

TILLAMOOKERS GET "SOAKED."
Their Experiences at Skookum Lake.

The next morning Snider rose early and went out on a log in the lake to fish. I got up a little later; but Brown rolled himself better in the blankets and began snoring where he had left off.

How beautiful the little lake lay there under the clear blue morning sky! The lofty pines and hemlocks on the opposite side seemed to crowd and elbow one another in order to get near the shore to see their mirrored beauty and greatness in the limpid waters. Twittering sunbeams were beginning to play one of the silent symphonies of Pan on the whitestemmed alders at the end of the lake. It was a bit of pristine nature a bit of God's own out-doors yet untouched by the hand of man.

How still, how peacefully still it was! The chop of an ax would ring through this silence like sacrilege. No sound but that of the birds bidding each other goodmorning! A thrush sat on an alder branch, near by, and cast curious glances at our hut. A robin came hopping and tacking up the path toward our door to see if he could get near enough to steal a peep in. A saucy blue jay lit on a blooming elder bush, expressed his opinion of us freely, scrutinized our architectural effects with a critical eye, and then flew chattering away to spread the news of our arrival through the sylvan neighborhood of Skookum.

I awoke from my nature worship when a faint metallic sound came creeping over the mountains to the west. It was the six o'clock whistle of the saw-mill at Tillamook, and it aroused me just in time to save the best part of the coffee-the grounds-from landing in the ashes. After having had a cup of coffee and a bite to eat, I took a cup and a generous hunk of kuchen out to Snider, for I thought to myself, there is nothing will remind him so much of home and wife as kuchen, and while he is munching that, he won't be so liable to sit and try some fool experiment and fall in.

"Have you had a bite yet, Snider?" said I.

"Oh, yes; they are biting right along," said he, "and I came nearly catching one of the biggest fish I ever saw. It was nearly—"

"That will do, Snider," said I, "it is always the biggest fish that slips off the hook; they are old and experienced at it. But you paste yourself onto that log now, and sit tight and after breakfast you and Brown can go fishing together."

Going back to camp I thought it might be a good idea to tie the two of them together when they went out; but since we only had one rope I thought it wise to save that for future emergencies.

Now I set to work to gather Skookum feathers—twigs of spruce and moss—for our bed was not all that a bed should be.

After a while Snider returned in triumph with some fine trout for breakfast. They were chunky, they were white meated and they curled up in the skillet in a most delicious fashion, and Brown being attracted by the smell of the fish, opened his eyes, stared at the ceiling, Yawned and stretched a few times, then unrolled, got up, and went down and succeeded in catching one very fine fish to help out our meal.

"The King of England never had anything half as good," said Brown, and smacked his lips.

After breakfast Snider and Brown went fishing and I set to work to repair the hut.

Now right here I want to put on record a few scientific facts for the benefit of future exploration parties, and they are: If you ever build a hut of fir or spruce branches, place them butt end up, and they shed water better; and if you ever use skunk cabbage leaves for shingles, put them on in the same fashion, but down side up, for if you don't they have a nasty way of filling up in rainy weather, and when filled, let loose and slip a pint of water down your back when you are not looking.

At noon my comrades retraced with 28 fine trout. Fishing had been pretty good, and when I saw them coming up the road I knew that there would be bragging and teasing, for Snider's face is a regular fish-barometer and it now shone like a hot griddle-cake with nice yellow butter all over.

"Where is your fish," he shouted. "I've been working all morning putting the hut in order," said I.

"That will do to tell," laughed he.

"Well," says I, "I begin to see that if I am to report every detail of this expedition to the Society at Cloverdale, keep the hut in repair, do the cooking and dishwashing, there will be little time left for fishing. And I want it thoroughly understood, before I undertake all the manual labor of this ranch, that you two fellows don't bawl me out to my fellow citizens when we get back to Tillamook and say that I am no fisherman. If you don't promise that each one can lick his own dishes clean," said I.

After dinner we all went fishing, and in the evening when we cleaned our trout and salted the biggest ones down we found that we had 42 nice fish.

Snider hated the idea of putting the fish-can out in the brook over night to keep cool, for he was afraid a bear might get them. "Snider," says I, "you will either have to put the fish out in the brook, or else sit up with them, for we only have one blanket and I never saw a blanket big enough for three, and a case of fish."

Brown had gotten so excited that morning when the red automobile honked at his door that he came away and forgot his blanket, and Snider had such a mean way of getting up in the middle of the night and complaining that he was cold, and flapping his arms at me for appropriating my share of the

and the camp one end,

moving a stick here and a stick there, a most successful way he has of keeping a fire from burning. Brown at the other end fixing some fishing tackle and I was sitting in bed washing dishes.

