bottom; then we piled heavier stones on top of the board to hold it down. In a few places we staked boards into place. In one large pool we sank a small raft in the same manner. These, of course, provide excellent cool shelter under them.

Part of my job on the Fenton was to check the food supplies of the fish, and the temperature in these man-created pools and shady nooks and compare the data with sections of the stream where these improvements did not exist, yet where the conditions had been almost identical before we put in the improvements. I also had the pleasant task of determining how many fish per unit of improved stream existed compared to the number present in the unimproved sections. Until that summer no data were available for any of these things in this part of the east. So I was paid for the job of catching trout, or just sitting on a river bank inconspicuously and watching for trout, counting them and recording where seen.

As I was camped on an attractive but unimproved section of the river, I had frequent opportunity to observe that the larger forms of life present there were suckers, turtles and an occaional water snake or water bird. I seldom saw a trout there, and caught only one near my camp the whole time I was there. As far as I could see the other unimproved sections were the same, although this is one of the streams which the state stocks every spring.

Of course there was the question, where did the trout come from which were in the improved areas? I could only assume that they had survived by finding their way to the shelters, else they too would have disappeared by way of predators. Maybe some of

them would survive and find their way up to feeder brooks to spawn in the spring. But even the most optimistic among us did not hope to ever again see brook trout maintaining themsleves in Connecticut streams. They would always have to be supplemented with hatchery fish: those, however, could be helped to survive longer.

It was a pleasure to walk down the hemlock trail on the west side of the river and catch glimpses of the white-edged fins of a trout disappearing into a stone pile or under a board. And it was easy to see that their food was much more abunadnt on the rocks of the improvemnts than on the rocks in the open. In this improved area I had little trouble catching a trout with either a dry fly or a worm, to obtain a specimen for stomach analysis, and in every case there was enough food present in the digestive tract to warrant getting out my low-power microscope and checking the species they were eating.

The one trout which I had caught near my camp had as empty insides as if his digestive tract had been put through a washing machine., even though there was enough food in that area to take care of the needs of more than one trout. It could have been that the water did not have enough oxygen, or may have been too warm for him, though I caught him in a shady section. He had been free, of course, to travel downstream to find a better habitat, but he hadn't.

At summer's end there was no doubt in my mind that the simplest stream improvements can make the difference between a poor trout stream and a fair to good one. The question, was, of course, how much time and energy a landowner would want to put into improving the sections of stream running through his land when those who derive the most benefit are total strangers with fishing licenses from the city. At

that time you never heard of trout fishermen getting together for a weekend to help improve a favorite stream. But that has been more true since then. Also, the city fisherman pays his fishing license fee, which in turns supports hatcheries else there'd be no fish left in the streams at all.

Extensive stream improvements were put in at this time on the West Branch of the Farmington River, in the western part of the state, by the CCC. And after my summer on the Fenton many such improvements were put in various streams throughout the state. But floods caused by the excessive rainfall of the September 1938 hurricane destroyed many of the structures, indicating that only permanent structures, which are costly, might last. In time, it became a fun thing for fishing clubs to put in fish shelters of the crude type such as those in the Fenton. They were the precursors of what today is known as submersible architecture used by the Sea Grant people to produce more food organisms for marine fish and shell fish. They work, no matter how crude or fancy.

I dug a beanhole at this camp. By myself, slowly. It was rather easy to do as the flat on which I was living was a sandy river terrace. But stones were also easily available, from the river, where I lined the hole sides and floor with them so one by one I carried or rolled several of them to the hole. On one of my trips to another stream I had seen a long piece of galvanized metal lying as a piece of junk along the road. This made an excellent roof for the beanhole.

