

**HENRY
ABBOTT**

CAMPING AT
CHERRY POND

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Camping at Cherry Pond

We were out of meat. We were not in imminent danger of starvation, nor indeed of hunger, but were reduced to what might be called a vegetable diet, and not a great variety of that. Bige and I discussed the situation while we ate our frugal evening meal of flapjacks, maple syrup, and onions. We had eaten onions, syrup, and flapjacks for luncheon, and syrup, onions, and flapjacks for breakfast that same day. The last of our stock of bacon had been consumed twenty-four hours earlier, and the last of our eggs had served as part of breakfast on the morning of the previous day. Our fresh meat had disappeared five days before, and the potato bag was empty. We had some coffee and plenty of spring water. The flapjacks were good, but we were not quite happy. There was a lot of sameness in our diet, which was far from agreeable, and we now were considering ways and means.

I suppose it is due to the perversity of the human animal that he craves what is sometimes called a "balanced ration." We were both fond of flapjacks, and likewise of onions. There is nothing quite so satisfying as onions, cooked over and eaten by the camp fire; but onions three times a day, and day after day – well, I suppose it would have been just as bad if we had been sentenced to eat ice cream for a steady diet. I seem to recall that we had, in our Sunday-school days, the authority of the Good Book for the statement that the Israelites went on a strike because they were obliged to eat quail three times a day for a long while.

Bige and I were living at the Cherry Pond Camp. We had gone over there to hunt deer, and had taken in with us, ten days previously, what we considered a good supply of food; but then, we had counted on shooting a deer and expected to have venison to add to our cuisine. Of course we could have gone back to Brown's hotel and gotten some more food, but Deerland Lodge was ten miles away; besides, the people there would have laughed at us if we had returned empty-handed. We were expected to bring "meat" back with us, but luck had been against us.

There were plenty of fish in Cherry Pond. We had caught them there many times, but at the time of which I write the season was closed for both speckled and lake trout, and, moreover, we had brought no fishing tackle, so a fish diet was out of the discussion.

It was early October, and the deer-hunting season had opened on the first day of the month. We had come to hunt deer, but we had no thought of taking a mean advantage of the deer or of violating the game law by hunting him at night along the shores of the pond with a jack light. That would have been too easy, and in our opinion little short of murder. We proposed to be sporty and practice only the "still-hunting" method. That would give the deer long odds and, so to speak, a running chance for his life. Under the prevailing conditions the chances were indeed about twenty to one in his favor.

In still hunting one must sneak through the woods, making no sound and as little motion as possible. Preferably one should also hunt "up wind," but this is not always possible. The deer has been provided with a pair of very large ears capable of collecting the sound made by a breaking twig many rods away; and his sense of smell is so keen as to telegraph to his brain the human scent and warn him of the approach of his hereditary enemy long before he is within range of vision. It is also the habit of the deer, when lying down, to take such a position that he can keep his eye on his own back track, while he has in effect "his ear to the ground."

At this time the leaves had just begun to fall, and there had been no rain for many days, so when one walked through the woods the leaves rustled, and dried twigs and branches snapped, making the forest "noisy."

There were many deer living in the vicinity of Cherry Pond. We had seen tracks and other signs of their presence, but on the few occasions when we saw a deer it was usually only the flash of his white tail as he jumped from behind a clump of bushes and disappeared behind a rock or other screen. Twice we took snap shots, and in each instance the bullet, we found, was imbedded in

a tree trunk that the deer had succeeded in placing between the gun and himself at the first running jump. I had also sat many hours on logs watching runways while Bige tramped around a hill or over a mountain to drive a deer past my watch station. On one occasion when I heard a deer coming and was all ready to shoot, he evidently suspected danger, crossed over to another parallel runway, and passed without coming into view.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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