

AN INEXPENSIVE HOLIDAY
(Continued from page 192)

ly dismissed the encampment with one word—"Gypsies," and drove on, neither rousing nor molesting them; and dawn found them rested, invigorated and delighted with the novelty of scrambling up in a tent, bathing in the stream, and lighting the fire for breakfast, with no roof overhead to shut out the blue of God's skies.

The third day out came a surprise. The mother thought she had made ample provision for the journey as far as food went, but such appetites as they developed were not just reckoned with, so they had to buy bread from a farmer's wife, meat in a village through which they passed, and, of course, lots of milk and cream when their own jars' supply had disappeared. At the close of the fourth day they reached their destination, the most genial, carefree wagon-load of smiling folks that ever drove into the little settlement.

"I'll be glad to see the old people and Tilly," said the farmer, as his eyes sighted the roof of the house where he had been born. "But I'm sorry the fun is over."

"Oh, it's not over by any means," his wife replied brightly. "You see we have to go back."

"I've been 'going back' this four days," he answered a little unsteadily; "going back over so many years I feel almost as if I was a boy again."

And somehow or other, his remark delighted the mother-wife, although she had never had any part in the boyhood he spoke of.

Of course they had a glorious visit with "his folks". Grandma's feather beds felt very alluring after tent life, oddly enough when the good-byes were all said and the old homestead was slipping away behind them, they, one and all, returned to blankets and canvas like a flock of ducks to a pond.

The absolute novelty of the thing, the open air, the delight of constantly shifting scenery, had enthralled them at as it only enthralls the stay-at-homes, where four walls, limiting life and living make them old, or nerve-racked, or simply stolid.

Everybody sighed with regret when the carefree holiday was ended. "This beats trains and steamboats all hollow, mother," said the farmer. "We can stop when and where we like, eat where we like, put up our house and sleep where we like, and it does not really cost anything; in fact I believe we've saved. And they had saved. They had saved youth, good health, good-nature, and the old-time comradeship of the court-ing days, which might have slipped away unheeded, in the grind and the grubbing of commonplace life.

Did the mother know this when her wise little head and loving heart planned this holiday outdoors together? Perhaps so, for the mother's insight is very keen and her eyes are oftentimes seeing things through the lens of a very human heart.

Of course they found everything all right at home when they returned. It is amazing how we worry and think we cannot leave things—only to find that they look after themselves very nicely, when we take a day off and breathe a few hours of God's great outdoors.

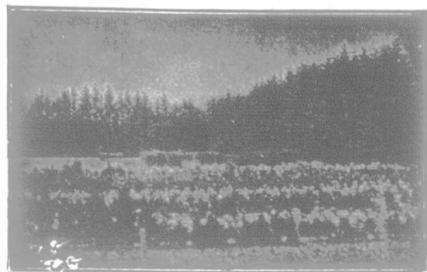
"And oh, mother!" coaxed the children, as the fat grays eyed their own stable and quickened their pace, "can't we all go a-gypsying again next year?"

"What does father say?" came the gentle reply.

"Father says, 'You bet we will, if mother will only plan it for us,'" was the wholesome reply, as the farmer drew rein at their kitchen door, leaped like a boy from the wagon, then held out his arms for a sleeping baby girl, and a sweet-eyed woman whose face had lost the lines of many cares within the last two weeks, and who looked amazingly like the young bride he had brought to this very same house just fourteen years ago.

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