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Vive Le Camp!

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L’ETERNEL est mon berger: je ne manquerai de rien” Pierre looked at the man standing at the pulpit, and then, as he listened to the words of the well known Shepherd’s Psalm, his gaze went upward through the trees overhead to the blue skies beyond. As he sat there, his mind went to tomorrow and then went racing back to the yesterdays of the past two weeks.

Yes, tomorrow, camp would be over. Tomorrow, everyone would be up bright and early; bed rolls would be tied securely; suitcases would be packed; and all the campers and leaders would go to the morning service of worship at L’Eglise des Cantons de l’Est in Melbourne. The Rev. Jacques Smith, le directeur du camp, would conduct the worship. The Rev. Hugh L. Nugent, l’aumônier du camp, would preach the sermon. The campers would sing an anthem and in no time at all the service would be over and Mama and Papa would be waiting for him to finish his goodbyes to his old and new friends and then they’d be off and camp would be over for another year.

This was Pierre’s third summer at Le Camp d’Action Biblique, and well he remembered the first time he had attended. It had been during the winter before that Mama and Papa had decided to leave the Roman Church. It had not been an easy break to make, and so many things had changed for Pierre. Take school for instance. He had always been taught in French before, and since that was what they spoke at

home, that was the only language he knew. But now, he went to a Protestant school — and the lessons were in English. He had to go back a couple of grades just because of that but it hadn’t taken him long to grasp the language enough to get back into the grade in which he belonged.

And this new faith of Mama’s and Papa’s! My how they were studying it, and what a difference it had made! They hadn’t been as calm and relaxed in months. Every night just after supper when they met for family devotions they had such happy times discussing together the meaning of this verse and that and then bowing in prayer, thanking God for Christ to whom they could take all their burdens and cares. How much there was new to learn and how much Pierre wanted to learn too. That’s why it was decided that he would go to the Bible Action camp — a vacation Bible school, really, but in a camping situation. And it was for French-speaking Protestant children too. So, that summer, off he had gone.

NOW, here he was, at the last evening worship of camp, three years later — aged fifteen, and so the last year he would be able to attend. What fun these last two weeks had been! First there had been old friends to greet and new friends to make. There had been the little fellows that he and some of the other old campers had helped to get settled. And of course, there had been exploring to do — down by the creek, through the woods, around the lodge,

and whenever they were near enough to their section, some girls to tease.

Time after time as he had sat at the doorway of his tent taking in the beauty of the part of the Sherbrooke mountain range before him and feeling the warm sun cooled by the trees around him, he found himself going over the words of the psalmist “Les cieux racontent la gloire de Dieu, Et l’etendue manifeste l’oeuvre de ses mains”

In Bible study he had been quite intrigued by the life of Christ as he found it recorded by the gospel writers, and by what the church meant then and now as he saw it grow in the Mediterranean lands and beyond. He had wondered about other boys and girls taking the same New Testament study — Where they were? What their camps were like? What they were doing? — because he knew that the French Protestant Bible study books for camp were not available in Canada and had had to be brought in from Switzerland.

Because of the very special type of camp it was, Bible study and worship had held a big place in the day’s programme. But there had been lots of time for other kinds of fun and activity too. Those exercises first thing in the morning had certainly wakened him! What an imagination they had to have in order to decorate their tent a little differently every day before inspection time! And the handicrafts — he had a whole armful of things he had made — and some of them out of materials he would have classed as junk too! Swimming? How he loved it — and how he

SPOTLIGHT NOTES :

Camp Name : Le Camp d'Action Biblique (sometimes called Camp Richmond).

Situation : Near Richmond, Quebec.

Director-Founder : Rev. Jacques Smith, minister of the French-speaking L'Eglise des Cantons de l'Est, Melbourne, Quebec.

Chaplain : Rev. Hugh L. Nugent, minister in Beauce and Frontenac counties in the province of Quebec.

Ownership : The camp was presented to the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada by the congregation of L'Eglise des Cantons de l'Est in 1956, debt free!

Campers : French-speaking Protestant boys and girls aged 7 to 15.

Time : The first two weeks of August each year.

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Adjusting the tent ropes at Le Camp d'Action Biblique. One of the permanent buildings is seen in the background.



Campers line up for morning inspection by the Rev. Jacques Smith, director, and his assistants.

Both boys and girls are taught various forms of handicrafts by camp leaders.



looked forward to that period every afternoon when he could dive in and skim through the water with the grace of a fish. And afterwards there was volleyball or softball and before he knew it it was time for campfire and perhaps a light snack before going off to bed.

Forgotten something? No, not really. The food was just left to the last because it deserves a place all of its own. Like everyone else at the camp the cooks gave freely of their time and skills. What a job it was too — feeding sixty hungry mouths! Mmmmm . . . how good it was! Scrumptious to say the least! And everyone put on weight!

Special events? Yes, there were some and what fun they had been too. Those skits they put on around the campfire were hilarious and he must remember the punch lines to tell the gang back home. Parents' night was a huge suc-

cess; everybody remembered their parts; lots of parents came; and the food afterwards — mmmmm good! There was a Sunday picnic at the lake — the team play-offs for the volleyball and softball championship.

AND something else too — truly a special event in Pierre's life. He had found himself thinking a great deal since coming to camp — even before coming in fact. He'd been thinking about his beliefs, about his faith. Suddenly, last night he knew. He went to the camp chaplain's tent to talk and ask questions and the chaplain in his quiet understanding way had answered them for him. Before he left, they had knelt in prayer together and when he crawled into his sleeping bag a few moments later it was with a joyous heart and a new feeling in every inch of his

being, for Pierre had given his life to Christ. He had made his decision. He had become a Christian.

Suddenly, he jumped. How long had he been thinking? He didn't know, but they were already singing the closing hymn. He rose to his feet and, recognizing the tune, sang along with his fellow campers:

"Deux mains pour servir le Maître,
Deux pieds pour aller partout
Dire a tous nous voulons être
Au bon Sauveur humble et doux."

To him, the chorus of the hymn was a prayer that would go with him wherever he went in all the days to come and he sang with a heart overflowing

"Lord take my life
My heart, my will.
Let me n'er forget Thee,
God of goodness, God of grace." ★