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BAGGAGE
ROOM

“I’LL CLOSE MY EYES AND TRY TO GO STRAIGHT,” SAID PEE-WEE.
Pee-wee Harris in Camp. Frontispiece—(*Page 26*)

PEE-WEE HARRIS IN CAMP

BY
PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Author of
THE TOM SLADE BOOKS, THE ROY BLAKELEY BOOKS,
THE PEE-WEE HARRIS BOOKS

ILLUSTRATED BY
H. S. BARBOUR

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Pee-Wee Harris in Camp, also in Dutch; also in hot water, in cold water, on the stage, in politics, and in the raspberry jam. Including the true facts concerning his size (what there is of it) and his heroism (such as it is), his voice, his clothes, his appetite, his friends, his enemies, his victims. Together with the thrilling narrative of the rise and fall of the Hop-toad Patrol, as well as other delectable particulars touching the one time mascot of the Ravens, sometimes known as the Animal Cracker Patrol. How he foiled, baffled, circumvented and triumphed over everything and everybody (except where he failed) and how even when he failed he succeeded. The whole recorded in a series of screams and told with neither muffler nor cut-out.

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CHAPTER I
HE OPENS THE DOOR, THEN OPENS HIS MOUTH

"I'm going to brand a horse with a hot iron! I'm going to brand a double cross on him! I'm going to brand it on his hip! I'm going to get ten dollars!"

These were strange words to issue from the lips of a boy scout. Yet they were uttered by no less a scout than Pee-Wee Harris, the scout of scouts, the scout who made scouting famous, the only original scout, the scout who put the rave in Raven Patrol. They were uttered by Scout Harris who was so humane that he loved butterflies because they reminded him of butter and who would not harm a piece of pudding-stone because it aroused his tender recollections of pudding.

"I'm going to brand him to-morrow night!" he repeated cruelly. "Is there any pie left in the pantry?"

What act of inhuman cruelty he meditated against the poor, defenseless pie only his own guilty conscience knew. Before his mother was able to answer him from upstairs he had branded a piece of pie with his teeth.

Pee-wee's mother did not come down, but she put her foot down.

"I don't know what you mean," she called, "but you're not going to do it. There is one piece of pie in the pantry unless you have eaten it already."

Pee-wee ascended the stairs armed with a dripping slice of rhubarb pie which left a scout trail up the wild, carpeted steps and through the dim, unfathomed fastnesses of the upper hall.

"I'm brandhorse," he repeated, wrestling with a large mouthful of pie, "I'mgngtendlrs."

The bite of pie conquered, Pee-wee proceeded to enlighten his mother as to his latest enterprise.

"You know the—"

"Don't eat while you're talking," said Mrs. Harris.

"You know the Punkhall Stock Company?" Pee-wee continued excitedly. "They're coming to the Lyric Theatre next week. They're going to play New York successes. They advertised for a boy to brand a horse and I went to see the man and his name is Rantrnetolme—"

"Stop! Wait a minute; now go on. And don't take another bite till you finish."

"Mr. Ranter he's manager and he said I'd do and I only have to be in that one play and I only have to be on the stage one minute and I'll get ten dollars and everybody'll clap and I bet you'll be glad and it—anyway, it

isn't a hot iron at all, but it's painted red so it will look hot and it doesn't hurt the horse only it looks as if it did, so can I do it?" he concluded breathlessly. "You can't say that red paint will hurt a horse," he added anxiously. "Gee whiz, I wouldn't be cruel, but red paint can't hurt anybody."

"What is the name of this play?" Pee-wee's mother asked.

"The name of it is *Double-crossed* and I'll tell you all about it, it's a dandy play, a man has a double cross for trade-mark, see? And he's a villain and he gets a kid to crawl through a hole in the fence, it's out west in Arizona, and that kid has to brand one of the other man's horses so the man will admit the horse belongs to the other man and the other man can take him, see? That's what you call a plot. The man beats me if I say I won't do it, so I do it and I don't say anything at all and after the play is over I get ten dollars, so will you come and see me?"

"Where is the boy who usually does that?" Mrs. Harris asked, rather ruefully.

"They get a different boy in every town," Pee-wee said, "because Mr. Ranter, he says it's cheaper to do that than it is to pay his railroad fare all over the country, so can I do it? The iron isn't really hot. So can I do it? Roy Blakeley and all the troop are coming to see me and maybe they're going to get a flashlight and they're going to clap a lot. So can I do it? I'm going to do good turns with the ten dollars so if you stand up for good turns like you told Mr. Ellsworth, you'd better let me do it or else that shows you don't believe in good turns. So can I do it?"

In the interval of suspense which followed, Pee-wee strengthened his spirit with a bite of pie and stood ready to take still another upon the first hint of an adverse decision.

"I don't like the idea of you going on the stage with actors, especially with the Punkhall Stock Company," said Mrs. Harris doubtfully. "What would your Aunt Sophia say if she should hear of it?"

"How can she hear of it when she's deaf?" said Pee-wee. "Anyway, they never hear of things in North Deadham. I only have to be on the stage about one minute and I don't have to talk and I'd rather do it than—than—have a bicycle on Christmas. So can I do it?"

"I hope you don't impersonate a scout," said Mrs. Harris, weakening gradually.

"I'm the son of a cowboy that owns a ranch," Pee-wee vociferated, "and his name is Deadshot Dan, and he gave me some peanuts when Mr. Ranter was talking to me. Gee whiz, you can tell from that that he's not really bad, can't you? Mr. Punkhall was there too, and he said I'd do it fine and they'll show me how to do it at a rehearsal to-morrow morning and it doesn't really hurt the horse, so can I do it?"

"You remember how scandalized your Aunt Sophia Primshock was when you kept a refreshment shack by the roadside? We have to think of others, Walter. Aunt Sophia would be—I can't think what she'd be if she knew you joined the Punkhall Stock Company. And your cousin Prudence who is going to Vassar! I had to listen to their criticisms the whole time while I was visiting them, and your father thought they were right."

Poor Mrs. Harris lived in mortal terror of the Primshock branch of the family which occupied the big old-fashioned house at North Deadham. No stock companies, no movies even, ever went there. No popular songs or current jokes or wise cracks of the day penetrated to that solemn fastness. All that ever reached there, apparently, were the tidings of Pee-wee's sensational escapades, his floundering around the country in a ramshackle railroad car, his being carried off in an automobile, and, worst of all, his epoch-making plunge into the retail trade when he had sold and sung the praises of hot frankfurters by the road-side.

