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When You Go Camping Take Lots of Skeeter Dope and Don't Ever Lose It

He is one of the few wild animals that are not afraid of man. He scents him afar off and with a zooming cry attacks him and sucks his blood. He has driven men to madness and made whole sections of a continent uninhabitable. No, he is not a vampire bat, he is the mosquito.

This yarn is for the city dweller who can't get away for a vacation this summer. When he finishes it he will chortle with glee, think sadly of the poor people who have gone up into the bush and stride off to a movie with his heart full of love for Toronto. There are very few mosquitoes in Toronto.

We were up in the bush. Our camp was so far out in the tall and un-severed [bushes] that there wasn't even an echo. An echo would die of lonesomeness out there.

The first night was perfect. There was a wind from the north and it was cold and we slept like logs. There wasn't a mosquito around.

But the next night at dusk a warm south wind brought them up from the cedar swamp in clouds. If you have never seen a cloud of mosquitoes you cannot appreciate it. It is just like a cloud of dust. Only it is mosquitoes.

We retired into our tent and dropped the mosquito netting over the front. Pretty soon a mosquito bit me on the nose. I killed him and another took his place. Ted lit a candle and started to hunt down all the mosquitoes in the tent. We cleared the tent of them and lay down to sleep and then came that familiar zoom and another proboscis was inserted into my face.

The mosquitoes were coming through the netting as though it were the bars of a cage. By smearing ourselves with citronella oil we managed to get some sleep. About as much sleep as a man gets with a few thousand buzzing, biting, ungentlemanly insects settling down on his face as soon as it comes out of the blankets and satisfying their hunger by pushing their bills into his countenance. •

The next night I came in soaked and tired from a day's fly fishing and as I emptied my creel I noted a hunted look on Ted's face. "I lost the skeeter dope," he said. "You what?" said I, paralyzed.

"I was trying to get the cork out and it stuck and I pushed it in and then I set the bottle down and it spilled."

Then I knew how Napoleon felt on St. Helena and what Caesar's feelings were when he observed Brutus sticking his jackknife in him, and how the "only one grain of corn, mother" bird felt when he found that there wasn't any corn.

We were out for two weeks. We were twenty-six miles from the nearest town. Our mosquito netting had meshes that would permit a mosquito to be as active as a Sinn Feiner, and Ted had lost the mosquito dope.

Just then a warm breeze commenced to blow from the south across the cedar swamp up toward the high ground of our camp and a keen observer could have seen what looked like a cloud of dust coming up from the swamp. Then I began to appreciate mosquitoes.

We built two smudges and sat between them. The mosquitoes stuck around and every once in a while made a dash through the smoke.

Then we built four smudges and sat inside of them. The mosquitoes came in through the cracks in the smoke. We began to feel like smoked hams. I suggested as much to Ted.

“We are,” he said.

Then I started to cheer him up.

“Suppose,” said I, “that mosquitoes were as big as crows? What chance would we have then?” He said nothing.

“Suppose they ate fish? There wouldn’t be a fish in the stream.” He didn’t reply.

“We’ve got a lot to be thankful for,” I said.

“Oh, shut up!” he said in a very unmannerly way.

We stuck it for two weeks. But sometimes we were pretty desperate.

Ted suggested that after we had eaten my cookery for a long enough time we would be poisonous to a mosquito.

I retorted that he was probably poisonous to them anyway.

He suggested that I had bought that mosquito netting.

I asked who lost the skeeter dope?

He threw a flapjack at me.

Finally, after a few days it commenced to blow from the north, and we didn’t see another mosquito. Ted remarked that I was a fine cook. I said that he certainly cast a wicked fly.

The moral is that we should have had cheesecloth instead of the kind of mosquito netting they are selling this year. And you need two bottles of dope. Better make it three.