

# BILLY SUNDAY FINDS RECREATION ON HIS OREGON RANCH

Beautiful Estate Is Carved Out in Orchard Region Near Hood River, Where All Vacations Are to Be Spent in Future.



**BY ADDISON BENNETT.**

**"M**Y NAME is Billy Sunday. What is your name?"

This I was greeted as I stood by the side of a giant fir tree adjacent to the summer home of Billy Sunday. I had alighted from the automobile in which I had gone out to see him, had knocked unannounced at the door of his sleeping tent, where I was told I would find him, and facing around towards the residence I saw coming towards me from the house four people—a woman, man and two boys.

It was shortly after 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The day was marvelously beautiful, the rays of the sun were neither too warm nor too cold. I stood by the side of the great tree, looking north. Behind me was a beautiful grove of native trees, a portion of the former primitive forest. In the edge of this grove and over my left shoulder a large tennis court was nearing completion, back of it a swimming pool with dressing and bathing pavilion by its side. Across from these towards the east was the large sleeping tent, with wings and marquee to shield it from wind, rain and sun.

**Panorama is Beautiful.**

To the north, past the dwelling and looking over the little group approaching me, the view was a panorama of beauty. In the center of the far background stood Mount Adams, with his upper snow line bathed in sunshine until it had taken on the delicate tint of a maiden's cheek. Gigantic, marvellously grand and awe-inspiring, the great mountain seemed to stand there as a sentinel guarding the great valley before us from the outer world to the north.

Towards the mountain, between it and my point of view, lay the wonderful Hood River Valley, spread out before me like a mammoth sheet of verdure. Tracing the rows of nearby trees and looking between them as far as the eye could carry, they seemed to be endless, just one vast orchard of shadowy green. Not so level as to be monotonous, not so broken as to be forbidding—just like the rolling waves of the sea.

And that cheery voice: "My name is Billy Sunday. What is your name?"

As I gave my name my hand was feeling in an electric grasp, a grasp that sent through my entire system a feeling of warmth and friendship; and I was looking into two eyes that spoke a language clearer, stronger and sweeter than the handgrip, a language older than the hills, and yet a language always new—the language of love. A something that defies description, and yet is as plain as the noonday sun.

**Boys Healthfully Brown.**

"And this," went on the cheery voice, "is Mrs. Billy Sunday, and these are our two boys, Billy Junior, age 14, and Paul, age 8. You came at an opportune time, just as we are celebrating their birthday, for they were born on the same June day, only six years apart."

The boys, as brown and plump as two russet apples, had their guns and were on their way to the woods, the great shepherd dog barking and barking as though he knew where a million digger squirrels could be cornered if the boys would only hurry, hurry, hurry. What two fine, upstanding boys they are! The picture of health, brimming over with boyish strength and energy—boys that any father or mother in the world might be proud of.

I soon found that between Billy and Mrs. Billy it was "Ma" and "Pa." Ma had done the talking over the telephone when I made the arrangements for the interview. When I heard a female voice I asked if I could not talk with Billy. The answer came prompt and decisive, "You cannot!" Then I gave my object, I could hear her speaking to some one close at hand, evidently Billy; then came the answer, "Yes, you may interview him."

Now, I think Billy turns over the

principal part of his managerial duties to "Ma." In this he is wise. She stands between him and ordinary business affairs, for he is too busy and too deeply engrossed in his evangelistic work to give the attention to details that must be used to hedge around a character so celebrated.

**Mrs. Sunday is Important.**

If I am any judge of human nature then "Ma" Sunday is a woman of about as much importance in her sphere as Billy is in his. I believe if the truth could be brought out that we would find that Billy's wonderful success in a high degree be credited to the splendid team work of the two of them. At the first moment as we met I found myself saying to myself—my innerself, to my innerself—"Why, there were the Billys."

Wandering down to the house, the three of us, the boys having taken to the woods, and Sheep with them, where they were, we judged from the sounds we heard, engaged in a mighty chase—going up on the porch we were met by Billy's mother, a fine and stately woman of over three score and ten. Looking at her I could see where Billy got that square jaw, the firm chin, the nose searching eyes and that pug-nacious nose. Perhaps his father may have passed along certain traits to the boys, but surely Billy inherited many of the fighting qualities he has from his mother.