"I'm afraid she'd think it—unwise," Mrs. Harris said in her gentle, half yielding manner.

"Ah now, Mudgy," Pee-wee pleaded; "I told those men I'd do it and a scout has to keep his word, gee whiz, you have to admit that. And Aunt Sophia doesn't have to know anything about it and I promise, *I promise*, not to tell her, and anyway Prudence has joined the Girl Scouts and maybe by this time she's got to be kind of wild—kind of; and anyway I'll never tell them so they can't jump on you and if I say I won't, *I won't* because a scout's honor is to be trusted. So can I do it? I won't buy gumdrops with the ten dollars if you'll let me do it."

"Good gracious! Ten dollars worth of gumdrops!" said Mrs. Harris.

"Sure, that's nothing," said Pee-wee.

CHAPTER II
HE PLAYS HIS PART

We need not dwell upon Pee-wee's career on the stage. It was almost as short as he was. He crawled through a hole in a fence and had no difficulty in finding the right horse, since there was only one there.

He held the iron (painted red) against the horse's hip, then withdrew across the stage and was seen no more. The deed of villainy had been done, the double cross of the thieving ranchman had been branded upon the horse he coveted and was resolved to win "by fair means or foul." Those were the tragic words he had used.

There was nothing so very terrible about Pee-wee's new adventure and Mr. and Mrs. Harris were rather proud of the way in which he acquitted himself. He broke his ten dollar bill in Bennett's Fresh Confectionery, where he treated the members of his troop with true actorish liberality. Two sodas each they had, and gumdrops flew like bullets in the play.

"Roy's got your picture," said Westy Martin; "I hope it comes out all right. He's going to hang it in the cellar."

"How did it seem not speaking for thirty seconds?" Roy asked.

"He timed you with his stop watch," Artie Van Arlen said. "Did you see us in the front seats?"

"Now you see, it's good to be small," Pee-wee said. "They chose me because I could get through that hole in the fence. Fat Blanchard wanted to get the job but they wouldn't give it to him because they were afraid he'd get stuck half way through the hole. That horse is awful nice, he likes being branded I guess; anyway he wasn't mad about it because he licked my hand twice."

"If I had my way I'd lick you a couple of dozen times," said Roy. "Did you tell him about how you won the animal first aid badge?"

"Who?"

"The horse; did you tell him how that makes you a star scout?"

"What does the horse care?" Westy asked. "He's a star actor, that's better than a star scout."

"I guess he had to go on the stage on account of the automobile driving him out of business, hey?" Roy said.

"Anyway, I like horses," Pee-wee said.

"Sure," said Roy, "and you like horse radish and horse chestnuts too. No wonder you like horses, you're always kicking."

“Maybe some day I’ll play—maybe I’ll play Julius Caesar,” said Pee-wee proudly.

“Sure, maybe you’ll play checkers,” said Roy; “come on home, it’s late.”

“Let’s have one more soda,” said Pee-wee.

“Which one of us will have it?” Roy asked.

“One each,” said Pee-wee; “I’ll treat. The first ones were on account of my acting in that play, kind of to celebrate, and these will be on account of my getting to be a star scout. Will you?”

“For your sake we will,” said Roy, as they all lined up again at the soda fountain. “I hate to think what will happen when you get to be an eagle scout.”

“We’ll have a soda for every badge, hey?” said Pee-wee, immediately enthusiastic over the idea.

“That’ll be twenty-one sodas each.”

“Good night!” said Roy.

“And we’ll have chocolate ones on account of that being my patrol color, hey? Only I’m going to start a new patrol before that and maybe I’ll have red for our patrol color so we’ll have strawberry sodas, hey? Because, anyway, I’m going to be an eagle scout next summer.”

“Tell us all about that,” said Dorry Benton of the Silver Foxes.

“I’ve got a lot of plans,” said Pee-wee, between mouthfuls of dripping ice cream.

“Have you got them with you?” Wig Weigand asked.

“I’m going to start a patrol up at Temple Camp and I’m going to be the leader of it on account of being a star scout and I’m going to enter one of my scouts for the marksmanship contest—”

“G-o-o-d night!” interrupted Roy.

“A tall chance a tenderfoot stands of winning that,” Dorry laughed.

“I—I bet you I can think of a way, all right,” Pee-wee vociferated. “Didn’t I fix it so Worry Chesley could get the gold cross?”

“Yes?”

“Sure; didn’t I fall off the springboard so he could save my life?”

“And the raving Ravens will have to go on raving without their little mascot?” Doc Carson asked.

“Sure, let them rave,” said Pee-wee; “gee whiz, I can rave without them.”

“Oh, absolutely,” Roy said.

“If I’m a star scout that means I’m a hero, doesn’t it?” Pee-wee asked, his soda glass tilted up so that he might capture the last dregs. “If a scout has ten merit badges—”

“That means he has to treat to soda ten times,” said Roy; “it’s on page forty-eleven of the handbook. If he treats to soda fifteen times he’s a soda scout and he can wear the soda badge, all down the front of his coat, just like you. Come on, let’s go home, Mr. Bennett wants to shut up.”

“I wouldn’t shut up for anybody,” Pee-wee said.

CHAPTER III
SUCH IS FAME

Pee-wee's plans, indeed, were more numerous than the miscellaneous possessions which he displayed upon his scout regalia and which set him off like a sort of animated Christmas tree. If his active brain could have been revealed to view it would have been found decorated with plans of every description; schemes and enterprises would have been seen dangling from it, as his jack-knife and his compass and his cooking pan and his watch and his coil of rope were seen dangling from his belt and jacket. His mind was a sort of miniature attic, full of junk. An artist familiar with rummage sales might picture our scout hero in all his glory. But alas, no artist could picture his brain!

At the time of the beginning of this odd train of happenings, Pee-wee had cause to be both proud and satisfied. For one thing he had eight dollars and sixty cents, the rest of his ten dollars having gone to Bennett's.

