

Page 18 - Fr. Rod MacSween's Memories of Ironville ISSUE : <u>Issue 67</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1994/8/1

soap, and then started at him with the father's straight razor. After awhile they announced that they had finished. He opened his eyes and looking down towards his lap, he asked, "What's that on the cloth?" "Blood," they answered in choras. He leapt to his feet, scattered the shaving things over the floor, threw aside the bloody cloth, and rushed out the door. He did not re? tum for a long time. My mother told about another such wanderer who came and went as regularly as the moon changed. She was a small Httle harmless woman who was liked by everybody. On leaving any farm she always asked for a gift and always received one. It was never anything great, perhaps a cake of soap, a half-pound of tea, or a piece of cloth. These were always carefully wrapped. The little woman would deposit these packages in certain fa? vored farms, perhaps in the house, perhaps in a bam. She was like a squirrel preparing for a long winter. Alas, the analogy was only too exact, for such people must have been in constant dread that some day all houses would be closed to them. One day she came to my motlier's house, in a rash and in great fear. She gasped to my mother: "They're coming to take me away and lock me up. They say I'm crazy but I'm not. You know I'm not." My mother tried to soothe her and she would not be soothed. She asked her to have tea and she refused. "Give me my packages. That's all I want. I have to run," she said. When my mother last saw her, she was ranning towards the next farm, two or three bags bouncing on her back. Soon after she was cap? tured by the auSiorities and put away, and that ended the long era when that strange race Uved with the rest of men. THE GREAT INDUSTRIALIZED FARMS OF TODAY do not have the intimacy of the small family homestead. It is an in? timacy not only of family, there is the intimacy of the animals as well. The horses, cows and sheep give food to the humans in many farms, but they give companionship too. Generally this companionship is not acknowledged and it is always a great j factor in the lives of all. But even here my memo- Imagine this as your office... Imagine a career at sea... becominjj an olTicor in the Canadian ('oasl Guard. ir vou are finishing (irade 12 plus 0 OAC's (Ontario), CECiKI' (Quebec) or (Irade 12 (oilier provinces) in your university preparatory program this year, if you excel at math and physics, and if you think big... 1 lead for the freedom, tlie excitement and tlie challenge of a sea-going career with the Canadian Coast (juard. 1*1 The f()ur->ear Ceujadian Coast Ciuard officer training plan offers: • Tuition-free training • . monthly allowance • Practical sea training A modern, attractive campus in Sdney, with private rooms %. Canadian Coast Guard College Canada ries reveal me as a specta? tor only. I watched the an? imals and that was all. I was too young to engage myself with any of them. I merely admired and wondered. I cannot forget my first sight of a wild rabbit. It was busily chewing some? thing on the pathway where my brother and I were searching for the cows. When one of us made a noise, it dashed off at tremendous speed. My mind was thrilled at the sight; it was one of the rare occasions when 1 can remember my feelings. Later on we had a tame rabbit about the house. I'm certain that I must have caressed its lovely fur and tried to make it my friend, but there my



mind is a blank. Two things 1 do remember. First, my father taking his Sunday shoes from under the bed and finding the upper edge bit? ten off by the rabbit. I ex? amined the jagged rim of each shoe. What my fa? ther's reaction was, I am not sure. Later I watched while one of my brothers crawled underneath the house to rescue the rabbit. It simply sat still while he gathered it into his arms and brought it into the house. The rabbit had be? come the victim of an at? tack from our cat. My mother tried to make it comfortable near the kitchen stove. It showed no reaction, there were no visible wounds, but the rabbit slowly died. Of course the animal par excellence on the farm was the horse, a mare