When all was ready, I sent an invitation up to the forestry faculty and their students. On the chosen day, I started a fire in the hole at six in the morning. The spring-water kettle I converted to a bean pot. It barely fit on the narrow stove, where I set

the beans to boil, after having had them soak in the kettle overnight. They had to boil for about an hour, but I knew it would take an extra hour to get such a huge kettle to boil on that little stove. So I arranged for a couple of forestry boys to come down about eight o'clock, to transfer the hot, heavy kettle into the beanhole. They first raked out the unburned pieces of wood which I had been feeding into the fire, so there were mostly just a few red embers on the bottom. But the rocks were so hot I was afraid some one would get burned. But they got on opposite sides of the narrow hole, and with a rope through the handles, lowered the kettle safely onto the bottom. They removed the ropes, and covered the hole for me with the sheet of tin, then shoveled the soil back over the tin and especially along the edges. They teased me as they went off in a little jalopy, demanding I provide them with a GOOD meal that evening.

At six o'clock most of the company was gathered, to rejoice or tease. With many comments, and some silent worrying on my part, the two boys who covered the hole with soil in the morning now dug the soil away. Suddenly an edge of the metal was uncovered. The bouquet which arose from that opened edge set up a roar of rejoicing and approval. But I still held my breath. They could be burned.

But the beans were lfted out of the hole by a couple of hooked sticks, and certainly didn't smell burned. When the lid was removed the lightly golden browned-top beans looked like something from a gourmet oven. There were faculty and their wives present, and they had brought big salads, home made biscuits, and pie, to either fill us up if the beans had been a disaster, or to supplement the beans for a more complete diet. The boys lighted a fire in the fireplace; one had brought a guitar, and Robbie was there. A perfect foresters'

night out! Even a moon glistened on the river.

Robbie had come to visit me many times, often hiking through the woods the four and a half miles from his home; usually he had a school pal with him. One day a cousin of his, about two years older, who was interested in taxidermy, was with him. The cousin looked over the field mouse skins and skeletons I had been preparing for class work and he asked me if I knew how to skin and stuff a bird. I was a bit dubious, as working with feathers is different from working with fur. He offered to shoot something and bring it to me.

"How about a crow?" I suggested. "There are no laws protecting crows, and it's a large enough bird to start with." I knew that crows had been a nuisance around campus so I suggested he go to the college dump to shoot one, where he would be out in the open and could see what he was shooting at and not hit anyone.

Three days later a car drove down to my camp. I learned, to my horror, that Robbie's cousin and two other boys had gone hunting for a bird skin. Instead of going to the open dump as I had suggested they went to the woods and climbed a tree with their guns. The cousin and one boy climbed back down safely, but the third boy handed down his gun to the two below, butt end first. The gun was loaded. The trigger caught in a branch, the gun fired and the boy dropped out of the tree dead at their feet.

It is one of those incidents which nibbles at your conscience all of your life. You know you were innocent. You know the other fellow didn't do as he was told. And you know that even if you had refused to make a suggestion, those with the guns would have tried something anyway. My own gun I hated more than ever now, and from then on I always kept it unloaded lest some visitor come

across it and handle it improperly.

My gun was the center of more potential adventures, again, in this camp, most of which never happened as at Shade Swamp. One week-end my sister and two of her girl friends came to stay for a Friday night, I sleeping in their car and they tucked into my tent. Saturday morning they drove me to the Natchaug River so I could see how my rainbow trout stream was getting along in the summer heat. I took my gun along as I knew of a couple of doubtful characters who hung around in the area and I wanted to make sure we weren't bothered. But it was an unevntful morning, other than discovering that the temperature of the river was up to eighty degrees, a lethal reading for most trout. The girls drove me back to camp, had lunch with me, changed from their "old" clothes as they called them into city finery, and headed for Boston for the rest of the week-end.

The following Monday evening I was very much surprised to see my sister's car coming down the long meadow lane. She had never liked the country that well, to return so soon. I was afraid that something had happened to my parents.

She drove right up to me, got out of the car in a very indignant way, threw open the back door of the car, and pointed to the back seat where she reached in and pulled a scarf off of something.

"Where did you get that?!" I exclaimed, not knowing until that moment that the gun was missing.

