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Four Boys and A Camp

There were four of us, Harry, Earnie James and I. We never knew each other by these names; they were just our "Sunday" names. We called Harry, "Johnsing," because his name was Johnson. Earnie was adorned with the pathetic name of "Pa" because he was all the time talking about his father; James, being very thin, was naturally called "Skinnev," or "Slats", preferably "Slats," while I was called "Short" because I was short and fat.

We were seated in one of our "retreats" as we called our shady hiding places, and were having a good talk. It was a lovely, shady place at the bottom of the twenty acres. It was all covered in with grape vines and was very cool, making a capital place for us to sit in and pass away the time. From the outside you would never think that a nice place like that sheltered four of the worst scamps in the county. We were discussing our holidays. There were still two weeks of the summer holidays left, and we had worked hard up to now, consequently, we were planning a "real" holiday. We were going camping—that was sure—but the question was where?

"Let's go and camp at the river," said Slats.

Naw," answered Pa, "that's no good."

"Well, where do you want to go?" asked Bones.

"I think it would be just swell at that lake four miles from here," answered Pa, "and there isn't a house for miles around, only coast guard and he won't hurt us."

Johnsing and I said "That's great. We'll do it."

In a few moments all were convinced that the only place for a good camp was the Blue Lake. Each boy was to bring along a plate, spoon, cup, knife and fork, rug, and all the provisions that he could lay his hands on. I was to supply a tent and camp stove, side of bacon, two loaves of bread and all my "eatin'" material.

What day were we to go? That was the next question. James said, "Saturday." We asked him why, and he said that we could straighten up on Sunday and so start a good week. We all thought this a good plan and agreed to meet at our place with the stuff on the following Saturday.

Saturday was a fine, warm, August day, and four boys were soon busy piling their camping outfit into our democrat. It was a large load but by ten o'clock we were on our way to the Blue Lake. In two hours we arrived at our destination and picked out a spot for our tent. It was an ideal place for a camp. The tent was placed on a level strip of soft, green grass, surrounded by tall maple and birch trees. All the outfit was taken out of the democrat and I drove the horse back home. It was about three in the afternoon when I returned to the camp and found the tent up and everything shipshape, but there wasn't a boy around. I called twice and was soon rewarded by an answering call just around the bend on the lake. I hurried over and found the boys in the lake having a great swim. I was soon in with the rest and we had a dandy time until about half past five. We then "sunned" ourselves, which saved the trouble of drying ourselves with a towel, and soon had our clothes

on and back at the tent. Slats was cook and he fried the ham and eggs while the rest of us set the table, gathered fire-wood and got a pail of water. We were ravenous and soon finished a hearty supper. After the sun set we all gathered around our camp-fire and told stories until about eleven o'clock. None of us could go to sleep. I don't know whether it was the thought of wild Indians hunting us out and scalping us, or just an attack of nervousness. Johnsing jumped up about twenty times to ascertain if it was morning yet. We would just be getting drowsy when up he would get and light a cracker match and scare us all. About two o'clock a thunder-storm started. There was no chance for sleep now as we were all awake, wide awake, waiting for the next crack of thunder. Each of us thought we would be struck for certain by the next crash, but nothing happened until Johnsing got up to see how the time was flying. Just as he got up, there was a flash of lightning and a roll of thunder and Johnsing yells out "Oh!" and drops back on the blanket. We all rushed over to see what was the matter. We asked him if he was dead and he answered, "No, only I thought I was."