The animal first aid badge which he had lately won, being his tenth award, had made him a star scout. The badge itself had not yet been tendered him but this would be done by the exalted powers when he reached Temple Camp. It would be done with befitting ceremony. It was not necessary for anyone to tell Pee-wee that he was a hero; he admitted it. After he had received his rank of star scout all of the pioneer[1] scouts at camp would rally to his standard, clamoring for admittance to his new, and altogether unique, patrol. So Pee-wee's path of glory was mapped out, as far as it was possible for the human imagination to map it. The new patrol was to be called the Hop-toad Patrol, because it was by tracking a hop-toad to its savage lair that Pee-wee had won the stalking badge, one of the stepping stones to his pedestal of glory.

But the fame of Scout Harris had already gone further than he knew; it had penetrated to North Deadham, and had appealed to Aunt Sophia Primshock's eyes, if it could not sneak in through her ears. On the very next morning after Pee-wee's brief career upon the stage he received the following letter:

> *My dearest nephew Walter*:
>
> We were so pleased to see in the Council Fire column of a newspaper that you have been awarded the scout badge for first aid to animals. Prudence is so proud of her cousin that she cannot

wait to see you and tell you so. When we think of all the cruelty that is inflicted on poor dumb creatures, and sometimes by boys, it makes me very happy to think that my very own nephew stands as the champion of the beasts and birds, and will not harm them or allow anyone else to harm them. That is better than selling sausages like a pedler, and if it is true that they are made of dogs it makes one's heart ache to think of it. We want you to come here and see us very soon, and you must stay for several days.

Your proud and happy

AUNT SOPHIA.

Enclosed in the envelope was another missive, rather more formal in tone, which read:

TO WALTER HARRIS, SCOUT:——

The Humane Committee of the Girl Scouts of North Deadham invite you to attend their rally on Saturday evening, July the tenth, and to accept the Black Beauty Cross of Mercy, for friendship and kindness to dumb creatures. This cross is given only by the North Deadham organization, to those rendering conspicuous service in the field of humanity by championing our dumb friends who cannot speak for themselves.

Katherine Kindheart
Sympathea Softe
Dorothy Docile
Prudence Primshock
Committee

The hero's acceptance of this invitation was a little disconcerting, but it did not dim his glory. On the contrary (so far as his own efforts were concerned) it increased his glory. He wrote:

Dear Aunt Sophia and Prudence and that Committee too:

I got that animal first aid badge so now I have ten badges only I didn't get it yet but anyway, I'm a star scout. You have to have a general knowledge of farm animals and I know a lot about them and I was kicked by a cow and she spilled the milk. I like milk too. I know what's good for colic and you have to know that and it's good for a horse. I don't mean colic.

Once when I was drowning some kittens I saved two so that was a kind act to those two and that counts. It counts one point. I

fixed a tin can that was tied to a dog's tail because it was tied too tight. I know all about the different knots, too. Once I grabbed a bat because I thought it was a dish rag hanging up. I bet most girls wouldn't be kind to mice especially rats.

If a horse falls down you have to take off his harness and the thing that goes kind of alongside his neck comes off like suspenders. Anyway I like a belt better on account of wearing my belt axe. Gee whiz I like girls and every kind of animals, only they're scared when they get in a rowboat.

I read that story about Black Beauty that your badge is named after. I like elephants better. If you have a parrot you better not swear because he learns it. Scouts have to cut birds up in sections so as to tell the different parts of them. I'm going to wear that Black Beauty badge alongside my star badge. I'm going to go on the train that gets there in time for supper.

With love,
WALTER HARRIS,

First Aid
Physical Development
Personal Health
Public Health
Life Saving
Astronomy
Swimming
Forestry
Dairying
Animal First Aid that makes ten.

P. S. I don't mean you have to cut birds up alive only in pictures.

Aunt Sophia put on her spectacles and scrutinized this letter curiously, but in the end her eyes dwelt fondly on the words at the end of the list of badges. Pee-wee always thus summarized his glories, even in school examination papers. She gazed at the words *Animal First Aid* and was reassured.

As for Sympathea Softe and Katherine Kindheart and Dorothy Docile, they were greatly edified by the imposing list of Pee-wee's triumphs.

"*Physical Development*," said Dorothy, in whispered admiration; "I just *bet* he's tall and dark, with a splendid chest. One can be *big* and *gentle* at the same time."

“Of course,” said Sympathea, “look at elephants; they’re as *gentle* as can be.”

“Oh, I hope he isn’t like an elephant,” said Dorothy; “they’re so clumsy. And they just eat, eat, all day. They just *live* on peanuts.”

“I pictured him as tall and lithe,” said Miss Katherine Kindheart; “like a —like a tree. I think that one familiar with forestry is almost *sure* to be tall. The swimming award too! Oh, I just long to see him. I think that *forestry* is such a perfectly *scrumptious* word too. *Forestry!* It sort of reminds me of Daniel Boone and Buffalo Bill—calm and stately; you know what I mean.”

“Or General Pershing,” said Sympathea.

“Or Eugene O’Brien,” said Dorothy, who was something of a movie fan.

“Oh don’t you just *long* to see him?” they all asked each other.

---

[1] Pioneer scout; a lone scout; one without troop or patrol affiliations.

CHAPTER IV
HE ADVANCES

Pee-wee started for North Deadham in full scout regalia, carrying a duffel bag instead of a suitcase, wishing to detach himself as much as possible from the manners and customs of civilization. A new feature of his motley array was a can-opener dangling from his belt, intended to suggest the rugged scout's dependence on his own culinary art in the dense wilderness. It was rather suggestive of Heinz 57 varieties.

On the train he made some memorandums in his scout report book looking to the future government of his new patrol. The following is a sample.

If any hop-toad can't learn the pace he has to have his legs tied together for an hour.

Every feller that gets a new hop-toad gets a piece of chocolate but he has to give it to his patrol leader for the treasury.

If a hop-toad can't croak like a frog he has to be turned over on his back and somebody sit on him till he croaks.

A hop-toad has to be given to the tom-cats if he can't learn because the tom-cats want more because they only have six.

On account of going fast hop-toads have to have sticks in their mouths.

I'm going to try to get tents near where the Robins were before the other fellows chased them away.

When the train stopped at North Deadham, the girls of the Humane Committee saw descending from it a diminutive figure clad in khaki, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like him. His scout report book bulged out of his pocket, his jack-knife and his compass and his can-opener jangled in a kind of martial tune, his step was the step of a conqueror. Beneath his flapping scout hat his curly hair showed and upon his face was a frown, a terrible frown, the frown of a hero.

