

OUT FOR SPORT.

GIVEN two weeks' holidays, a chart and a compass, a Peterboro' canoe and innumerable blankets, a tent, a shot gun and a dog, with enough ammunition for all possible emergencies and "prog" for a fortnight's outing—and what more would anyone want to enable office cares and work to be thrown aside whilst health and vigor were being regained preparatory to another long winter's study and grind. Ho for an hour amongst the islands! Ho for the wild, wild woods and the wilder, wilder grouse and the still wilder ducks, which, even when you do get them, are at this season just a trifle too fishy to be really good eating!

A camping trip affords a curious contrast to city life. It is not, as some who have never tried it may imagine, one long wild burst of pleasure. Like all other things, it has its drawbacks and its shortcomings. From the moment you rustle out with an axe to bring in the daily supply of firewood, or cut the tent poles and prepare to drive stakes, until at night softly reclining on a bed of cedar boughs watching the dying embers of the camp-fire, thinking of home and wondering how much of you remains your fond relatives would find if one of those big swaying trees through which the wind now whistles would fall upon the little tent, all is change and excitement and work, new and strange and interesting. The relief after the routine of office work is intense; the change elevates the temperature and raises the spirits, until after the fortnight has passed, camp is broken for the last time and home we come unkempt and unshaken, browned and burned, ragged and grimy, but happy and healthy. And after all, what was it we went out for?

This is something like the kind of a camp I enjoyed only "more so." To avoid the long paddle around the point, the train was taken to Sidney, our canoes being safely carried on the train through the kindness of Mr. T. W. Patterson of the Victoria & Sidney railway. A six-mile paddle brought us to Shoal harbor, where the first stop was made at a place now historically known as Camp Robertson, about three-quarters of a mile below the old Brackman & Ker oatmeal mill. Here was an ideal site for pitching a tent, save and except the great exception—fresh water, which we had to bring from the mill. However, all pleasure must have some alloy, and other advantages compensating, the Council of War summoned to deliberate upon the question, decided that here we stay. That night we ate tinned meat, but it was savored by visions of the great sport of the morrow, when countless birds were to fall before our much-to-be dreaded guns. Tired and sleepy we turned in, and at 4 next morning were out and away after the grand grouse

hunting of the islands, for rumor even in that remote place had it that one had only to bring along a sufficient supply of ammunition to carry off all the game the commodious canoe would comfortably hold. Well, at noon we headed back for camp in face of a rising wind and a heavy sea. The net result of our morning's work was two guns—one bird, and yet the stew was good beyond all praise, for we were hungry and tired and it was the first of the season. Next day more of the adjoining islands were explored, particularly Pier Island, where we were solemnly assured the grouse were like the fallen leaves in Valambrosia. They may have been, but if so it was our day off. That night we paddled up to mine host Wright's, at North Saanich, to say good-bye to one of our party, and when we heard that Dr. J. C. Davie, of Victoria, had just passed through from Salt Spring Island with twenty brace (and that there were still more left) it needed little argument to convince the party that there was but one place on this side of heaven to which we all wanted to go, and that place was Salt Spring. By the way, let me suggest that in hunting circles the man who has bagged twenty brace for two days' shooting is one to whom the average "shootist" respectfully doffs his hat.

Our immediate destination was about twenty miles distant. There were two ways of going, by canoe or by steamer, and heeding the warnings of kind friends at home (not to go near the water) the steamer route was decided upon, whereupon camp was broken and on Tuesday, the 4th day of September A.D. 1894, at 12 o'clock noon by astronomical time, we had reached Ganges Harbor, and were now at the sportman's delight—Salt Spring Island. To be candid, it was rather a disappointment to find that there were no birds down on the wharf to meet us, but no trifle like that dampened the burning ardor for the absence of the grouse might be due to the pouring rain and to their native modesty which forbids them congregating in public places.

Have you ever had the delightful experience of pitching camp in a rain storm with a wet tent, wet blankets, wet firewood and a damp ground? No? Well, let me assure you a portion only of life's lesson has been learned. There's a great joy waiting for the uninitiated, a joy akin to that experienced when your canoe goes gracefully bottom up on a dark night in ten fathoms of the "briny." The practical result in both cases is the same—you get wet, and nothing but a big fire of drift wood, a cup of hot tea and a good pipe will bring you back to a normal condition, at peace with all men. This was our introduction to Camp Stewart, a lovely spot above a shelving beach, almost hidden beneath the spreading branches of a big cedar and right alongside a tiny

stream of limpid mountain water which, tumbling over the rocks in its downward journey to the ocean, sang us to sleep with nature's most joyous lullaby. For ten days Camp Stewart was to be our home, and a happy home it was, too. There was a dense forest all above and the sea beneath. The nearest ranch was between a quarter and a half a mile distant and when at night after cleaning guns and getting ready for the early start next morning, we lay around the camp-fire and sang the rollicking songs of college days, no one was disturbed except perhaps the numerous deer that made their home in the almost impregnable thicket on the hillside. About two miles and a half away was Cushion Lake, famed for its fine trout, and two miles further on, Roberts Lake, another delightful resort for the angler, for whatever may be the opinion of the grouse shooting on Salt Spring Island, there is no gainsaying the fact that the pretty little lakes in the mountains fairly teem with speckled beauties; hungry for fly and bait. At the other end of the Island there is also Big Lake, where there are trout from 4 to 10 pounds, but they are capricious and hard to take. In fact, it has puzzled the sportsmen to know what to use at Big Lake. One day, an ordinary brown fly will do, and again nothing but an earthworm or a piece of bacon. Mr. Hedley Chapman, of Victoria, who was stopping for a couple of weeks at Mr. Henry Stevens' ranch, made sundry and divers experiments, but with poor success, and he has perhaps the most complete fishing outfit in the Province. Mr. Chapman was, however, very successful at Cushion Lake, taking one day as many as he could carry home, some of the fish being of fair size.

No portion of the Province that it has ever been my pleasure to visit, opens up such a surprise as Salt Spring Island. It is a model community and the ranchers, of whom there are a large number, are an industrious, contented, hospitable, people. All over the Island there are good roads, and it is the proud boast of the settlers that not a dollar of the Government appropriation is wasted. The energetic member, Mr. J. P. Booth, is one of the people. "His wants are ours," said one of the residents, "and what benefits him, also benefits us." How much Mr. Booth is appreciated by the electors, may be seen by the last election returns when in spite of a most strenuous opposition from a certain quarter he was re-elected by a handsome majority. Salt Spring Islanders elect their own road boss and find, that the plan works well, and one hears no complaints of extravagance or wrongful expenditure of money on that most im-