We were all so glad that we forgot to give him a good licking for scaring us. In just about a week and a half, it seemed to us, the sun broke over the clouds and sent a thrill of happiness through us all. The clouds rolled away the leaves on the trees glistened as if the rain drops were diamonds, (and so they are, and of the first water) the little birds shook their tail feathers and poured forth eloquent notes of joy, and four little boys crept out of their tent and after due consideration seemed to feel rather glad that they were spared by the lightning after all. As the sun rose our spirits rose, and after breakfast we all took our rifles and went for a hunt. Between us we shot seven fish-hawks and two sea-gulls. Then we returned for dinner and kept the cook very busy for about an hour supplying us, until he said, "Now, look here, if you boys eat any more I'm not going to be cook any longer." As none of us wanted to be cook we checked our appetites right there, and Slats was satisfied. In the afternoon we had a read and sleep, and about six o'clock ate a light supper, after which we played a game of catch and then turned in for the night. It was a lovely cool night and we were all soon fast asleep. It was different from the night before, because we now knew what to expect. The next day we went fishing. We found that we would need a boat, and so we thought we would all walk to the town two miles down the lake and secure a row boat that belonged to Pa's father. We arrived at the town in good time and found the boat on a lovely sandy beach just at the outskirts. Slats and Johnsing wanted to go in for a swim, but Pa and I said, "No, let's take the boat back." "But we couldn't stop them and in about a minute they were in the Lake and having a good time. I was beginning to feel rather sorry that I hadn't gone in when Pa says, "We will just hide their clothes and make them feel sorry. I agreed, and in less than no time two boys had climbed a tree near the path that led from the lake and had taken with them two other suits of clothes. About fifteen minutes later the two boys in the lake had had enough of fresh water and were rushing for their clothes. But they couldn't find them anywhere and were yelling for us. We nudged each other and never said a word. Slats was looking rather sorrowful, but Johnsing cheered him up. They started to walk towards us, and coming from the opposite way was the coast guard. We nearly burst with silent laughter. The coast guard passed under our tree and came up to Slats and Johnsing. They looked up at him and he said, "Say boys, what is the matter? This isn't the garden of Eden, and it isn't quite the style to go around dressed like that." Johnsing told him that someone had stolen their clothes, and that he must have made for the town. Now, the coast guard was a nice man and said he would try to find the clothes and if not, he would bring down some of his boy's clothes. The boys thanked him and the coast guard told them they had better get in the trees and wait for

him. They crawled in among the trees and sat down at the foot of the one we were in. The coast guard disappeared, and the boys were beginning to feel pretty bad when we dropped their clothes down upon them. They gave an awful yell, and we jumped down and told them to get into their clothes quick before the guard got back. They were rather mad at us but were soon clothed, and in about ten minutes we were in the boat on our way back to camp. We arrived at about five o'clock and were very hungry. Slats said that we would have to cook the supper for punishment. We didn't like the job but we managed it somehow and everybody was happy. That night we retired early and had a sound sleep as we were all tired.

What with fishing, shooting, swimming, boating and playing games it was not very long before our two weeks were up. At any rate it seemed no time to us. Fifteen days after we left home we returned looking like young Indians; we were so sunburned. We have had many jokes about our camping tour, but Johnsing and I never get tired of reminding Slats and Pa in the words of the coast guard that "this is no garden of Eden."

G. W.

The Bishop of London, in his recent visit to America, made many friends by his humor, now tender, now kind, now sardonic. One of the many stories told of him in this country is the following related by a clergyman:

The bishop was at a dinner of clerics in New York. We divines are a modest lot, but occasionally our self-esteem gets the better of us, and we brag and boast and make ourselves ridiculous.

A Boston minister at this dinner got to telling about a begging sermon he had once preached.

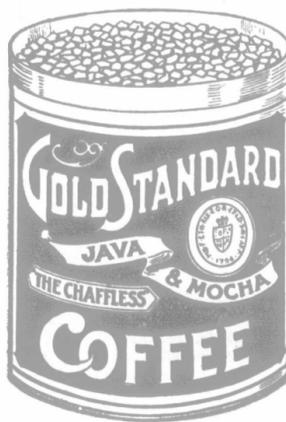
"I don't wish to brag or boast," he began, "nor would I have you think me conceited, but gentlemen, I assure you—"

And then at great length he told us how women had wept at his begging sermon's pathos, strong men had emitted hoarse sobs, and in an avalanche the contributions had poured in—gold and greenbacks, checks, even jewels and watches and great heaps—

But here the Bishop of London leaned forward with a twinkle in his eye,

"By the way, brother," he said, "could you lend me that sermon?"—
Washington Star.

OPEN A TIN



Open one tin of Gold Standard Coffee. Then set it alongside a tin of any other brand—or, better still, pour out a small pile of each on the table. Now, examine them carefully. Notice that Gold Standard is all pure brown particles of the coffee berry while the ordinary coffee is full of dust and light colored flakes of

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