The only discordant note in the martial figure that he presented was the stick of lemon candy which he was sucking. During his ride various articles, chiefly edible, had been left upon his lap for inspection, and he bought them all, and they now bulged and protruded here and there upon his scout attire.

Removing the stick of lemon candy from his mouth, he contemplated the girls who had come to meet him, uttered the single word "Hello" and replaced the candy in his mouth.

"Did you *ever* in your *life*?" gasped Sympathea.

"He is *certainly not* an elephant," said Dorothy.

"Or a Daniel Boone or a Buffalo Bill," chimed in Miss Kindheart.

"I'd rather be myself than them," said Pee-wee.

"Yes, why?" asked one of the reception committee anxiously.

"Because they're dead."

"Oh, we're so glad to see you, Walter," said Cousin Prudence, embracing him till he rattled like a Ford car; "I thought you'd never, *never*, come to see us. And you've won the animal first aid badge! Oh, isn't that perfectly *wonderful*!"

"I won a lot of others too," Pee-wee said. "I've got nine badges. See them on my sleeve? When the tenth one is put there I'll be a star scout. I'm going to be a patrol leader, too. I lost a marshmallow on that train. Are you going to have that meeting to-night?"

"We certainly are and you're going to be the main attraction. You're going to sit on the stage! Isn't that just perfectly fine? I don't believe you've ever been on a stage, now have you? Do you think you'll be afraid?"

It was very hard for Pee-wee to admit that there was anything in the world he hadn't done; and to have it intimated that he, the actor in *Double-crossed*, had never been on the stage, was as much as he could bear. But he remembered his voluntary promise to his mother and modified his answer.

"*Sure*, I've been on platforms and they're the same as stages," he said; "only they're kind of different. When we get our awards we have to go on platforms. Do you think I'm scared of audiences? Gee whiz, they won't hurt you. I'm not even scared of bears and they're not as bad as audiences, that's one thing sure."

"But I mean a *regular stage*," chirped Sympathea, "with woods painted in back and everything."

"I've even been lost in the woods," Pee-wee announced proudly. "Do you think I'm scared of painted woods? You can't get lost in those. I've been —I've been—*famished* in the woods, when I was lost."

"I thought scouts *never* got lost," Miss Dorothy Docile carolled forth.

"That shows you don't know anything about them," Pee-wee said disdainfully; "they know all about getting lost; they get lost better than anybody else. Then they find their way out by resourcefulness. Do you know what that means?"

"Isn't that perfectly *wonderful*?" said Miss Katherine Kindheart.

"That's nothing," Pee-wee said; "you go around in a circle when you get lost; do you know why?"

"No, do tell us."

"Because your heart is on your left side. You have to know all about astronomy if you're a scout."

“That isn’t astronomy, that’s anatomy,” said Cousin Prudence.

“Woods is my middle name,” said Pee-wee.

“Isn’t that a perfectly *lovely* name?” said Sympathea. “Walter Woods Harris.”

“I don’t mean it’s really my middle name,” Pee-wee said. “Suppose I was crazy about mince pie. I’d say my middle name was mince pie, but it wouldn’t be Pee-wee, I mean Walter Mincepie Harris, would it?”

“And do you really go round in a circle when you get lost?” Cousin Prudence asked him.

“S-u-re,” said Pee-wee conclusively, “your left side goes ahead of your right side—”

“And what becomes of your right side?” Katherine asked.

“It comes along after your left side,” Pee-wee explained.

“And doesn’t it ever, *ever* catch it?”

“No, so that’s why you go round in a circle; see? Now I’ll close my eyes and try to go straight. I’ll show you.”

The demonstration of this item of scout lore was highly satisfactory and very scoutish; for scouts are supposed to smile and Pee-wee’s escort of honor did more than that, they screamed. Closing his eyes, Pee-wee strode forward verging more and more toward the curb until he stumbled and went head over heels into the gutter, where his feminine admirers gathered about him, clamoring to aid the hero.

Pee-wee was equal to the occasion. “A scout is supposed to spread mirth,” he said, rising and brushing the mud from his regalia. He had certainly spread mirth as thoroughly as the mud was spread upon his scout uniform. “I’ll tell you something else about anatomy too,” he said. “Just then when I fell down in the mud it reminded me of it. Do you know how many muscles it takes to make a smile?”

“No, do tell us,” said Cousin Prudence as she brushed him off, laughing uncontrollably.

“Thirteen,” said Pee-wee.

“No wonder you were unlucky,” said Sympathea, shaking with laughter.

“It takes sixty-four muscles to make a frown,” Pee-wee continued. “So you’re doing a lot of extra work if you frown,” he added, pulling up his torn stocking.

The girls’ Humane Committee must have been of an economical turn, for they did not use sixty-four muscles, or anything like that number. They roared and screamed, and held their sides and brushed him off and readjusted his official junk upon his diminutive person, and just kept on laughing and laughing and laughing.

CHAPTER V
HE STORMS THE INNER FORTRESS

Having risen from the gutter like so many world heroes who began as poor boys, Pee-wee proceeded to expatiate on the honorable company which had come out of that lowly and muddy abode into the dazzling halls of fame.

"That's where Mr. Temple began who started Temple Camp," he said. "Wait till I see if I've got my money all right; I've got seven dollars and fifty-two cents not counting my ticket because my father paid for that. I'll treat you all to sodas."

"Oh I just couldn't eat a *thing* while I'm laughing so," Miss Dorothy Docile explained; "thank you just as much."

"Can't you eat when you're laughing?" Pee-wee asked incredulously.

"No, can scouts eat while they laugh?"

"S-u-re, they can eat while they're sleeping even. If you dream about eats they taste just as good don't they?"

"Can they eat while they're going around in a circle?" Sympathea asked mischievously. "You know we're girl scouts, but we really don't know much about girl scouting, because we've only just started. Don't you think our Black Beauty award is a splendid idea?"

"Sure, I have lots of dandy ideas," Pee-wee said; "but anyway you've got a right to kill snakes—snakes and mosquitoes. But I haven't got any right to kill a lion."

"Oh, I hope you never did that," said Cousin Prudence.

"Sure I didn't," Pee-wee assured her.

