

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

THE WAY JOHN APPLIED IT.

"Wasn't that glorious?" Julia turned a glowing face toward her brother. "Pretty good stuff," remarked John. "Do hear this blase youth!" cried Julia, turning to a group of girls. "I know he never heard a better sermon in his life and he calls it good stuff." The girls laughed at the scorn in Julia's voice.

"He's a Boston man, isn't he—up here on his vacation?" John asked the question indifferently.

Julia refused to notice him. "I just feel as if I want to go right out somewhere and do something," she exclaimed.

"You don't need to go out at all," remarked the Sunday school superintendent, appearing on the scene at this moment. "Several of our teachers are away on vacation and we need some of you summer people to help us out. Will you take a class of girls? And I've a nice class of boys; will you lend a helping hand?" turning to John.

"Thank you, no, not this morning, I must be getting out to camp. Good morning, Mr. Maynard. You'll be out in time for dinner, Julia?" to his sister.

"Yes, I suppose so, but tell mother not to wait dinner for me; I really don't care whether I have anything to eat or not, I can think of something else occasionally."

John laughed, and, lifting his hat, left the church.

"I think boys are made of different stuff from the rest of us," declared Julia, turning to the girls; "nothing enthruses them but a good dinner, eating is everything, a glorious, thrilling sermon is simply good stuff!"

"Boys are all right, though," declared a pretty girl in blue. "They don't wear their heart on their sleeve, and that's why I like them."

"Neither do girls," returned Julia. "They do if they have any," laughed the pretty girl. "By the way, I hear you and your brother are camping this summer."

"Yes, mother and John and I are trying the simple life—in two tents on the edge of Silver Lake. You must come out; it's beautiful. Our parlor is in the pine woods, no furniture but hammocks. Was that bell for Sunday school? I wonder what I'm going to say to those children."

While the girls were talking John was making his way out to camp. It was an uphill walk, and he enjoyed it all the better for that. Over the little stubble foothills he trudged, the sweet fern, steeped in the sun, greeting his nostrils, and the pink hard-hack, blossoming among the warm gray rocks, delighting his eyes. Now and then he drove into a stretch of pines where his feet sank deep into the needles, and the dim aisles made a grateful contrast to the noonday glare. Music as from a great organ swept through these trees. John felt like taking his hat off. A little later when he came to a clearing where he could look straight up into the face of three splendid mountain peaks, he did take it off. For a brief instant, standing in the presence of these majestic mountains, he felt as if he had left his little world far behind him and had grasped the meaning of eternal life.

He stayed only a moment, then turned and plunged down straight into the little white tent where he knew he would find his mother.

She was there, surely enough, cooking potatoes and beets and onions and green corn and blueberry pudding, on two small oil stoves, and trying to get them

all done at once. No wonder her cheeks were red and her expression a trifle harassed!

John stood in the middle of the tent and looked at her.

"Did you have a good sermon, John?" She was almost too tired to ask the question.

"'Twas hot stuff, mother."

"Why, John?"

"It was. I don't recall the text!"—John was taking off his coat—"but the gist of it was that a feller ought to look after his mother, that's the way I figured it, so here goes."

The kettle which John's mother had in her hand was now carefully deposited on the floor, and she was drawn, gently but firmly, outside the tent.

"John, what are you up to?" she gasped.

"You're pretty warm, I guess you better have this shawl." John detached a cape from a peg outside the tent and wrapped it about his mother.

"Now, John, don't be foolish! The dinner'll spoil."

"You see that hammock over there?" John's voice sounded as if he were enjoying himself; "well, you're going into it and you're going to stay in it until dinner's ready." John now deposited his burden in the hammock. "There, is that comfortable? I guess you'd better have a pillow or two."

"But John!"

"Yes, I understand all about the pudding and things. Let's see—I mustn't take the cover off the pudding kettle till—how many minutes?"

"Twenty, John, but!"

"No buts in this deal, mother. While I'm skinning the beets and things, you may be planning what you'll be doing the rest of the summer. Your vacation begins to-day. So long."

