whose batrachian occupants croaked nightly
their request for rain.

The nights were startling to one unaccustomed
to such, for the deep silence would be broken
at times by the soft tinkling of the cow-bells, as
their owners peacefully chewed the nourishing
bud. Then, with frightful clearness, the doleful
hoots of the owls perched in neighboring trees
would come to the ears, interrupted frequently
by a sullen croak of a frog, followed by a whole
chorus. The effect was weird indeed, and it
was difficult to reconcile the sounds of content,
sorrow, and harsh clamor. These ceased with
the morning light, and as the boys hastened
through the corral to their work of destruction,
there seemed nothing strange about the place.

The region round about had been logged on for
many years, and the dense forests of former
times, free from undergrowth, had been changed
to a district covered with low trees and ferns,
and traversed by grass-grown roads. Numerous
stumps told of the magnificent trees that
once had flourished there, and the only trees
that remained standing were spared because of
small size or marked decay. The groves of
alders, elderberry-trees, and dogwoods were
the favorite haunts of flocks of wild pigeons in
the early summer, while in the cross-roads and
cleared spots rabbits could be seen, morning
and evening, hopping about, or raised up on
their hind-legs watching for foes. Within a
few miles of the house there was a beautiful
stream, abounding in the spring with trout of
large size and uncommon voracity, and in the
winter with great flocks of mallard and teal.
In all the country the quail were very plentiful,
and a poor shot was he who could not bag a
score in a day.

One spring morning, as the boys were abroad,
they observed a great many bees among the
flowers; but they were at a loss to know where
they came from, for there were no tame bees in
the neighborhood. The day was such as to
awaken all life. The warm rains that had pre-
viously fallen had started the buds on the trees
and shrubs, and the warmth of this day had
brought them all out in perfection. The fruit-
trees were masses of white and pink, rivaling
their undomesticated brother plants; but these,
nevertheless, were plentifully blessed with
bright-colored promises of a bountiful future.

The bees all seemed to come and go from the
same direction, and a careful search, guided by
this fact, led the boys to a large redwood-tree,
foraking at a height of about fifty feet. At the
crotch, dark objects could be seen entering and
leaving the tree, and the hive was indeed found.
It was well-nigh useless to chop the tree down
at that time of the year, for there was probably
no great amount of honey as yet stored up

With zealous care the boys guarded their tree
all through the summer, while the bees worked
on, searching far and wide for honey to fill their
comb, quite unconscious of the sad fate soon to
overtake them. As the late fall approached,
the axes with double edges were sharpened up
from time to time, and on the fatal day they
gleamed forth viciously from the shoulders of
the youthful choppers. A staging was rigged
on the tree, a few feet from the ground in order
to get at the softer wood as well as to lessen
the distance to be cut through. With eager might
the boys cut at the tough bark, and shortly the
white sap of the tree was exposed. The white
rim was cut through, and by noon the tree was
well cut into. The afternoon found the boys
tired and with blistered hands, but undaunted
by such trifles they resumed their work, and
were rewarded, finally, by seeing the tree fall
headlong to the ground.

Angry at their sudden disturbance the bees
swarmed out of the tree in droves, intent on
vengeance, and ready to fight all intruders.
The mosquito-netting and gloves the boys had
brought along now proved of service, and pro-
tected by these, the robbers were able to
approach the forks of the tree and chop into the
trunk there. The shell of bark and wood about
the hollow was quite thin, and a few strokes of
the axe sufficed to reveal the coveted prize.
The cavity proved to be about three feet deep,
and as much as two feet in diameter, and it was
almost completely filled with fine honey. The
boys pulled out layer after layer, and heaped