If any proof of his courage was required, he gave it in his martial advance up the wide, old-fashioned, thickly carpeted stairway which led to the inner fortress where Aunt Sophia Primshock sat bundled up in a big wheel chair. No weapon had she but her spectacles, but she used those in such a way as to make her terrible to behold. Her eyes made sudden flank movements around the side of them; they went "over the top" as well; and peered straight through them in a way of terrible scrutiny.

Aunt Sophia Primshock had all kinds of money and several different kinds of rheumatism. As fast as there was a new kind, she secured it. She was very deaf, but not too deaf to hear Pee-wee. It was not quite as bad as that. Next to her collection of rheumatics was her collection of cats. In the august presence Pee-wee now appeared in all his scout glory—marred only by a hole in his stocking—followed by Cousin Prudence.

"I am very glad to see my nephew," said Aunt Sophia, as Pee-wee advanced to receive her kiss, "and I am not only glad but *proud* to call him my nephew," she added. "I don't know much about this scouting, I'm afraid it makes boys a little wild. But when a boy registers his friendship for dumb creatures I am proud, *more* than proud, to call him my nephew. You have seen the girl's committee? They are dear, sweet girls, all of them."

"Oh yes, he fell for us, Mother," said Prudence.

"Fell for you?"

"Yes, he fell all over himself, but he isn't hurt."

"And what is better still, he would not inflict any hurt," said Aunt Sophia. "And what a fine boy he is, eh Prudence? A splendid, kind, humane boy, with a heart—"

"On his left side, Mother," said Prudence; "he proved it to us and we *know* he has a heart."

Aunt Sophia smiled indulgently. Like most persons who are under the spell of one idea she was not even curious about matters in general. It was perfectly evident that she had captured the helpless, struggling, little Girl Scout troop and turned it into a humane society. There was no doubt that the "committee" had originated in that solemn apartment.

"You can kill snakes because they kill birds," Pee-wee said; "and cats kill birds too."

There was no answer to this so Aunt Sophia said, "I was so happy when I heard—saw it printed in a newspaper—that *my nephew* had won the badge for first aid to dumb creatures." (Aunt Sophia always called animals dumb creatures.) "That is better than running after circuses and going to—to shows. Isn't it? I had a brother, a very dear and promising brother, many, many years ago, and he joined a troupe of play actors, which made his poor mother very, *very* sad." Pee-wee wriggled nervously but listened with respect. "The scout boys, they don't—they don't fill their brains with—with wild west shows? What is that you have there?"

"That's my handbook, and this is my scout report book," Pee-wee exclaimed, glad enough to expound the ins and outs of scouting.

"Ah yes, and if you do a kind act you jot it down?"

"Sure."

"Let me see them," said Aunt Sophia holding out her hand; "my arm is very stiff. Did you bring me my tea, Prudence dear?—I eat very little and go about almost none at all. I am very, very stiff."

"That's because you don't sleep outdoors," Pee-wee said. "I bet if you went scout pace you wouldn't be stiff. Do you want me to show you how?"

"Goodness gracious no, my dear! Let me see what is in the books—"

"Rolling down hills is good too," said Pee-wee; "I bet if you try that you won't be stiff. Lots of scouts roll down in barrels, because that shakes them up. I'll get a barrel for you if you want to try it."

Aunt Sophia did not want to try it, but she was presently to be shaken up in quite another way. Gazing with increasing severity through her spectacles she saw sprawled upon the page the dreadful words.

> If any hop-toad can't learn the pace he has to have his legs tied together for an hour.
>
> Every feller that gets a new hop-toad gets a piece of chocolate —
>
> If a hop-toad can't croak like a frog he has to be turned over on his back and somebody sit on him till he croaks.

Aunt Sophia looked up, dumbfounded, speechless. She readjusted her spectacles, as if even they might be deceiving her, and read:

> A hop-toad has to be given to the tom-cats—

She read no more. Rather she saw the page in a kind of trance. Her astonished eyes jumped from one blood-curdling memorandum to another, picking out the more heartless words and phrases. Given to the tom-cats . . . chased the Robins away . . . turned on his back till he croaks . . . hop-toads . . . sticks in their mouths. . . .

Horrors, oh horrors! Here before her very eyes was a series of recipes for cruelty! Directions, suggestions, memorandums written in cold blood for the torture of hop-toads!

Pee-wee sensed the situation, but it was too late. The hop-toads were already on their backs, the sticks were in their mouths, they were croaking, or being fed alive to tom-cats, the robins had been chased from their nests and their little ones, the boys were standing around eating chocolate while the toads suffered, the massacre was on.

"I'll tell you all about it," Pee-wee said, facing the awful face of his outraged aunt. "You see hop-toads, they're really not hop-toads; do you see?"

"I do not see," said Aunt Sophia.

"I'll tell you all about it. Scout patrols are named after animals; there's a patrol at Temple Camp named the Robins, see? My new patrol is going to be named the Hop-toads, because they're all going to be good at scout pace, see? Gee whiz, you don't care if we make *fellers* hold sticks in their mouths,

do you? Because they can run better that way. A hop-toad means a—a scout. *I'm* a hop-toad. Maybe I don't look like one but I am."

Aunt Sophia was just about convinced—by a very, very narrow margin. She was convinced, but she remembered the awful things upon that fly-leaf. She was still a little, just a *very little*, suspicious. But she accepted Pee-wee's explanation. . . .

CHAPTER VI
CARRIED BY A MINORITY

That same memorable Saturday was the day on which Pee-wee's troop was to go to its summer quarters at the beloved Temple Camp. As every scout knows, Temple Camp is a little in from the Hudson River in the neighborhood of Catskill.

North Deadham is about thirty-five miles north of Bridgeboro. Roughly speaking, North Deadham would be on a line between Bridgeboro and Temple Camp. The brilliant idea of spilling the beans in North Deadham is attributable to Artie Van Arlen, patrol leader of the Ravens—Pee-wee's own patrol.

"What do you say if two or three of us start hiking on Friday and camp along the way and bang into North Deadham in time to foil our young hero?" said Artie. "Foiling is his middle name, so we'll try a little of it. Then we'll wrap him up and take him along to camp with us. What do you say?"

"You mean hike all the way?" asked Connie Bennett of the Elks.

"Sure."

"Declined with thanks," said Connie. "Let him stay there a while. What's the use of starting out hunting for trouble? He's wished onto the Ptomaine Committee or whatever they call it; let them worry for a while."

