

CHAPTER XVII

THE BOTTOMLESS LAKE

On a neighboring farm but only a few rods from our home was a remarkable little lake called the Bottomless Lake. It is tiny and has no visible outlet. Evidently there is an underground source, as it is not at all stagnant, but clear and sparkling. It was, at that time, surrounded by high tamarack trees from which we obtained good gum for chewing. The surrounding land is very marshy and wet. Trees have been felled and only by walking on these logs can one get near the lake.

Hired men used to tell stories of splicing poles and dropping plumb lines to find bottom, but they were never able to fathom it and gave as their opinion that the lake went "clean through to China". Another of their stories was that a cow had once strayed from pasture, fallen in this lake and was never seen again. This place held great awe and mystery for me.

Two very interesting plants grew here. One was the wild orchid (both pink and yellow) and the other was the pitcher plant. I never ceased to wonder about the latter, this meat-eating plant, and still think it a most curious thing. It takes its name from the shape of its leaves. They are partly filled with water. The interior of the "pitcher" is lined with fine hairs, pointing downward, so that small insects can get in easily to get water but cannot get out. Thus the plant gets its meat.

Cutting pictures out of papers and magazines, coloring them with pencils and water colors, making scrap books and rummaging in the big attic were my favorite indoor sports.