

G R I P.

EDITED BY MR. DEMOS MUDGE.

The grabeat Beast is the Ass; the grabeat Bird is the Owl;
The grabeat Fish is the Oyster; the grabeat Man is the Fool.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1874.

Letters from Hot Latitudes.

PERSPIRATION CAMP, July 10, 1874.



Y day we had talked of it for a month, had dreamed of it nightly, and, regularly as the morn had dawned, it had been our waking thought; for had we not read of its pleasures in books—blind leaders of the blind—which had told us that for pure intellectual enjoyment, for building up the harassed body and strengthening the weary mind, to hold communion with Nature, to leave the Busy Haunts of Men, in other words, to CAMP OUT, was the one thing pre-eminently beneficial, and a consummation devoutly to be wished.

And so thought we, and for ten days previous to the one fixed for our voluntary exile, you might have heard, had you been at the key-hole, much mysterious talk as of men bound on some mighty expedition, mention of burdettes and other articles of camp equipage foreign to the uninitiated, and you might have seen piled up in a corner clumsy shaped packages, the contents of which no mortal man, not in our secret, might even guess.

Nightly conferences too were had over our commissariat arrangements, and liberal were the calculations in regard to our prospective appetites; so much so that I believe our original programic contemplated one ham, three twelve pound loaves, and two bottles of pickles per man *per diem*, in which calculation it must be evident dyspepsia could have had no share.

And there was a hunting up of discarded garments, and a selection of extraordinary trousers in which the occupants felt like unlucky candidates after a contested election, unsented members, so to speak; and a donning of Wellington boots that appropriately enough extorted an ardent wish, ere they had been worn a day, for "bluchers or night."

Time, with its usual speed, has flown then, and the eventful day has arrived for our expatriation; the boats are loaded with our *impedimenta*, our fellow *voyageurs* are on board, the roll has been called, and we have answered "Adsum," and not without an inward mis-giving such as must have seized upon COLUMBUS as he left the shores of Spain, our prows are turned up the river, oars are shipped, hats are waved to friends who prefer giving us a start to starting with us, and we are off.

And as we go the last face I see is that of the would-be funny man of our set, our special nuisance, who stands on the shore weeping crocodilish tears and who has maliciously mounted a broad mourning band on his white hat, in honor, as he says, of the mournful occasion.

Did you ever pull twelve miles in a boat eighteen feet long; with a heavy and perspiring female camper in the stern seat; with canvass tents, bedding, and satchels above you and under you, and all around you, imbedded so to speak under a mountain of baggage, the mercury at 85, and the only prospect that of the tip of the aforesaid heavy femle, down which trickles slowly signs of liquefaction?

I won't descant longer on the horrors of the middle passage, for are we not going to commune with Nature and will not the delights of solitude and the cessation from business cares coupled with the pleasure of drinking our tea saturated with hard and mosquitos, more than make amends for the burden and heat of the day; and should a man grumble because before all this pleasure is attainable a little self-immolation (heaven save the mark) is necessary?

The voyage over, therefore, and no mishap save several hair-breadth escapes from being run down by aggressable tugs and unyielding propellers, and we are landed; our baggage and baggages are disembarked, our foot is on our native strand, and like ROBINSON CRUSOE, we feel that we are "monarchs of all we survey," that is, what is left of us, and that our right there is none to dispute.

By this time the mercury is risen some five degrees and is evidently bent on going for the nineties but there is no help for it; our tents must be pitched and our fair companions housed, so to work we go with a will.

Now tont pitching when you understand it is (barring lying) the easiest thing in the world; but when you don't it's the —. To misquote slightly, "we pitched our tents like the Arabs and silently cussed away."

But we got them up at last and then you know it was so rural, such sweet communion with Nature, even though your face did look like a miniature Niagara, and you yourself felt like a revised edition of the prayer-book with everything exorcised except the ejaculations.

We were eight in number look you, and at the risk of a libel suit I can't forego a sketch of them,—per photographs 'a la' KATE FIELDS.