"Anybody in the Silver Foxes want to hike it?" Artie asked.

"We promised Mr. West of the West Shore Railroad, we'd go that way," said Roy; "we can't break our words. The train will be waiting for us."

"Some scouts!" said Grove Bronson of the Ravens.

"I'd just love to stop at North Deadhead for our young hero," said Hunt Ward of the Elks, "but you know how the directors of the railroad would feel."

"Sure, a scout's honor is to be trusted," said Roy.

"How about his feet?" Artie shot back. "Can you walk from the station to the train? You make me tired, you fellows."

"If you're so tired what do you want to hike for?" Roy asked. "You're so wide awake and full of pep, what do you want to go to Fried ham or Deadham for? I should worry about Deadville or whatever you call it. Right away when we get rid of Pee-wee you want to go and get him. They've just had whooping cough at Temple Camp; isn't that bad enough? The raving Ravens are raving again, no wonder the railroads are losing money with the Raven Patrol walking all over the country."

“Who’ll volunteer?” Artie said.

“A large chunk of silence,” said Roy.

“I won’t,” called one.

“Neither will I,” shouted another.

“Not for mine,” piped up a third.

“We’ll all volunteer not to hike,” said Roy. “Let the scouts in the books do the hiking.”

“I will,” said Grove Bronson.

“He hasn’t got the railroad fare,” shouted Roy.

“All right,” said Artie, “you and I’ll hike together, Grove; we’ll take the north turnpike—”

“Be sure to put it back when you get through with it,” said Roy, “and give our kindest regards to the animated animal cracker and if you’re going to hike from Deadtown to camp the best way is to follow the Franklin Turnpike as far as Idaho and take the second turn to your left. That’ll take you into the Great Salt Lake. Don’t hurry, take your time.”

“The pleasure is ours,” said Artie.

“If you don’t get to camp till next summer it’ll be all right,” said Roy. “Tell Pee-wee he’ll find us near the lake and we hope he’ll drop in.”

CHAPTER VII
MENTAL TELEGRAPHY

Thus it happened that while Scout Harris, friend and champion of the dumb creatures, was preparing to receive the tribute that was due him, two scouts of his patrol were tramping along the dusty road as the sun went down, on the last part of their long hike to North Deadham. They crossed the frontier of the village unnoticed. The only sentinel there was a rooster on a fence and he was asleep at his post, or rather his perch.

The invading column passed through McCrockett's Lane and rested under a weeping willow tree, where they kindled a little fire and brewed some coffee and fried some bacon. If the weeping willow could but have known their business it would have laughed rather than wept.

Their supper finished, the invaders trampled the fire out and played mumbly peg under the tree just as if nothing were going to happen. Scout Harris said afterward that just at that time (seven thirty) a strange desire for fried bacon came over him and that he smelled coffee. Thus soul speaks to soul across space in the mystic realm of scouting!

At exactly eight o'clock by a cow-bell in a neighboring field, verified by their own trusty scout watches, the invaders followed a northwesterly course through the village square into Gordon's Hollow and thence to Main Street and to a certain commissary where they made ready for the terrible work in hand by two stimulating ice cream cones, which sent the blood coursing through their veins and gave them strength and courage.

Passing the district school with great caution they succeeded in a skilfully conceived flank move around the entire police department, who was standing on a corner talking with an unsuspecting citizen. This was at exactly seven minutes after eight by the town hall clock which wasn't going, no doubt in honor of the great occasion.

Singular to relate, at precisely four minutes after eight by Pee-wee's reliable scout watch, and just as he was starting with his cousin Prudence for the church lecture hall, he was conscious of a shivering and decided to return and get his scout jacket. It was at that very moment that the invading legion partook of ice cream cones. Perhaps it was only a coincidence but so strong was the thought of ice cream cones in Pee-wee's mind that he bought two (treating his cousin Prudence) on their way to the church. A most singular and harrowing thing to relate is that these two separate parties *almost met* in Pop Carroway's Candy Parlor.

The lecture room of the church was ablaze with light from eight kerosene lamps. One of these had a reflector on it, to be used perhaps as a sort of spotlight on the hero's entrance.

Aunt Sophia, by reason of her collection of aches and pains, did not attend this gala meeting. She stayed at home with her cats. But the minister was there and the Girl Scouts from South Deadham and Deadham Centre were there.

This gay outpouring of nearly fifty people was not exactly in honor of Pee-wee. It was a Girl Scout rally intended to stir up interest in the local movement. But since Pee-wee, like a true scout, was always prepared to take whatever came along, he appropriated all the stray glory that was floating around.

Being the only boy in town, he was something of a lion and was viewed with becoming awe by the spectators as he sat wedged in between his cousin Prudence and one of the other girls on the platform. His martial appearance was somewhat modified when he pulled up his rebellious stocking, but his frown was terrible and his belt axe was so skilfully displayed as to strike dismay to the most courageous heart.

His nine merit badges (the final badge still lacking) were revealed upon his sleeve. He and the two maidens who flanked his sturdy form occupied but two chairs and from the rear of the little meeting room Artie Van Arlen and Grove Bronson, lurking there unseen, beheld the picture of these three as a sort of human sandwich (the kind sold at railroad stations) with the middle part of almost microscopic proportions. All of the valor in Scout Harris's diminutive body seemed to be squeezed up into his head by the flanking pressure of his feminine hostesses and he gazed out upon the assemblage, silent, uncomfortable, terrible.

The organization business of the evening being concluded and a couple of songs about the woods having been sung, Miss Sympathea Softe arose, replaced a straying lock of hair with skilful daintiness, wriggled a little with becoming stage fright, and proceeded to explain the happy idea which the Girl Scouts had hit on in the Black Beauty Award.

CHAPTER VIII
A PREDICAMENT

"Humanity and kindness," she said in finishing, "are as broad as the skies. So we planned not to confine our award to our local circle or even to Girl Scouts everywhere. There are Boy Scouts as well and we must not forget *them*."

"There are more of them than there are Girl Scouts," Pee-wee spoke up, "because I can prove it—"

"And their activities are reported in newspapers throughout our country —"

"They're in *Boys' Life* too," Pee-wee announced vociferously, to the great amusement of the audience.

