

we did not light a fire as we would like to have done. Late in the afternoon, as we were lying in a clump of willows, on a sort of peninsula between the stream and a pond made by the rise, the ducks began to fly over us in clouds and settle down on the pond. This was what we had been waiting for; but while waiting, we had got so benumbed by the cold wind, that it was with difficulty we could load our guns, and after discharging them with indifferent success, I was determined to have a fire, before another duck was shot at. So, directing my companions to collect what dry leaves, twigs and wood they could, I proceeded to ignite it in this manner: Having arranged the leaves and twigs properly, I took a piece of gun-wadding, and filling it with powder, laid it among the leaves, upon which a handful of powder was also thrown. After this, I opened the pan of my fowling-piece—percussion caps being unheard of at that time—and putting in a good priming, pulled back the hammer, and placing the gun near the leaves, pulled the trigger. The “flash-in-the-pan,” was instantaneously followed by another flash that made me start backward, with haste. My hair and eye-brows were badly burnt, and my right hand was severely scorched.

The fire burned briskly in the willows, but I had enough fire in my hand, without wishing for more. As we rode home that evening, few words were spoken, and when the wagon stopped in front of our house, I alighted, and went directly to my room. So severe were my burns, that they kept me confined to the house for six long weeks; during this time I was under the care of my mother. God bless her! she is dead now. That kind mother tried to impress upon my mind the duty I owed to my Heavenly Father—she advised me to regard the commandment, “Remember the Sabbath, &c,” and those early injunctions have never been forgotten, though often disregarded. But it was not until the following fall, that I shouldered my gun and commenced to hunt again. Then came back my old roving habit—with it the fondness for manly sports, hunting included.

This early training, together with the almost constant ex-