"You left it in my car Saturday," she said, with great agitation. "We discovered it when we got to Boston. I've been scared to death all week-end. I didn't have a permit to have it in my possession, and we didn't know if it was loaded. Even if I had the nerve to touch it I wouldn't dare bring it into a hotel room with us. I locked the

car every time we had to move two feet away from it, but we were always afraid that when we got back someone was hiding in the back seat with the gun pointed at us." How often I had felt that way when I returned from a trip and the gun was in the tent!

"Every bump we went over all the way home we expected to hear that gun go off," my sister wailed. "It was bad enough to have to get into the car Sunday morning in Boston, after the thing had been in the car all night, but then I had to let it sit in the car all last night at home, and all day today parked where I work. If I've sprouted gray hair it's your fault!" I glanced at the head which was still shiny chestnut, half yearning to comfort her and half ready to burst out laughing. Her voice was quavering; she was on the point of tears so I restrained the urge to laugh.

But I could see all the implications. My dainty lady-like sister, who wouldn't touch a gun with her little finger, caught like any queen of the underworld in Boston, with a .410 guage pistol-size shotgun in her possession which required a federal permit. And of course she had no kind of permit. What headlines! I could hear her explaining to the hard-boiled Boston police, all in one breath, "My sister lives alone in the woods in a tent in Connecticut and she has a permit for this gun and we went with her to take river temperatures and count water bugs and she took the gun along to protect us and then she forgot it and left it in my car." Naturally, they wouldn't believe her. And what would the Conn. State Fish and Game Dept. people have said if the Boston police had phoned them and asked for an explanation of that gun! At least the Fish and Game offices were closed for the weekend.

I reached in and took the gun out; I knew it wasn't loaded but I aimed it at the ground. Personally, I wished she had dropped

the blarsted Shermead thing into Boston harbor, where at least it would sink better than tea. But once the gun was out of the car and I saw my sister's face relax I burst into such uncontrollable laughter I was soon in tears.

I often went over to see the old lady who owned the sawmill, when I learned she lived alone. She was eighty-three years old and so crippled with arthritis she couldn't get down her front steps after her mail. Relatives, who had tried unsuccessfully to get her to live with them, came once or twice a day to help her.

When blueberries ripened in the small field between the barbed wire back of my tent and the dirt road I often picked my tin cup of them for her. Though I had never before permitted myself to pick a cardinal flower I did gather a few for her as there were several tall stalks of them along the river. She had loved these things all herlife, but now she was confined and wouldn't see a wild berry or a wildflower unless somone brough them to her. She was the happiest, sweetest, most contented old lady I ever met, a model which I consciously set myself to remember if it ever came my turn to be in my eighties.

Once in a great while, when the mill was in operation while I was camping there, when the sound of the high-frequency buzz echoed through my campsite, I hurried over to watch it in action. The mill building itself, and the mill pond with its paddle water wheel, were so picturesque that many artists came to paint or draw the scene. Most of them sat on camp stools out on the edge of the main road at the far side of the mill pond, from where the view was best so they knew nothing of my camp. A few did choose the scene from the dirt road below, near the bridge.

One late afternoon when I walked over to watch the old mill in action something moved in the bushes on my left, just in off the dirt road. Being so eye and ear trained to woods sounds, movements and objects, if anything were present which didn't belong I was aware of it instantly. There was a foreign object in those bushes, all right. A man! I recognized him, too. A neighbor whom I had passed a couple of times walking along the dirt road. Why did he have to hide in the bushes? Aside from certain natural reasons, I myself often lurked in bushes, when chasing birds or on the trail of some wild animal, or looking for shrub seeds. I briefly thought of my gun, but it was locked, and unloaded, in the work tent chest. I was to often hear women say, in the years ahead, they are afraid of men hiding in the bushes. But to me it was so rare that this was the first time I encountered it.

