

you!" Thus was my first introduction to Chase S. Osborn, destined in a few years to become one of Michigan's greatest governors and a power in the republican party nationally, and to acquire world-wide fame for knowledge and versatility in fields almost too numerous to mention.

Out of the side pockets of his mack-inaw coat came a big hunk of jerked venison for a hungry boy and right then and there was cemented a friendship that has steadily deepened—the beginning of a sort of hero worship on the part of the boy that has only intensified with the swift passage of the years.

My next experience with Governor Osborn came when, as a junior at the University of Michigan, I was elected a delegate to the republican state convention at Detroit, held, as I remember, in the Light Guard armory. It was a critical time in the political affairs of the state. The great building was packed to suffocation but the wheels were at a complete standstill awaiting the arrival of Governor Osborn from the capitol with his keynote speech.

When finally he did arrive, however, he took the time on his way to the speaker's platform to pause and visit for several minutes, while the celebrities waited, with this same unimportant young man whom he remembered as a hungry kid on a train years before.

And then that never-to-be-forgotten trip a little later to Lansing, together with other aspiring young newspapermen at Ann Arbor, to be royally entertained at the executive mansion by the governor, to be escorted almost in state by his aids through the governmental buildings, and to be introduced to everybody of importance.

An Invitation to "Possum Poke". Seems but yesterday—that trip to the capitol—but it was a least 25 years ago, and while I have since endeavored to keep in touch with affairs back in my native state of Michigan, my contact with Governor Osborn was completely broken until in January, of this year, when I received a hand-written letter, in his inimitable style, from his winter home, "Possum Poke in Possum Lane," Poulan, Georgia, a letter warm with friendship and good will, and expressing the desire that if ever I came south I would make him a little visit. "You will find our lodge rude and simple but I am sure that our hospitality will make up for that," the letter concluded.

One of the chief delights of "Possum Poke" is its seclusion and distance from the main highways, and the flow of commerce and of tourist traffic through the south. Located in Worth county, it can be reached best by going almost due south from Atlanta some two hundred miles, or by traveling straight west from Brunswick, Ga., about an equal distance on state and county roads, none too good in spots.

The Brunswick route might be found uninteresting to most people but as a former Michigander I found it strangely reminiscent of my native state as it was 35 years ago. Mile after mile the roads wind through

man, by Mammee, a demented, aged colored woman who presides over the kitchen, and by a whole army of chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, guinea hens and dogs, looking for attention and for the morsel of food inevitably to be had.

"The governor is getting ready to go quail hunting," we were informed by Chris, "but drive your car in and we will go down to the lodge and meet him there."

A Rare Welcome.

To be greeted by Governor Osborn under any circumstances is an event long to be remembered; to be greeted by him when you are unexpected and when for months he has been pretty much alone with his books and papers and studies and writings—well, that's something never to be forgotten.

"And to think that you have come all this way just to see me," he said, after a big bear hug, "that's splendid, and I couldn't think more of you if you were my own children. Why, you are children—my children—and everything in this place is yours."

With just two more days before the close of the quail season we insisted that nothing should interfere with his afternoon's hunting, so presently he was off in his station car, accompanied by his daughter, Chris, and two fine pointers, leaving us to explore "Possum Poke."

As compared with the tremendous plantation estates that wealthy people have acquired in eastern Georgia, particularly in the vicinity of Sea Island, "Possum Poke" is a veritable toy, but one is left with the strong impression that mere acreage and great buildings have nothing at all to do with peace of mind, contentment and infinite happiness.

"Possum Poke" may comprise as much as three or four acres, if that much. About its confines run white painted fences, in its center a pole flaunts an American flag proudly to the skies, toward the south a row of tall pines form a pipe organ for the vagrant winds that come scampering through from the Gulf of Mexico, or the wide Atlantic to the east. There are neat quarters for the colored help, a small solarium for tropical plants and flowers, housing for a 600-foot well of excellent water, neat pathways paved with white gravel, and lined with flowers and shrubs, a vegetable garden and, beyond, a flourishing little grove of pecan trees.

"Big" and "Little" Poke.

To be accurate, one should mention that there are really two "Pokes"—"Big Poke" which is exclusively for the use of guests, and "Little Poke," a newer structure where the governor is ever actively at work with his writings and extensive correspondence, and in the back of which are his sleeping quarters.

It was to "Big Poke" therefore we repaired ourselves and awaited before a cheerful hearth-fire the return of the hunting party, the while entertaining ourselves with looking at the many hunting pictures on the walls and talking with "Mammee" in her immaculate kitchen.

Afternoon faded into night, the sweet song of mocking birds stilled into sleep, the brilliant stars came out to festoon the tall sentinel pines with

To have the privilege of hearing the governor ask the blessing is a soul-satisfying experience far richer than the services of the finest cathedral in the world. The simplicity of the man, his reverence for his God, his thankfulness for life, his appreciation of friendship, his veneration of country, his humbleness amid the works of his Creator—all expressed in that vibrant, eager, musical voice which has enthralled audiences throughout the world—who has ever had such an opportunity who could ever possibly forget, or fail forever after to be more humble and more reverent!

As for the supper itself—well, the blessing asked, rollicking good humor prevails, you get no more butter until you have finished what remains on your plate, if you would like another yam you may have to catch it on the fly, and guest and servant alike sit face to face with such a barage of wit and raillery as must have been typical of the festive boards of the kings of old.

The Zero Hour.

Nine o'clock has come and 9 o'clock at "Possum Poke" is the absolute zero hour. The zero hour, because all clocks at the "Poke" are set hours ahead, and promptly at 3 o'clock in the morning, by your time or mine—every morning in the year—the governor is up and at work, and at 5 o'clock the bell on Mammee's back porch peals out its breakfast announcement.

Untried to such an experience, and tired after hundreds of miles of motoring, we failed to respond to the enchanting sorcery of the bell, and when finally we did appear, it was to meet this chiding, good-natured comment of the governor:

"First house guests that I have had in more than 40 years in Georgia who didn't get up in time to listen to my Presbyterian mass and to have breakfast with me."

With our departure that morning on the northerly trek homeward, comes to an end this short recital of a pilgrimage to the Georgia home of a man whom countless people regard, and the writer is happy to be included among that number, as one of the most brilliant, most learned and most beloved men who has ever graced the pages of history. In the eyes of the people of Georgia he belongs to Georgia, out in Indiana where he was born they claim him as a Hoosier, in Michigan where most of his business and political life has been spent, he is regarded as their greatest son, but in reality he belongs to America and to the world.

And I submit that some day—and let us hope and pray that that day is many years removed—that little old retreat down in the "Cracker" country of south Georgia, just north of the Florida line, will be a national shrine dedicated to the memory of a man unique in the annals of America—journalist, statesman, philosopher, author, naturalist, explorer, world traveler, sportsman, orator, lumberman, miner, scientist, orator, lumberman, those of us who have known him personally—"Friend"—in the most exalted and highest meaning of the word.