"You haven't recorded any scientific facts yet for the Society at Cloverdale," said Snider.

"Well," says I, "we have learned that Skookum Lake covers an area of about four acres, and it is over eighty feet deep in places. We have also learned that the trout here are more chunky and sluggish than in the streams below."

"But you can't tell why the fish are chunkier here and the Society will want to know that," says he.

"It is simply because the trout below wear their sides of swimming up stream," says I, "don't you remember what a struggle we had coming up that Fawcett Creek?"

"That shows how much of a scientist you are," sneered Snider. "It is simply a case of environment," continued he, "before the landslide which formed the lake occurred, the race of trout here were never as slim and active as those in the streams below, but being shut up here generation after generation, and having had plenty of food they have gradually grow more plump and sluggish."

"That does sound reasonable," says I, "for I have seen the same causes produce the same results in individuals communities and nations I will surely report that to the Society."

"But what are you going to report to the Society for Psychological Research at Bay City regarding the ghosts and goblins that are supposed to haunt this place?" asked Brown.

"I'm going to report to that august body, that the only spooks haunting the place, are Tillamook spooks," said I.

The rain was falling in great big drops, and now and then a skunk cabbage shingle got tired of holding its burden and let a pint of cold water slip down on one or the other of us as we crouched under the ridgepole of our firbranch hut, and as our fire wouldn't burn we retired early.

At eleven o'clock Snider got up complaining that he was cold, and suggested that we seek shelter in the heavy timber above, but Brown and I thought it wiser to make the best of it where we were, and I volunteered to sit up and try and keep a fire going.

The darkness at Skookum is stygian on a rainy night and if spooks and ghosts love darkness as the spirits seem to believe, Skookum would be an excellent place to hold a seance. I had to search for firewood by the light of a flickering candle and was in such fierce temper that no ghost dared to come within reach of my butcherknife. But I learned one lesson that night and that is, that old heavy elderbrush stems burn like hard coal after one gets them going.

The next morning the rain was still coming down in torrents, and if Lake Skookum is beautiful on a bright sunny day, it certainly is gloomy on a rainy day when the clouds hang low among the trees on the surrounding mountains like wet sheets on wash-day.

We managed to get our coffee cooked and while eating our breakfast we talked the matter over and we concluded that we had better start for home rain or shine, for if we waited for a let up we might run short on provisions and would be in bad condition for the return trip.

As soon as we had finished our breakfast we packed our belongings, strapped our sacks on and started.

When arriving at the edge of the fine marsh meadow in coming up, everything had looked so sunny and cheerful that we had neglected to mark the place where we came out of the woods, and now while the rain was pouring down on us we had to wade around in the long slough-grass for some time before we found any kind of a trail. And after having found what we thought was the place where we had entered the meadow, and walked, climbed, and crawled, for some time, we found it to be only a bear trail, and we had to return to our starting point. We made three such unsuccessful attempts before we found what is usually called "the old trail," following the north bank of Fawcett Creek.

Now we marched briskly on until we lost the trail on a bushcovered hill by a large tree.

"Here it is!" called Snider, who was in the lead, and Brown and I followed gladly, for the cold rain was beginning to tell on us, and we were glad to walk to keep warm. As we crossed a small slough I thought that I had seen that place before, Brown and Snider would certainly have seen our tracks in the soft mud. Therefore I said nothing, but followed, for Snider had told me once that we would find the trail better if I would just shut my eyes and follow. But some time later Brown recognized acrotch, and there could be no mistake in the identity of that tree. "We have come this way once before this morning," said Brown with conviction.

"Well, I thought we had crossed that slough yonder before also, didn't you fellows see any footprints?" asked I.

"Yes," said Snider, "but they pointed the other way." "Of course they pointed the other way," said I, for we marched up that hill on the other side of the slough, walked around that big tree and now we are on our way back to Skookum again."

"It is a pity that you fellows don't recognize your own footprints when you see them," said I with disgust. "Now we will have to rehearse all of that grand march again, and we will have to see if we can find our way back to that big tree and if we can't find a trail there we will have to try to find Fawcett Creek, and if we can't do any better we will have to wade down, as we waded up."

We succeeded in finding the big tree, and in locating the creek, and after searching awhile we also found the trail leading down the north fork.

It was still up hill, and down hill, over logs, and under logs, through brush, gulches, and ravines; but we were now able to follow the trail.

At ten o'clock we ate a lunch of cheese and crackers, while standing on a three hundred foot log, bridging the creek. There was no hope of starting a fire and cooking some coi-

fee for it was still raining and as we were chilled through and through, we did not take time to rest.