John's mother was an energetic little woman. What time she had spent out of doors so far this season she had either sat on a camp stool and read a book or else she had foraged the country for blueberries. This was the first time she had been in the hammock. For several minutes after John had disappeared inside the tent she sat bolt upright, the care of the dinner heavy upon her. Pretty soon, however, the gentlest of breezes came along and lifted her wet hair and touched her hot cheeks. She took a long breath of the pine-scented air and then from the great organ loft above her head there came a whispering so full of peace that she settled back among the pillows exactly as if such a thing as a dinner had never been heard of.

There was something unusual about the sky and the mountains that day; they seemed close and tender just as they did when she was a child. She remembered how lovely the sky looked in those days and how it used to say things to her about God. She had been so busy late years she had not thought much about God, but now—John's mother began to have a peculiar choked-up feeling. He was so good to her, mindful of her all these years. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me!"—she tried to say the words, but at the first sound tears got the better of her and just rained down her cheeks. In the midst of it all there came up from the tent the briskest, shrillest, most confident whistle that ever broke a Sabbath stillness. And then John's mother laughed—and laughed again. "My cup runneth over," she whispered. "My cup runneth over."

John meanwhile, had his mind on dinner. The beets and onions were done, the corn was waiting for the potatoes.

John was hunting for the potato-masher when Julia appeared on the scene.

"Where's the potato-masher, Jule?" John spoke in a brisk, pre-occupied voice.

"Why, where's mother?" exclaimed Julia.

"In the hammock. I say, find that—and I want a fork—see! those potatoes are done. Look out! don't take that cover off. By George, you may think it's a cinch to get three meals a day on two two-for-a-cent oil stoves, for two hungry youngsters, thirty days in a month! Fine vacation mother's having."

"Why, John, what do you mean by talking that way? I'm sure I don't want mother to do it all. I offered this morning to stay at home and let her go!"

"Goody-goody talk!" interrupted John, briskly. "If you want to do anything for mother all you've got to do is to do it. Offering cuts a lot of ice with mother, it does. I say, where's that fork? Those potatoes are done."

"I'll see to them," said Julia, in a hurt voice.

"No, I'll tend to 'em; you fix the cucumbers. Look here, Jule," John faced about with the kettle in his hand, "mother's got the last dinner she's going to get this summer, you'll get the rest—what do you say?"

"Why, if she'll let us."

John laughed contemptuously. "Let us!" he exclaimed. "Don't you know mother?"—Frances J. Delano, in Congregationalist and Christian World.

STUDYING BOYS AND GIRLS.

Professor William A. McKeever, of the Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, Kans., has worked out a plan for the assistance of parents in the home training of the young. He will send free a series of pamphlets. Professor McKeever has a number of able assistants who are aiding him in gathering the materials for these pamphlets. Among other things these will interview many parents who are already succeeding in doing one or more of these particular things with children and get the benefits of their knowledge. Finally all the materials will be summarized and printed as above stated. If a farmer has a horse that balks in the harness or a cow that acts queerly and runs off the reservation he can write to the nearest government experiment station and secure a printed bulletin or a letter on the subject from an expert, but if the refractory creature chances to be his sixteen-year-old son or his fledgling daughter he has no such recourse. This is not a square deal to the parents, nor is it at all fair to the boy and girl. The first bulletin on home training will be issued soon. Some of those now being prepared are entitled:

1. Teaching the Boy to Save—How to Start a Bank Account.
2. Training Boys and Girls to Work in the Home. (One on each.)
3. Cigarette Smoking Among Boys—Cause, Prevention and Cure.
4. The Home Training Best Suited for Developing Moral Reliance.
5. The Problem of the City or Village Boys' Vacation Period.
6. Finding and Preparing for a Vocation. (One on each sex.)
7. Earning One's Way Through College. (One on each sex.)
8. How to Make Rural Life More Attractive to the Young.
9. Training Children in Regard to Their Sex Natures.
10. Problems of the Growing Boy's or Girl's Society. (One on each.)