**Romance Begun at Church.**

The three of us were seated on the porch, with Billy standing. He but rarely sits down when indoors, or outdoors either, for that matter. He walked back and forth like a caged lion as I talked to him. We went back to his baseball days, talked of Captain Anson, "Commy," and his fellow players, Pepper and others. "Not one now playing," he said, "most of the old team dead or worn out. I quit at the zenith, quit when I stood well towards the top, most of them hung on too long, but few of them took to me themselves."

"Did you know Billy in those days?" I asked Mrs. Sunday. Then came out the story of Billy's career. Mrs. Sunday, then Helen Thompson, and her parents attended a little Presbyterian church in Chicago in those days. Billy Sunday, one Sabbath, found himself in that church. Later he became acquainted with Helen, who was a Christian. He was converted and joined the same church. This was during the time he was one of the best ballplayers on one of the best teams in the United States—the Chicago White Sox.

"Did you often go to see him play and root for home-runs?" I asked.

"Yes, I went pretty often," she was interested in seeing him steal second and third—and he sure made a home-run at the Thompson domicile."

**Anson Serry for Billy.**

In 1888 they were married in this little church and soon after Billy quit the ball business and began preparing himself for the ministry. Some of us old-timers can remember (at least I can) the sensation made when Billy quit. I remember distinctly reading the comments of "Cap" Anson, Billy's old boss, in which he deplored the loss of Billy and was sorry for him, thinking he was doomed to failure. But he was wrong, as you know, for Billy Sunday will for a moment doubt his utter good faith in the work he is undertaking."

Our talk took a wide range. It finally drifted around to Gypsy Smith, and Billy asked me my opinion of him, after speaking of Smith in words of highest praise. I told him I thought him a wonderfully clever actor, one of the best I had ever seen, a man who studied every word, every movement, every gesture and every intonation, and rehearsed them until he was able to

preach the same sermon in the same way time after time.

"I cannot do that," said Billy. "I, of course, in a general way lay out my discourses in advance, but I do not often follow literally, do not know whether my words are coming ragged and jagged or smooth and classical, whether they are charged with barbed wire and pieces of gum and molasses. I am not thinking about the words or my actions at all; I have other and more important questions in my mind, and no time to lose."

Speaking of his work since he began preaching in 1897 Billy dwelt on the 12 weeks he held services in Philadelphia last winter, during which time he preached to a million and a half people. The average attendance was all the house would hold (it seated 12,000) which, by the packing process, was 17,000.

**Time Engaged for Years.**

I found he has been asked to hold a series of meetings in every one of the great cities of the country save one—Portland, Or. Every other city of more than 200,000 has invited him, many of them several times, but never an invitation from Portland. His time is booked for and certainly he will be upon for several years ahead. On September 6 he opens at Omaha, then goes to Syracuse, N. Y.; Trenton, N. J., and finishes the season next May at Baltimore.

Questioned as to his opinion of the Hood River Valley he came back with a wonderful tribute to its attractiveness. "Why, it is worth a trip across the continent to spend a day in this wonderful air; I have been all over this country and there is no place that suits me like this. Five years ago I was preaching in Spokane, and a clergyman told me about this section. I came down and bought 40 acres here in the woods. I had it cleared and planted and began making improvements. Now I am beginning to get a nice home. I will spend more time here this summer than I have heretofore, but I am finishing the season next May at my vacations here."

The Sunday place now embraces 60 acres, 25 acres of 4-year-old orchard, 10 acres of woodland, about 15 acres of meadow and the balance is occupied by buildings, garden, etc. The place is located at what may be called the upper or south end of the second Hood River Valley. The buildings are on an eminence that gives them a slightly elevated location. Just east of the dwelling there is a tall flagpole and from this constantly floats a large American flag, being a landmark now for a large section.

**Plant Is Complete.**

Billy's half-brother, L. C. Heizer, has charge of the place, and in the three year round. It is one of the most complete summer plants I ever saw. I do not say Sunday himself. The dwelling is only a small part of the attractive features. There is a single-attached water tower. Under the tank is a room some 15 feet square, a sort of fruit kitchen, where washing, ironing, fruit canning and such things are done. Here is the milk house, with the living water passing through it. Close by is the icehouse filled every winter with a year's supply. Just back is a grove and behind this, out of sight from the house, is the cowbarn, horse barn, chicken-house, swine quarters, and all drained into a run passing alongside and supplying running water. Everything has been done well. The horse and cow barns have wire fly netting over the windows and screen doors and the windows have roller shades. All of the outbuildings are weatherboarded in the same style as the house and painted the same color. The dwelling, where the help employed under Mr. Heizer lives, is of the same character, but is situated on the extreme northwest corner of the place. In every particular it is an estate planned and perfected to please the eye

