

**THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS
ON THE OPEN ROAD;
OR, GLORIFY WORK**

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The camp fire girls on the open road; or, Glorify work by Hildegard G. Frey

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HILDEGARDE G. FREY

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Just then a negro stepped suddenly from behind the bushes along the road and startled Sandhelo so that he promptly sat up on his haunches to get a better look at the apparition. Page 49.

“The Camp-Fire Girls on the Open Road.”

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS
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By HILDEGARD G. FREY

AUTHOR OF
The Camp Fire Girls Series



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By HILDEGARD G. FREY

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or, Glorify Work

The Camp Fire Girls Do Their Bit
or, Over The Top With the Winnebago's

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THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS ON THE OPEN ROAD

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS ON THE OPEN ROAD

KATHERINE TO THE WINNEBAGOS

Oct. 1, 19—.

DEAR FIRST-AND-ONLYS:

When I got to the post-office to-day and found there was no letter from you, my heart sank right through the bottom of my number seven boots and buried itself in the mud under the doorsill. All day long I had had a feeling that there would be a letter, and that hope kept me up nobly through the trying ordeal of attempting to teach spelling and geography and arithmetic to a roomful of children of assorted ages who seem as determined not to learn as I am determined to teach them. It sustained and soothed me through the exciting process of "settling" Absalom Butts, the fourteen-year-old bully of the class, with whom I have a preliminary skir-

mish every day in the week before recitations can begin; and through the equally trying business of listening to his dull-witted sister, Clarissa, spell "example" forty ways but the right way, and then dissolve into inevitable tears. When school was out I was as limp as a rag, and so thankful it was Friday night that I could have kissed the calendar. I fairly "sic"ed Sandhelo along the road to the post-office, expecting to revel in the bale of news from my beloveds that was awaiting me, but when I got there and the post box was bare the last button burst off the mantle of my philosophy and left me naked to the cold winds of disappointment. A whole orphan asylum with the mumps on both sides would have been gay and chipper compared to me when I turned Sandhelo's head homeward and started on the six-mile drive.

It had been raining for more than a week, a steady, warmish, sickening drizzle, that had taken all the curl out of my spirits and left them hanging in dejected, stringy wisps. I couldn't help feeling how well the weather matched my state of mind as I drove homeward. The whole landscape was one gray blur, and the tall weeds that bordered the road

on both sides wept unconsolably on each other's shoulders, their tears mingling in a stream down their stems. I could almost hear them sob. The muddy yellow road wound endlessly past empty, barren fields, and seemed to hold out no promise of ever arriving anywhere in particular. All my life I have hated that aimlessly winding road, just as I have always hated those empty, barren fields. They have always seemed so shiftless, so utterly unambitious. I can't help thinking that this corner of Arkansas was made out of the scraps that were left after everything else was finished. How father ever came to take up land here when he had the whole state to choose from is one of the seven things we will never know till the coming of the Cocqui-grues. It's as flat as a pancake, and, for the most part, treeless. The few trees there are seem to be ashamed to be caught growing in such a place, and make themselves as small as possible. The land is stony and barren and sterile, neither very good for farming or grazing. The only certain thing about the rainfall is that it is certain to come at the wrong time, and upset all your plans. "Principal rivers, there are none; principal mountains—I'm the only

one," as Alice-in-Wonderland used to say. But father has always been the kind of man that gets the worst of every bargain.

Now, you unvaryingly cheerful Winnebagos, go ahead and sniff contemptuously when you breathe the damp vapors rising from this epistle, and hear the pitiful moans issuing therefrom. "For shame, Katherine!" I can hear you saying, in superior tones, "to get low in your mind so soon! Why, you haven't come to the first turn in the Open Road, and you've gone lame already. Where is the Torch that you started out with so gaily flaring? Quenched completely by the first shower! Katherine Adams, you big baby, straighten up your face this minute and stop blubbing!"

But oh, you round pegs in your nice smooth, round holes, you have never been a stranger in a familiar land! You have never known what it was to be out of tune with everything around you. Oh, why wasn't I built to admire vast stretches of nothing, content to dwell among untrodden ways and be a Maid whom there were none to praise and very few to love, and all that Wordsworth business? Why do crickets and grasshoppers and owls make