

PLEASANT HOURS

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THE OLD SUGAR CAMP.

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"Now I tell you, boys, this is nice!" exclaimed Sim Bartlett. "I just like this."

He was lying in his bunk when he said this. About him was the roof of the old sugar camp which was built on one of the low-running slopes of Most Mountain. He heard the crackle of the fire on the broad open hearth at the foot of the camp-chimney. He caught the sound of the cold north west wind echoing down from the rugged top of Most Mountain, and rejoiced in his shelter from the blast. The other occupants of this camp were Tim and Silas and John Borton, his cousins. In the sugar season, Farmer Borton and Farmer Bartlett came to the camp and worked by day, returning home at night. The boys loved to stay there both day and night.

Sim now continued his remarks: "I tell you what, fellows; it did look interesting when it was growing dark. I was back here in the camp and you could not see me. I looked out. There was Uncle Henry stirring the sap in the kettle. Father was sitting on a log. Our two hired men were coming up with big, bouncing pails of sap. You three boys were round, looking happy as kings."

"Were we?" asked a growly voice in the next bunk.

"Yes, get up there, Silas! Tim! John, wake up!"

"I am awake!" said a voice belonging to John.

"So am I awake!" exclaimed Tim.

"Well then boys, keep awake!" urged Sim. "I have got some cider. Hold on! I'll get it."

Here Sim sprang out of his bunk, but quickly returned holding out to Silas by the light of the still sparkling fire a mug of cider.

Silas rose up in his bunk, shook his head and said decidedly, "None for me, thank you!"

"Why not?"

"Strong enough to knock you down, know where you got it."



THE OLD SUGAR CAMP.

It was known to be an honour to receive admission to Carlton Academy. The scholarship there was thorough, and only a limited number of students would Principal Spearhead receive. While graduation was an honour, so was admission. Sim had made application for admission. The principal had replied that the question was not decided fully, but "probably, there would be an opening for Simon Bartlett."

Sim construed the word "probably" as "certainly," and now wished in this unworthy way to celebrate the event. He was compelled to be content with a personal celebration that night.

Who should appear, the next day, at the camp but Principal Spearhead himself!

"I have often wanted," he told Mr Bartlett, "to see a sugar orchard turned into a sugar house, the trees giving sap, and you sugar makers turning it into syrup and sugar."

"You are very welcome," said Mr Bartlett, who felt that it was a high honour to entertain the principal of Carlton Academy. Sim was jubilant.

"Just the time," he said to the others, "to make sure of my admission to the Academy! I will improve the chance."

Sim certainly endeavoured to improve his chance to secure Principal Spearhead's good opinion, and every one allowed that Sim made himself very agreeable.

The principal left the camp as the twilight shadows were falling, saying that as he had snow shoes, he thought he would "just run to Sunset Ridge and get a look at the western sky."

One by one, the older members of the sugar orchard party started for their homes, leaving the boys in supremacy of the camp.

"There," said Sim to his companions, "I have been on my good behaviour about long enough. Entertaining that principal was dull music, though. I doubt it has got me into the Academy. I knew

"At Ransome Groton's out on the back road. He has got a cider-mill. It's all right, Silas."

"No, sir!"

"Well, Tim, then!"

"No, sir!"

"Now, John, you are not a fool!"

"Oh, no, of course not. I should be if I took that."

Amid the laugh that followed, Sim pettishly said, "There, boys! you are making too much of it. I came out here to enjoy my liberty, and to have a good time and so on. Next month, I am going to Carlton Academy —"