

It took one mouse no time at all to realize he had found a good thing in the cozy stud space of our new barn.



safe to the Rock

THIS AUTUMN WE ARE HAVING our house re-sided and new windows installed. In preparation for the anticipated salvage from that project, Linda and I (being frugal packrats at heart) recently cleaned out the loft in our small barn to make room for stacks of old, but still usable wood trim that will soon be removed from the house.

The barn my father-in-law and I constructed (with able help, of course, from Linda and her mom) is now thirteen years old—sufficient time for the loft to become a tangled heap of this and that and the next thing, much of which was tossed up there from below, with little thought given to order or neatness.

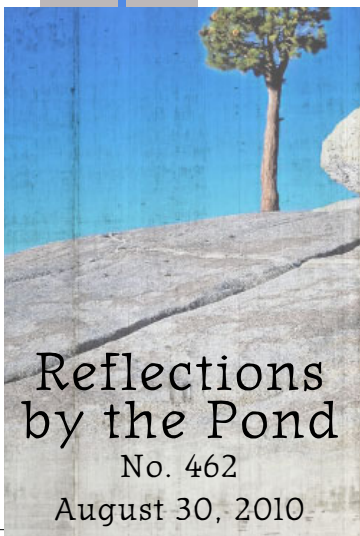
Not surprisingly, the removal of said mélange was not unlike

prying open the lid of the mythical Pandora's Box. One never really knew what unpleasant surprise awaited when turning over the detritus of the last thirteen years. Swarms of black ants had nested between sheets of stacked paneling and sheets of plywood, and mouse nests were discovered in boxes, rolls of old carpet remnants, and nooks and crannies of any description.

Being situated hard against our stand of timber, the barn's loft had become refuge and indoor potty for all manner of beast—an occupation which had started well before the barn was even completed.



On the day we built the loft I was up in the rafters arranging and laying down the sheets that would



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by the Pond

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become its floor. Once they were ready to be nailed into place, I discovered a heaping mound of twigs wedged into the space at the top of the back wall. Thinking it to be a pre-occupation bird's nest, I was surprised when something moved within the pile. Soon, with a little prodding, a rather substantial mouse emerged and scurried out of his snug home.

Wishing to discourage his permanent residence in my brand new barn, I removed all the twigs and thatch and tossed them outside, nonetheless marveling at the rodent's bright industry in securing such a cozy spot well in advance of winter. Out of nowhere a building was raised up in his woods, so the mouse seized the opportunity for shelter. If permitted to stay, he would have met the cold winter months secure under a solid, well-shingled roof.

One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the Lord
And to meditate in His temple.
For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle;

In the secret place of His tent He will hide me;
He will lift me up on a rock.
Psalms 27:4-5

That mouse, the loft's inaugural resident, knew, whether by instinct

*O safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine, would I be;
Thou blest "Rock of Ages," I'm hiding in Thee.*

*In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow's lone hour,
In times when temptation casts o'er me its power;
In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea,
Thou blest "Rock of Ages," I'm hiding in Thee.*

*How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe,
I have fled to my refuge and breathed out my woe;
How often, when trials like sea billows roll,
Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul.*

*Hiding in Thee, hiding in Thee,
Thou blest "Rock of Ages,"
I'm hiding in Thee.*

William O. Cushing

or experience, that the approaching winter would be far more pleasant when snuggled in a barn, than huddled shivering beneath a cold, damp tree stump. Within that shelter he and his family would remain not only warmed, but high, dry, and safe from the myriad predators who would like to have them for lunch.

Oh that we would have the simple wisdom of the beasts. Man

has a bad habit of expending great effort searching for shelter in all the wrong places.

Some seek shelter perched atop a bar stool. Some look for it in the arms of someone other than their

own spouse. Still others seek it in drugs or fanciful "new age" twaddle.

All the while, however, our true security lies within the arms of the Savior, where He—better than any other—is equipped to meet head-on anything that might bring us harm.

When my heart was embittered
And I was pierced within,
Then I was senseless and ignorant;
I was like a beast before You.

Nevertheless I am continually with You;
You have taken hold of my right hand.

With Your counsel You will guide me,
And afterward receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but You?
And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.

My flesh and my heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalms 73:21-26