and with a view to future profit—and every convenience toward comfort has been looked after. The lawns, the rose gardens, the gardens—all are places of beauty. To show in a slight way what was done to turn a forest into a garden, "Ma" Sunday said they contracted to have 40 acres cleared "plow depth," eight inches, at \$100 an acre. Later in plowing the field to get it in tith for tree planting they hauled off and burned 750 two-horse wagon loads of roots, pieces of stumps, limbs, etc.

**Various Pleasures Enjoyed.**

I am telling of these things to show what sort of a place "Pa" and "Ma" Sunday are making. It will in a few years be the show-place of the valley. And the family will no doubt enjoy themselves every moment, as they are doing now. They get their pleasures in various ways; one way is by hard work, a few days before my visit a picture was taken of "Pa" and "Ma" in the hay field, where they worked day after day until tired out. They do not dress up and put on style, neither do the children, save on the Sabbath when they go to some nearby church. Dressed in a woolen shirt open at the neck, with pair of khaki overalls, a pair of coarse shoes and an old straw hat, "Pa" is not a clerical-looking man, and "Ma" is dressed equally plain.

I suppose some of the readers of this article will want to know what I think about Billy Sunday, whether he is the great man some think he is, or what others would have us believe. When I first began talking with him and took note of the congeniality of his attire, I was reminded of the boys in Kansas who had taken up a homestead during a mad rush for land. They heard that a preacher had taken a claim a mile or so away. Out of curiosity they started out to see the reverend gentleman. Soon they came across an uncouth, unkempt, coarsely-dressed individual, who was setting some willow shoots in the ground. One of the boys, who was carrying a gun, said to the stranger, "We heard there was a preacher living out this way; can you tell us where he is?"

"Certainly sir," said the man, the Reverend Paul S. Feemster."

"Well," returned the young man, "if I was out gunning for preachers I would never map a cap on you."

That describes Billy Sunday pretty well as I saw him. And yet there is a something in his eyes that denotes the strength of the volcano. I believe if he were forced to it in a physical mixup he would be a foe to be greatly feared, for he is physically as fit as a fiddle. I never heard him preach—after meeting him I would like to listen to him from a pew. But I believe that he is as sincere and honest in his religious methods as I would certainly find him as a friend, neighbor or companion.

It must be true that he is sensational in his pulpit utterances and actions. From his appearance you would never for a moment doubt that whatever he might expect his conversation to be filled at times with vehement expressions. But when talking to the Hood River people who call on him the evangelist is no more dramatic than the ordinary man in his conversation.

mothers whose husbands have been brought back to them from the groshop by Billy; I would like, before making my verdict, to take the testimony of a few of those wayward sisters to whom Billy has brought peace and comfort and restored them, "clothed and in their right minds," to their parents and to the world.

For after all it is in the ministry as in everything else—it is results that count. Billy Sunday has been the most successful evangelist of the last decade.

When discussing some topic of interest his face lights up with the usual Billy Sunday animation and he is liable to let drop some of the apt slang phrases that have had much to do in making his sermons famous. He still seems tired, his face showing the lines of much work, but the 10 days of open-air life under the blue sky of the Cascade region are bringing back the roses to his cheeks and he says he will be fit when the Summer days are over.

**Billy and Wife Pile Hay.**

When the writer called at the Sunday place, Billy and "Ma" Sunday were both armed, with pitchforks, shocking windrows of rich clover hay, and at the same time entertaining a visitor, George Cochran, of La Grande, State Water Commissioner from the Eastern Oregon district, who was in the valley on official business, had called to pay his respects and to invite Rev. Sunday to deliver a sermon at the eastern Oregon city. Numbers of such callers journey to the Sunday ranch each week. But mind you, Billy Sunday never gives anybody an answer until he has talked the matter over with his wife. They are partners, literally speaking. Mr. Sunday told Mr. Cochran to wait till he had discussed the invitation with his wife. And while the visitor was away getting a pitchfork, Billy and "Ma" soon settled the matter, and the both of them together declined Mr. Cochran's invitation. Mrs. Sunday giving the reasons, and thus they handle all of their business.