That evening,, just as I finished recording the routine barometric and temperature readings, I heard someone coming. It was the neighbor I had seen in the bushes. He stopped at the back end of my work tent. "You don't have a door for me to knock on," he said meekly. "May I come to call?"

"Certainly, " I answered, feeling that bravado was best in such circumstances and that this was better than hiding behind a bush. I offered him my one and only camp stool, which he refused. I mptioned to the picnic table benches. He turned his back on them. So there we stood, first on one foot then the other, as he introduced himself and told me his wife was away for a few days and he was looking for someone with whom to chat to help while the time away.

I finally persuaded him to sit down on the table bench by the tree. For an hour or so we talked, mostly about inane things

which didn't interest me at all. I was bored. I yearned to get at some of my scribbling and reading. Twice I excused myself to go take water temperature and depth readings at the camp station, having to use a flashlight the last time, it was getting so late. There was no sign of the guy going so I said in despair, "Will you have a cup of cocoa?" assuming he would turn up his nose when coffee wasn't offered.

But he beamed. So I got the little stove into action under the stars, which were now getting brighter. I squatted down beside the stove to stir the cocoa. He came and squatted down beside me. I found excuse to get up and move to the other side by getting more firewood from near the fireplace. He got up, stretched, and came around and squatted beside me as I stoked the fire. So I arose and remained standing. When the cocoa party on the table was finally over I stated frankly and very obviously that it was time for me to call it quits for the day as I had to be up to take temperatures at dawn. He thanked me for a friendly evening and went his way, though I suspected he was hiding in the bushes somewhere nearby, watching me close down camp for the night.

Twice more that week, wasting my precious evenings, he came to sit in idle chit chat and having to be practically chased home. Never let anyone say in front of me that only a woman can talk on and on endlessly about nothing. This last visit was a Saturday night, and it was my misfortune I had no company. He was in a very low but talkative mood. "My wife doesn't understand me," he moaned. "Now why couldn't I have met an outdoor girl like you first before I saw her?"

This was the first time for me to hear this old saw; but not the last. How strangely that human behavior of the kind I would always associate with city culture would first come my way in the woods.

Sherwood

For endless minutes her ambled on, with me trying to steer the conversation to safer and less boring ground, wishing like made that he would go home, but unwittingly playing the female role of being too sorry for him to order him to leave. When he realized I wasn't encouraging him he finally got up from the table and walked over to the laboratory tent where he rested his arms on the guy ropes and put his head down on his arms. He heaved a great sigh and moaned, "I might was well go home and shoot myself. There's nothing for me to live for." Maybe that was the only time I was to hear such awful words as these, but not the only time for that assinine exaggerated sigh. How stupid some men can act, just because a girl is too courteous and kind to ridicule his behavior. I learned then, and many times in the future, that because a girl remains politely quiet he assumes she is stupidly swallowing it all.

I was disgusted. "I don't like such silly talk in my camp," I said gently. "I think you had better go home and get a good night's sleep."

"But I can't sleep. I'll just lie awake all night."

"Put your mattress out under a tree. You'll be surprised how sleepy you will get out in the fresh air under ths stars."

"Do you think it will work?" he asked, with a silly grin.

"Sure. Just try it."

"Please come over to the house and talk to me awhile," he pleaded. "It's so early yet and the night is so long. Maybe you won't mind helping me carry my mattress out under our big tree. A mattress is a clumsy thing to handle alone."

"Sorry," I said, not the slightest bit interested in his trap. "I hiked miles up and down this stream today. I'm tired. I have anothe hard day tomorrow."

Sherwood

"But tomorrow is Sunday."

"I work on Sundays. The river doesn't know when it is Sunday. It keeps on going."

He finally left. In the middle of the nightxxx I was awakened by a terrifically loud shot. I sat boltupright in my cot, my heart poudhing like a trip hammer. Then another shot!. I felt under my pillow. My gun was there, where I'd put it in case my lonesome neighbor came over in the dark. There was a long silence, in the plush dark.