At two o'clock we halted again and ate some dried beef and some bread, our teeth now chattered so that all we had to do was to hold the dried beef up in front of them and they pulled it in and masticated like a threshing-machine does a bundle of grain. At four o'clock, after having been on the trail since early morning, we found ourselves out of the woods and on level ground, now we emptied our boots and wrung our clothes, and set out on a seven mile walk to Tillamook.

We had planned, while going up, that we would telephone for the red automobile when we came to the end of the trail on our return trip; but we were so soaked with water and so chilled that we concluded it would be best for us to walk.

It was a sorry looking procession coming along the road towards Tillamook. We didn't have any energy to waste in conversation, our walk was simply a mechanical motion our will power kept our feet going. Snider a few rods ahead with his chin at an angle of fortyfive and with a few seasons' crop of dirt running in streaks from his hat down over a face set in pallid desperation. Next came I, but I couldn't see myself as the others saw me, and I was glad of it. A few rods behind me came Brown mumbling to himself: "I'm afraid to go home in the light." Some distance Brown flew two crows hawking and carrying on.

Now we would pass a signboard telling wayfarers that it was three miles to Tillamook, after a while we would pass one saying that it was four miles. We didn't know where we were going or coming, and we didn't care much, we had ceased to worry about earthly things. Personally I didn't care whether I was to be married or hung when I got to Tillamook but Oh how I wished I was there. "I don't feel my pack any more," said Brown with almost a sob in his voice.

"It has probably grown fast on you, Saimese-twin fashion Brown," says I, but don't worry about such trifles for I don't feel my body any more, and I am afraid I will be all soul before we ever get to Tillamook.

The farmers on their way home from town were smiling on their wagons as they passed us, and one laughing good natured fellow shouted as he passed Brown:

"Say pard you are losing something" And when we came back to examine his sack we found that a can of condensed milk had uncorked itself and was trickling down on his heels and marking a trail behind him.

"Brown, says I, don't you know better than to mark a trail with milk on a rainy day like this!"

"Well, says he, "I didn't have any more beans, and the Hearld says that when you go into the wilderness you should always drop beans so you can find your way back."

"Well, says I you should always go by the Headlight, and the Headlight states that you should carry a bag of white navy beans for that purpose. Here you have used up three cans of Hines best pork and beans in tomato sauce, and wasted enough good condensed milk to prime a cow with, you should always go by the Headlight, Brown" says I, Now I begin to understand why these pesky cows have followed us all the way and kept up such a cow-caw and such a how-do-you-do, they were fussing because they couldn't find any pork in that Hines combination. Always read the Headlight, Brown, says I always read the Headlight.

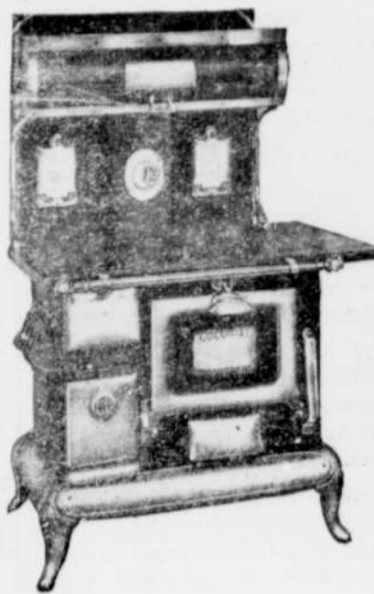
"Now when we got as far as the cheeseactory, Snider, says I you will have to stop long enough for the rest of us to catch up so that we can enter the city of Tillamook in a manner becoming to our station in society." We had better pull down our vests, and wipe off our chins, for it may be that the Tillamook band will meet us and play "Conquering Hero" as we march into town, says I, so let us try to look our best and be dignified. "For there is nothing which shows a man's manliness as much as the manner in which he takes his own success, and the adulation of his fellow mortals," says I, A fool who has been lucky enough to acquire a fortune or get into the public eye, will strut around red in the face and ready to burst with self importance, but a man of real worth will take such things with calm dignity, says I. So when the band strikes up "Conquering Hero" let us all be dignified, but calm, let the people of Tillamook know that we have been used to such praise and adulation from our cradles. After that preachment we started down the street, three abreast with chins high, and shoulders well thrown back, and the light of expectancy in every eye; but alak and alak! there was no one came to meet us. The band was playing sure enough, but it was serenading the butchers hogs and instead of playing "Conquering Hero" it was playing "Ash du liebe Augustine"

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