First I myself, somewhat misanthropical, with a touch of indigestion, the curse of the race from the time the apple disagreed with ADAM, downward; hot, but enwrapped in the serene consciousness that the aforesaid communion would recompense me for my feelings; by name—no matter—by occupation, a married man.

GEORDIE, likewise married, good natured, an earnest disciple of old IZAAK WALTON, and as a catcher of uneatable fish, without an equal.

FURZ, of Teutonic descent, blonde complexion, a good eater and a better smoker; and to complete the picture, JACK, good hearted, impetuous, quick of speech, with well-patched trousers; devoted to the girls, who shut their eyes to his patches and saw only his virtues.

On the side of the softer sex we had first my wife, good natured, fat and nervous (*ora pro nobis* if she sees this),—secondly FURZ' wife, likewise good natured but a martyr to dyspepsia for the circumvention of which enemy she carried round such a multitudinous array of remedies, that we were never sure when we took soup that it wasn't half broth and the rest Hyposphosphites; or that when we were regaled with green peas that we were not being done to death with blue pill; thirdly, GEORDIE'S wife, amiable, delicate, and doting on hard-boiled eggs; last of all but not least, HATTIE, the belle of the party, unmarried and wrapped up in the aforesaid JACK.

Oh HARRIET, when I think of thee words fail to utter, thoughts to express the feeling which—(for goodness sake GARR cut this out; if my wife sees it I'm a gone goose.)

I won't say a word about the first three meals; I didn't cook but only ate them, and regardless of the weary visages of my comrades who had done the cooking, I ate and was filled, heedless of the pendant spider or the perambulating earwig, oblivious even of the soup-like butter tessellated with the festivo fly, nor recked I of the morrow when my turn was coming to toss the sportive flap-jack in the hissing pan.

Dignity came on, and with it, GEORDIE and a string of club; and Destiny with a large D marked me for its own in the fish-cleaning line.

I lit a lamp, and anathematising GEORDIE, club, and IZAAK WALTON, set to work; in five minutes, ere the first fish was ready for embalming, the flies were up to my knees; in five minutes more they were up to my neck and then—I remember nothing more until I found myself under the tent, having been dug out by the rest of the party, who were advising me to go in for base-bass, I was so good "on the fly." But then look you, GARR, it was so truly rural, and it was so sweet thus to hold communion with Nature, to say nothing of the liberal manner in which the flies were thrown in.

When night threw her sable mantle round the scene, I laid me down to sleep, and recumbent on the lap of Mother Earth, revelled in the solitude for which my soul had longed (at least this is how I had pictured to myself I should do), but unhappily "the little rift within the lute" was there.

When I arose in the morning the mosquito certainly was dead, but I couldn't get my cap on and my nose was perfectly useless, save for ornamental purposes,—but it was so rural.

At 4 A. M., think of it, ye gods and little fishes! I was roused from my slumbers to cook the breakfast; and if there is one thing that a man's soul should yearn for, it is the post of cook to a camping-party, broiling the fish on one stove with the pipe from the other in his left trouser pocket.

But I struggled on; at 9.30, or in the short space of five hours, I had cooked the fish, put such portions of them on a dish as didn't adhere to the pan, had poured out the butter, dished out the tea with the regulation allowance of flies and gravel, handed round the eggs which I discovered in the tea-kettle, forty-five minutes after they had been put in, and which were in that incipient state of putrefaction so suggestive of indigestion; had sawn the bread into cubes of the proper dimensions, and after a struggle with the hornets who were investigating the sugar, had placed that luxury also on the table, when it was discovered by one of them, I name her not, that I had forgotten the milk.

To row three miles for a quart of that fluid, in a broiling sun after five hours of artificial broiling over a wood fire, was one of the most rural things I had experienced yet, and in the communion with Nature that ensued, I fear that the fragmentary character of the discourse must have caused considerable surprise to that interesting young woman. But I got the milk and returned with it to find the breakfast consumed, and I was perfectly satisfied then that the most rural thing in the whole arrangement was *myself*, in the most literal