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Before You Go Auto Camping

"Now we'll show you a real tent," said Henry when dinner was over. And he led the way to the car parked back of the house. "Just watch, and see how quick we can get the tent up."

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Gus Says Look to Your Tires, Spark Plugs, Crankcase, and Save Trouble

By MARTIN BUNN

"HELLO, Uncle Gus. What do you know about auto camping?" called Gus Wilson's nephew, Henry, to the older man as he stepped inside and slammed the door of the Model Garage with a resounding crash.

"What do you want to know for?" growled the veteran auto mechanic. "Go easy on that door the next time! What's the big idea about auto camping? Are you and Grace fixing to take a fall out of that game?"

"You guessed right the first time!" replied Henry. "That's just what we are going to do, and I want you to tell me how to get the car ready for the trip."

"Humph!" grunted Gus. "It all depends on where you are going, how long you expect to be on the road, and so forth. If it's just a matter of running about fifty miles or so to the nearest camp and staying there for your whole vacation, I don't see why you should need to make any special preparations except to see that the bus is filled up with gas, oil, and water."

"THAT'S not auto camping at all," Henry scoffed. "I mean the real thing—every night in a different place and lots of miles covered every day."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Gus. "You are a brute for punishment! All right, if that's the kind of a trip you want to make, there's a whole lot of things you ought to do to the car. Let's see—you've had it a bit more than a month now. How many miles have you driven?"

"Speedometer shows just over a thousand," replied Henry.

"Well," said Gus, "they say that the first hundred years are the hardest but as far as autos are concerned, the first thousand miles usually get a bus broken

in fairly well, and if anything is likely to work loose that's when it shows up. So I guess you're all right.

"Before you do anything else, I'd suggest that you climb into a pair of overalls and go over the car with a fine tooth comb. Try a wrench on every blessed bolt and nut you can find and see that all of them are good and tight.

"And while you are going over the car, keep your eyes peeled for anything that seems queer or not just right. Note whether the gasoline pipe is fastened tight so that it can't chafe against the frame or some other part. When you get to the engine, watch particularly for loose hose connections and wiring that seems to be loosening up."

"How about putting some braces in to reinforce the frame?" suggested Henry.

"Why do that?" Gus countered. "Your car was designed to carry five people, and if only you and Grace are going on this expedition, you certainly won't need to carry over three or four hundred pounds of baggage, and that is no more weight than three more passengers. Forget about frame bracing—just take it a bit easy when you strike extra rough going.

"You ought to arrange a couple of extra tanks under the hood. One for

gasoline and the other for lubricating oil. The extra gas tank is only for emergency if you happen to run out, but the oil tank ought to be big enough to hold a good supply so that you won't have to depend on getting fresh oil at some crossroads store where they sell you almost anything in the way of bootleg lubricating oil.

"By the way," Gus continued, "what kind of tools did they give you with the car?"

"Pretty rotten layout," Henry replied. "The screw driver might be all right only the handle turns on the blade. The wrench must be made out of cast-iron—one of the jaws cracked right off the first time I used it, and the rest of the stuff is no better. Even the oil can leaks something awful."

"THEN," advised Gus, "you had better go into the office and let Joe help you pick out a good kit of tools. We've got quite a stock. There's no use going auto camping without a tool kit that is meant for business, and while you are at it get a set of chains. You may run into a spell of muddy going where they will be mighty useful. And don't forget to include two or three spools of brass wire and a couple of large-sized rolls of tire tape. You may not need them on the car, but they'll come in handy for holding the camp equipment together when it gets smashed."

"Huh!" snorted Henry. "Nothing is going to get busted in my camp outfit. You forget how careful I am."

"Maybe so, son," said Gus, smiling. "But auto camping stuff like folding tents and folding stoves and what-not has to be made light, and if you don't find good use for (Continued on page 134)

When You Go Camping—

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Are the tires in good shape for a long trip?

Has the crankcase been filled with fresh oil?

Is your tool kit complete with rolls of tape?

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Before You Go Auto Camping

(Continued from page 66)

that wire and tape I'll miss my guess.

"I don't need to tell you to drain the crankcase and fill it up with fresh oil just before you start or to remind you to grease the car thoroughly. You know enough to do that, of course. It wouldn't do any harm to clean out the old lubricant in the transmission and rear end and put in a fresh supply."