"Why do people have to have guns?" I muttered aloud. "He's dead," I said talking to myself. "I should have found someone for him to talk to. I should have hiked out x to a phone, and called his wife. The old lady knew where she was."

By daybreak I was a wreck. I had visions of the guy slowly bleeding to death because I wasn't running for a doctor. Then felt myself recoiling against being a witness and told myself that if he wanted to kill himself he would do it now or later. Maybe he was better off dead anyway, since he didn't seem to be happy.

At sunrise I started for the college campus through the woods, to get help, as the owner of the house up above was away. I cut diagonally across the woods, instead of following the river to the Gurleyville road, hoping to save time. But soon I was pushing through thickets of briars and mountain laurel; it slowed me down, forcing me to think through what I was doing. Why should I involve anyone at the college? Why should I run away from a duty that was mine? I coaxed myself to turn around and go back. After all, if I was going to live in woods so close to civilization, I

had to learn to solve my own problems. I couldn't always be running for help. ~~[illegible]~~

I took a beeline back to the dirt road; playing Indian like Robbie, I slowly moved from tree to tree as I approached the house of the probably dead guy. Once close enough to peer through the screen of bushes along the road, suddenly I was so angry I wanted to stomp right out into the open and speak my piece. There was the old guy, rocking in a big chair on his lawn, peacefully reading the Sunday paper. On the ground near him was a large double mattress. The mattress was enough to make me gasp; I had been thinking in terms of a single cot mattress. I was flooded, mentally, with "what ifs". What if I had gone over to help him move that mattress; would he have pulled me down on it? What if his wife came home and saw that part of their bed out on the damp lawn?

I returned to my camp to cool off, and was horrified to discover that I was mostly mad because the guy wasn't dead. I set my thinking in proper Sunday order and went up to see the old lady by mid morning.

"Did you hear those shots in the night?" she asked, before I had time to mention the subject myself. "They scared me half to death. I was worried about you over there in that tent."

"I sure did. What was it all about?"

"When the mill man brought in my morning paper he said a big truck backfired twice, and woke up the whole neighborhood." I wondered if my lonesome neighbor had been sleeping out on that mattress under a tree for the first time in his life when the backfiring happened.

I decided then and there that my neighbor wasn't visiting me any more, with his suggestive ideas which turned a beautiful night

into a miserable experience. The next time I passed him on the road I sailed right on by with only a curt hello. I had several similar opportunities to cut him cold. He took the hint and never came to see me again.

But I did have one more minor involvement with him. One day when I stopped to pick blueberries for the old lady I had the gun with me as I'd just returned from a trip downstream. I didn't want to carry it up to her house so I laid it down in the grass by a clump of blueberry bushes. On my way back from delivering the blueberries there was my neighbor hiding in the bushes again. I remembered the gun! Acting as nonchalant as possible I walked over into the blueberry patch, but I just couldn't find the gun. Had he seen me lay it there, and picked it up while I was up at the house? But I persistently made four or five passes up and down the small field until I finally saw the gun. Knowing the guy was still in the bushes, I walked over toward the river, as he was near the bank. I took an obvious stance, held up the gun and aimed at some twigs out over the river. Then, as if tired of make-believe play, I put the gun into my belt in an obvious manner, turned, and walked confidently into my camp. I never saw him in the bushes again.

I was bending down over the vegetation of the stream bank one bright sunny afternoon, looking for my prized elephant hide moccasins which I had left behind that morning when I went across to the spring then couldn't find them when I got back. A moving reflection in the mirror-smooth laundry pool caught my eye. What I saw made me look up quickly at the trail across the river. Running in single file were five rather large dogs, as silently intent on something as a pack of wolves. My heart was in my mouth, for a pack of dogs running in the woods often do things which one or two dogs wouldn't

try, same as a gang of kids.