“IT’S GROVE BRONSON!” SHOUTED PEE-WEE.
Pee-wee Harris in Camp. Page 47

“The Boy Scouts,” continued Sympathea, “have an award called the First Aid to Animals Badge. It is the intention of our little troop to tender the Black Beauty Cross to every scout winning that award. The first one that we are going to honor is the cousin of one of our members, Prudence Primshock; a scout from Bridgeboro, New Jersey, a star scout who has won the badge that stands for humaneness in his troop—Walter Mincepie Harris —”

“Good night, he’s disguised as a mince pie,” Grove whispered to Artie; “the plot grows thicker, as Roy would say.”

“Excuse me,” said Sympathea blushing, “I mean Walter *Woods* Harris. I’m just a little nervous and (great and reassuring applause) I hardly know *what* I’m saying. We all know that Boy Scouts are heroes, that their hearts are always on the left, I mean on the right, I mean they’re in the right place. Walter—Scout Harris, will you please stand up and—”

“*Hold while there is yet time!*” came a voice from the rear of the little lecture room. “Water Mincepie Harris is not what he seems! He has disgraced the beloved mince pie and he is trying to deceive you all!”

“It’s Grove Bronson!” shouted Pee-wee, jumping from his seat.

“Yes, and your patrol leader, Artie Van Arlen!” said Artie, “come to *foil* your attempt to disguise yourself as an animal cracker, I mean an animal lover. *You* the tyrant of the hop-toads! Don’t speak! It is too late. These people shall know the truth! They shall know what scouts, including sprouts, really are!”

By that time the people were turning around, some curious, some laughing. The meeting was small enough to be quite informal and no suggestion of rudeness seemed to attach to the sensational interruption of the ceremonies. What the people saw were two khaki-clad forms and bronzed faces, with merry mischief shining through their looks of dignity and mock anger. Sensations were not common in North Deadham. The little audience hardly knew how to take this sudden turn of affairs, when suddenly Pee-wee called in a voice of thunder.

“Did you bring my aluminum cooking set and my stalking shirt?”

That settled it for the audience. The girl scouts began to laugh, the rest followed suit; only Grove and Artie remained grimly silent and sober. They were very funny. The people, including the girls were indeed beginning to see what scouts really are; that with all their wholesome goodness they never take themselves too seriously.

"No!" said Artie, as the two made their way to the little platform. "But we brought the picture taken of you, Scout Harris, while you were branding a horse with a red hot iron, taken by Roy Blakeley as a proof—"

"He's crazy!" yelled Pee-wee. "Did you bring my shirt? Are you hiking up to camp?"

"Oh, let us see it! Let us see it!" said Prudence excitedly.

"They didn't bring it," Pee-wee said, "but it's just like the one I've got on only lighter color."

"Oh, we mean the picture," the girls all chimed in at once.

"It's a joke!"

"Oh, isn't it terrible!"

"He didn't *really* do it?"

"Let me see it."

"Let me see it first."

"Oh, it's too *shocking*!"

"What does it all mean?"

By this time the Girls' Humane Committee, as well as several other girl scouts and a fair sprinkling of the audience were crowding about Grove and Artie, looking at the large photo which they held. It was an exceptionally good photo taken with Roy's fine camera; it was a masterpiece of his skill in photography. It showed Pee-wee in the very act of branding the horse. The girls gazed at it dumbfounded, then burst into a medley of denunciation.

"Oh, it's perfectly terrible!"

"How could he do it?"

"When did he do it?"

"Where did he do it?"

"Why did he do it?"

"For money," said Grove; "for a paltry ten dollars."

Pee-wee was about to scream his denunciation of this horrible attack when he recalled his promise to his mother *never* to tell Aunt Sophia (and that would include her household) about his disgraceful appearance on the stage with "play actors."

"There it is," said Artie; "look at it yourselves. It is a picture of Walter Mincepie Harris of Bridgeboro, New Jersey, branding a horse with an iron."

There was no doubt about it. There was only one Pee-wee Harris in the world. And there he was in that picture. The girls contemplated it, amazed, speechless. Yet, of course, it must be a joke. They did not really believe. . . . Oh no, he would explain. Of course, he would explain, Such a silly. . . .

"Oh, I think it's just a perfectly *horrid* picture," said Miss Dorothy Docile. "How did you ever happen to have it taken? Tell us about it."

"I—I—eh—I can't tell you," said Pee-wee.

"*What?*"

"I can't tell you," he repeated.

"You mean you *really did it*?" Miss Kindheart inquired, in frantic anxiety.

"I can't tell you anything about it," Pee-wee said; "so that's all I'm going to say."

Silence is confession. Sympathea Softe held up her arms in horrified despair. Katherine Kindheart stared at Pee-wee with surprised and stony eyes. Dorothy Docile shuddered, looking at him as if he were a curiosity. And still he was silent. He could not speak. A scout's honor is to be trusted.

"*I can keep a secret if girls can't!*" he suddenly shouted in mingled defense and recrimination.

"A secret," moaned Cousin Prudence. "Oh, he did it in secret. Thank goodness, poor, dear Mother isn't here."

As for Grove and Artie, they had not expected this. They had promised themselves the delight of witnessing Pee-wee's confusion and then of listening to his thundering explanation. That would have been entertainment for everybody. But there stood Pee-wee, seeming by his silence to confess his guilt; there he stood refusing to explain.

On the whole, it *was* a blessing that Aunt Sophia was not there.

CHAPTER IX
PEE-WEE'S PAST REVEALED

With Pee-wee refusing to explain there was just the shadow of a chance that he might be cruelly misjudged. For after all, photographs do not lie, and unfortunately Cousin Prudence and her friends knew little of "stage plays." Grove and Artie, having created the sensation they had counted on, were quick to set Pee-wee right before the multitude.

"He was in a show," said Artie before Pee-wee had a chance to stop them.

"You're not supposed to tell! You're not supposed to tell!" Pee-wee shouted. "On account of Aunt Sophia getting shocked! You're not supposed to tell!"

"We should worry about Aunt Sophia," said Artie; "if she never does anything worse than brand a horse with a cold iron in a play—"

"She can't, she's got rheumatism," Pee-wee shouted.

"Oh, was it in a play?" Miss Dorothy Docile carolled forth. "Isn't that just perfectly lovely!"

"I *knew* there was something *romantic* about him, even before I saw him," said Sympathea.