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to take the storage battery out and give it a good charge before we start?" Henry asked.

"NOTHING doing!" replied Gus emphatically. "Your car is new and the battery will get a lot more charging than it needs on the trip anyway, unless you run your camp light from the storage battery. That's assuming, of course, that you are on the road almost every day. Make sure that there is plenty of water in it before you start, and it would be a good idea to take off the terminals and scrub them with a bit of sandpaper. The least bit of corrosion at that point will interfere with the operation of the self-starter."

"What kind of a camp light is that you are talking about?" Henry inquired.

"Nothing but a socket fastened into the hole in an ordinary green tin electric light shade and connected to a long drop-light cord and a plug so that you can put it in place of the dash light," replied Gus. "With a headlight bulb in the socket, you will have plenty of light to read by."

"By the way," Gus went on, "is there any way of getting gasoline out of your tank for the gasoline stove?"

"There's a petcock on the bottom of the carburetor for that," Henry replied.

"And if you use it, you will drain your vacuum tank dry and then wonder why the engine won't start next morning. You ought to know better than that, Henry," said Gus reprovingly. "You can fit a petcock in the gasoline pipe between the main tank and the vacuum tank, but after all the best bet is to take along a three-foot length of rubber tubing and syphon the gasoline from the main tank. You can start the syphon by pushing the tubing all the way into the tank and then hold your finger over the end while you pull it out and tuck it in the filler opening in the gasoline stove."

"Have you bought your camp equipment yet?" broke in Joe Clark.

"Not yet," replied Henry. "That's one of the things I want to ask you about. What would you suggest?"

"WELL, let's see," Joe paused thoughtfully. "Of course you'll need a tent, unless you want to fix the front seat of the car so that it will fold back to form a bed. You'll have to decide whether you want a tent that hitches on to the side of the auto or one that is entirely a unit by itself. And I'd certainly recommend a gasoline stove. Saves a lot of time rustling firewood, and it's easier to cook on than a wood fire that is never the same heat twice running. A portable ice box is a big help unless you are going

to travel where you can buy food fresh every day. You can get a folding kit that includes pots and pans and dishes, or you can lay in a stock of paper plates and cups so you won't have to spend so much time washing dishes. Don't forget a simple first aid kit."

"Sounds like good dope," said Henry as he rapidly jotted Joe's suggestions in his notebook. "Grace wanted me to ask you and Uncle Gus around for Sunday dinner, and you can look over our outfit afterward," he finished.

"What's this, a dress rehearsal?" said Gus, as he and Joe stepped into the dining room the following Sunday to find both Grace and Henry in camping togs.

"It certainly is, Uncle Gus," laughed Grace. "Even the dinner is being cooked on that cute little gasoline stove!"

"Well, I'd say there is certainly nothing the matter with that stove," exclaimed Joe as Grace brought in a steak that was cooked to a turn.

And the rest of the dinner added further evidence that the stove was good.

"NOW we'll show you a real tent," said Henry when dinner was over. And he led the way to the car parked back of the house. "Just watch and see how quick we can get the tent up."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Joe admiringly. "You two are the original lightning change campers—couldn't have taken you ten minutes."

"Humph!" grunted Gus, as they climbed into Gus's car after wishing the young couple all kinds of luck on their trip. "You're a fine one to be giving out information on auto camping! Why, you never spent a night under canvas!"

"Never you mind," said Joe with a broad grin. "I'd spend most of my time auto camping if I wasn't tied down so tight helping run the Model Garage!"

Next Houses May Be Steel

(Continued from page 29)

use of steel, however, is not being confined alone to the framework of such structures. One of the most successful of the new types of steel bungalows has walls of steel sheets. Walls and partitions are made up of interchangeable units. The cost of the thirteen tons of steel used in the framework of one of these houses, it is said, is less than it would be for wood.

Of course, the most important advantage claimed for the new steel type of small home is its increased safety. It is said to be fireproof, lightning-proof, storm-proof, and as nearly earthquake-proof as any building that can be designed. In addition, it is easier to keep clean, and therefore is more sanitary. The smooth, tough steel surfaces defy mice and vermin.

As for appearance, those who see a great future for the steel home declare that if architects can make modern skyscrapers into monuments of lofty beauty, they can even more easily design attractive steel residences.