The Billy Sunday ranch is not just a show place, but it is being made to return a profit. The evangelist would no doubt make a practical farmer, for he shows that he is not afraid of work, and his discussions on methods of conducting a farm evidence a knowledge of the work. For the past four years, the space between the rows of apple trees on his place has been made to yield many hundreds of bushels of fine corn. He and Mr. Heizer were pioneers in the corn business here. People drove out into the valley just to see the ripening maize. The success with which the grain was grown, along with the boasting the O-W. R. & N. Co. has given corn culture, has been effective

counting the number he has taken into the churches. In doing this it is said he has made a pot of money, said in decision usually. Before he is decided further I would like to know how we are to compute the value of the souls he has saved or the worth of the many thousands who under his preachings have been turned from delinquents and outcasts to men and women who are an honor to themselves, to society, to their country and their God. Only God can answer.

## "MA" SUNDAY DECIDES MATTERS OF BUSINESS FOR HER HUSBAND

Evangelist and Wife Are as Happy as Newlyweds on Honeymoon at Their Summer Home—Much-Needed Rest Is Being Taken by Preacher.

**BY J. D. THOMSON.**

**H**OOD RIVER, Or., June 19.—(Special.)—To every appearance as happy as a bride and bridegroom spending their honeymoon days, Rev. W. A. Sunday, better known to the people of the United States as Billy Sunday, the evangelist, and "Ma" Sunday, his helpmeet, whose sympathy and assistance have made possible his success in the religious work, are spending their vacation on the Sunday ranch in the Hood River valley.

For the time being they are forgetting the outside world, playing as would children there within the bounds of their idyllic, rustic surroundings.

The devil may consider the Summer truce time and accordingly work overtime among the big human vineyards scattered around the Nation. But with Billy Sunday there is no truce, for he characterizes his vacation days as just a part of "the day's work." He is taking it easy at his Summer home to recuperate from the toils of the past busy season.

**Rest Badly Needed.**

The numerous recent sermons at Philadelphia and Paterson, N. J., made an inroad on the nervous energy of the dynamic preacher and a fortnight ago when he and his family started post-haste to the invigorating climate of Oregon, a rest was badly needed.

"But I can see the benefits already," he says. "I am already feeling fine. The fact that we come all the way across the continent every year to spend our vacation weeks here in Hood River Valley shows just what we think of the healthful qualities of Oregon atmosphere."

From many of the printed press reports of the activities of the Rev. Mr. Sunday, one going for a visit with him might expect his conversation to be filled at times with vehement expressions. But when talking to the Hood River people who call on him the evangelist is no more dramatic than the ordinary man in his conversation.

When discussing some topic of interest his face lights up with the usual Billy Sunday animation and he is liable to let drop some of the apt slang phrases that have had much to do in making his sermons famous. He still seems tired, his face showing the lines of much work, but the 10 days of open-air life under the blue sky of the Cascade region are bringing back the roses to his cheeks and he says he will be fit when the Summer days are over.

**ZINC PRICE IS DOUBLED**

War Brings Prosperity to Missouri's Great Mining Belt.

WEBB CITY, Mo., June 11.—A new world's record price for zinc was established in the Joplin district, when \$80 a ton as a basis price for 60 per cent ores was offered by buyers. This is \$5 better than the previous high bid.

Since the outbreak of the European war prosperity has hit Missouri's great lead and zinc mining district in bunches. One year ago was selling at \$25 and \$40.

All mines are running day and night, old diggings long idle are being reopened and the biggest boom in years is on. One company has drained an 800-acre mining tract in the Cartersville camp and now is working several mines on the land at a big profit.

**SUITOR ARRESTS ELOPERS**

Couple Cleared and Captor Then Is Arrested and Fined.

WINCHESTER, Va., June 11.—When Miss Mazie Allison refused to marry Robert Simpser and eloped with Walter A. Johnson the disappointed suitor tried to prevent the marriage. He chased the couple to this city from Fauquier County, and, representing himself as a Constable, arrested them. The girl was sent to a hotel and Johnson was placed in jail.

Johnson convinced the Sheriff that Simpser was not an officer and was released. Then Simpser was arrested. He was found guilty of impersonating an officer, assault and battery, carrying concealed weapons and shooting in the city limits and was fined \$70. Johnson and Miss Allison were married.