

today would not be as proud of a brand new bicycle as I was of that 20 cent knife.

But one day I lost my little knife. I have no words to describe my utter disappointment. I was filled with sorrow and dismay. It seemed that black night had suddenly overtaken me. I began a search for it. I looked here and I looked there. I looked everywhere. I looked everywhere that I could recall that I had been but I failed to find it. My brothers and my little sisters tried to help me find it but they could not.

When all earthly hopes were gone and it seemed like a night of despair had set in, suddenly I had a thought that gave me a ray of hope. Would not God help me find it? Did He not help when we were in peril of the cows? And like David of old, "I cried unto the Lord."

There was a patch of tall weeds near the house, so tall that, kneeling down in them I was hidden from view and there I besought the Lord to help me find my knife. The prayer was in regular form as nearly as I could make it and concluded with, "for Jesus' sake, Amen."

I shall never forget that day! When I arose from my knees I knew not where the knife was, but I went as straight to it as if I had known. In five minutes I had the knife in my hands. It was lying out near the barn. My impression at the time was that God had heard and answered my childish prayer—and the more than fifty years of time since have not altered that impression.

YOUNG INVENTORS

Every boy of that day (and they may still do it) went through a "gun fever" stage. We boys wanted a gun. And when I say we wanted a gun I mean we wanted a gun, "PERIOD." Some few boys of our day, the more well-to-do ones realized their ambitions, at least to the extent of an air rifle. I never had one. If my father had had only one son he might have been able to buy that one a gun, but he could not afford to arm the whole regiment that he had. So all the joy we had was the fond anticipation of the time when we might by some means manage to get one by our own efforts.

The shotguns of that day were mostly of the "muzzle-loading" type. This means that to load one a certain amount of gunpowder was poured into the muzzle, or open end of the barrel. Then with a "ramrod" a wad

of paper was pressed down against the powder with the ramrod. Then a load of shot was poured in and then another wadding of paper rammed down against the shot. The gun was then loaded except for the "cap" which was placed where the "hammer" would strike it and cause the spark which would explode the gunpowder and the gun would shoot. I suppose there were breech loading shot guns using shells in that day, but they were evidently high priced and we never even hoped to own one.

So anxious were we, (and in this case I refer to myself and my brother just older than me) for it was he and I who, is a way paired off and were buddies together more than with the other boys, so anxious were we for a gun that would really shoot (we made ourselves play guns) that even a "muzzle loader" would have satisfied us.

One day we were playing around the school house after the school term was over and found the metal stand of an old school chart. We trimmed everything off but the iron staff or stand and found to our delight that it resembled a gun barrel exactly. It was a hollow pipe or tube open at one end, closed at the other and about the right size and proportions of a small gun barrel. What was to hinder us from making a real shooting gun out of it? So we set to work and carved out a gun stock, contrived to fasten it onto the barrel and "presto," the gun was in our hands. The only thing that kept it from being like a real muzzle loading shot gun was that it had neither hammer nor trigger nor place to put the percussion cap. But we were not long overcoming these difficulties. Why couldn't we file a tiny hole at the closed end of the barrel where the powder would be and when the gun was duly loaded, hold a lighted match to the powder exposed through this tiny hole and this discharge the gun? Would it work? It did.

The first three or four trials with this new brand of fire arm was a howling success. But this was really a two man gun. I mean it took two to shoot it. One to hold the gun on the target while the other applied the match to make it shoot, and now comes the sad part of the story. We took turn about holding the gun on the object we wanted to shoot. This we considered the more important part in the procedure. The one who was holding the gun was the one who was really doing the shooting.