I remained motionless until they disappeared around a dense clump of bushes, then I stepped quickly up the bank and into the tent. I looked out the back screened window just in time to see them emerge beyond the bushes; they kept on trotting along the trail to a bend in the river where they were soon out of sight. If they had gotten scent of me would they have come across the river? At that moment the gun was under my pillow. Would one shot have scared them away? Could I shoot to kill, or would I have missed and only infuriated them? They could rip the canvas tent to pieces. I was snapping the flap down door tight as I was thinking these things and felt how futile to try to shut out five big dogs. By then, of course, they were well downstream and hadn't discovered my presence. But imagination can be unnerving.

I was apprehensive the rest of the day. But apparently the dogs got led off into another direction by something like a deer or even just a rabbit. At least they didn't come back my way. Generally speaking, wild animals in southern New England are not harmful to people. But I knew that dogs were something else again.

I didn't find the elephant hide moccasins for three weeks, and by then they were full of crickets, which had sawed three-cornered holes in the soles. Crickets are cozy, jolly fellows, which I consider good company. Their voices at night are peace verbalized. But you want to keep your clothes away from them. They saw holes just for the fun of it, as I once discovered when I spread a bathrobe out on grass not far from my tent once when I was camping in the Berkshires. I was dismayed to discover the robe slashed with countless tri-cornered holes, none of the cloth missing.

In the fall I tied tag labels on some of the wild plants all

over the neighborhood, causing much head scratching by those who walked the dirt road, until they learned the reason. I had started a wild seed collection for the college, for use in their new game management studies. Some plants are difficult or impossible to identify when the leaves curl and dry after frost, so I decided to label the ones I would need while they were still in recognizable condition.

By the end of September ice was forming on my water pail and along the edges of the river at night. Every morning now the meadow was white with frost. Occasionally I braved the chill to slip out of my warm bed before the fire in the stove got going, so I could admire the frost on my tent. Most of the tall weedy wildflowers,- the goldenrods and boneset and Joe-Pyes, were very dead and decrepit looking, and ferns had turned to shriveled brown curls. But the sumacs remained scarlet everywhere, like scraps of bright scarves.

In October the slightly delayed coloring of the tree foliage suddenly burst into golds and reds and purples in the most brilliant fall I could remember. They started to fall rather fast; the brook looked as if a giant resplendent patchwork quilt were laid over it like a wide mantle. Spots of bare water showed through, reflecting blue sky which enhanced the reds and golds of the leaves. All of the reflector barriers and dams downstream gathered up and held onto snippings of red and gold, as if deliberately making a collection of beauty.

Never did I remember a more clear, brilliant October. The sky was deep blue day after day. The sunshine a perpetual warm smile in mid day. Soon the branches of the big maple above my camp were bare. But they formed a beautiful etching against the

sky and the gracefully sailing cumulous clouds. It was as if Nature knew I was out there, admiring, and she smiled on me.

All the insects were gone now, as they had been since September, except those sheltered in the unfrozen river. I could no longer lure any of the trout to take my hook so that I could determine their fall food intake. The bright colors of the world had gradually changed from golden yellows and scarlet red to browns and mahogany reds. The air was snappy, especially at night and in early morning. I and all the birds and animals knew that the felicitous season was over.

I awoke the morning of November third to a white, snowy world. I knew this had to be my last day. Not wanting the white mantle on my tent to melt, so the tent would remain dry, I dressed fast in the chill, unhooked the stove and took it outside where I made cocoa and hot cereal.

It was with painful nostalgia that I walked up to the house on the hill and phoned the college. By mid morning the foresters arrived with the truck. My tent, the little stove with its legs folded under it, and my folded cot, were hoisted up onto the truck. My helpers took down the work tent and lifted it and all its contents into the back of the truck with my own things.

The Arab had folded her tent and was stealing away, but as the truck climbed the hill she looked back from where she was sitting on the pile of tent canvas and looked reluctantly at the empty camp site where only the picnic table was still in place; she was mercifully unaware that it would be fifty years before she would see this site again, by which time it would be grown up to woodlot.

Too soon the truck turned left and was out on the highway.

See pg 8 attached