"Oh, just to think he's an *actor* like Douglas Fairbanks," said Miss Kindheart.

"We won't say a word to Aunt Sophia, will we, Prudence?" Sympathea said. "You all have to *promise* you won't say a *word* to Aunt Sophia. That's the dark chapter in his history and we won't breathe a *word* of it to *anyone*. Oh, isn't it perfectly *angelic* to have a dark chapter in one's history?"

"I've got darker ones than that," said Pee-wee; "once I was out all night being kidnapped in an automobile, only I found I wasn't being kidnapped after all."

"It was so dark," said Artie; "it was a kind of a pinkish brown."

The meeting had now resolved itself into a "social" which was the way that meetings in the lecture room usually ended and the three scouts were the "lions" of the occasion. The great actor and friend of animals was the hero of the evening and ate four plates of ice cream and a couple of dozen cookies to show his sympathy for "dumb creatures." His tender heart beat joyfully (on his left side) and so overcome was he that his eyes filled with tears when he ate a stuffed green pepper. There seemed no danger of Aunt

Sophia learning the terrible truth about her nephew and, with her baleful influence removed, the social end of the meeting became a real scout affair.

"The trouble with you girls is you don't think of anything but animals," Artie said. "If you were real scouts you'd have seen that the tree in that picture wasn't a real tree and that the stable was only painted."

"That's deduction," Pee-wee interrupted loudly, as he wrestled with a mouthful of cake; "that shows you're not real scouts, because real scouts know everything, I don't mean everything but they know all about trees and things as well as animals and you can be cruel to trees and that shows you're a regular scout—"

"By being cruel to them?" Prudence laughed.

"There are other things in scouting besides animals," Grove said. "Don't get off the track when you start to be scouts—"

"Lots of times I got off the track," Pee-wee said.

"Sure," said Artie, "and every scout isn't an aviator because he goes up in the air."

"I've been up in the air a lot of times," Pee-wee persisted.

"Sure, he's a regular elevator," said Artie.

The two scouts had, indeed, arrived in North Deadham at a most propitious moment, just when the little struggling Girl Scout organization was in danger of being turned into a humane society. The girls were treated to a glimpse of real scouts and real scouting, the fun, the banter, the jollying, the breeziness of the all-around scout spirit. And thus the blighting hand of Aunt Sophia was stayed. Pee-wee took the Black Beauty badge and prized it (there were very few things that got past him), but the badge did not monopolize the thoughts and activities of the North Deadham girls any more.

The three scouts remained at the village over the week-end and on Monday morning set forth on their hike to Temple Camp.

CHAPTER X
PEE-WEE'S ENTERPRISE

The hike to Temple Camp was uneventful; it was only after Pee-wee's arrival there that things began to happen. On the way they discussed the question of Pee-wee resigning from the Ravens to form a new patrol. That would enable Artie, the Ravens' patrol leader, to ask Billy Simpson of Bridgeboro to come in. That, indeed, was Artie's main reason for hiking to North Deadham; he wished for an opportunity to talk freely over a period of several days with the irrepressible little Raven and to ascertain (as far as it was possible for any human being to ascertain) something of the plans that were tumbling over each other in that fertile mind.

The Ravens did not wish to get rid of Pee-wee, but since Pee-wee was rather a troop institution than a patrol member, Artie thought it might be as well to give Billy Simpson a chance if Pee-wee really intended to form a new patrol.

"You see, Kid," said Artie; "you can start a new patrol but Billy couldn't, because he's new at the game. But I wouldn't want it to seem—you know—kind of as if we were letting you out—see?"

"S-u-re," said Pee-wee reassuringly; "I'll say I discharged the Ravens and then nobody'll think anything against me, hey? We'll kind of let people think that I got rid of you, hey? But I can come and have supper with you sometimes, hey? Maybe I'll bring my new patrol, hey?"

"Have a heart," said Grove.

"Be sure to come," said Artie, smiling. "Come when we're out. Now listen, Kid, you've been in the Ravens ever since we started—"

"I was in it before you," said Pee-wee; "I was a Raven before there were any Ravens—"

"I know it, now listen, *please*. You're the kind of a scout that can get a patrol started easily because you're a good getter; you've got personality."

"Is that anything like adenoids?" Pee-wee wanted to know.

"No, it's something that you can't explain."

"I bet it's like algebra, hey?"

"Something like that, yes."

"I bet everybody'll want to join my new patrol on account of me being a star scout, hey?"

"The trouble is that the loose scouts at camp come from all over the country and what are you going to do when they have to go home?" Artie

asked thoughtfully.

"I had an inspiration," said Pee-wee.

"You having many of those lately?" Grove asked.

"*S-u-re*, I have them all the time, I had four yesterday. I'm going to have a correspondence patrol."

"A what?"

"Didn't you ever hear of a correspondence school—members all over the country?"

"Oh, I see," said Artie. "The only trouble is that it will evaporate in September."

"Now you see it, now you don't," said Grove.

"It'll be a patrol with lots of branches, like," said Pee-wee; "just like the Standard Oil Company. Do you see? And when they go home each scout starts a patrol, no matter where. It's kind of like a—a epidemic."

"Worse than that," said Artie.

"And I'm going to be the head of them all," Pee-wee said.

"And you're going to bring them all to dinner?" inquired Grove.

"You'll have a couple of million scouts under you in a year or two, Kid," laughed Artie; "it's a good idea."

"I invented it," said Pee-wee. "You take a patrol. A patrol's a patrol, isn't it?"

"Absolutely," said Grove.

"All right," enthused Pee-wee, "if a patrol breaks up that's the end of it, isn't it? But the more this one breaks up the more patrols there are. I thought of it when I was eating a banana yesterday."

"All right, Kiddo," laughed Artie; "all I want to be sure of is that you're not going to be sore if we take Billy Simpson in. Because I want to write to him and ask him to come up to camp and be initiated."

"I'll initiate him," Pee-wee burst forth.

"And if this doesn't work," said Artie, "there's plenty of material home in Bridgeboro."

"Sure," said Pee-wee, "I'd ask Carl Hansen because his father keeps a bakery and, anyway, I'm in the troop just the same, gee whiz, I'm with the Silver Foxes a lot."

Grove and Artie looked at each other and walked along thoughtfully for a short distance. They could not just bring themselves to let Pee-wee leave the Raven Patrol, of which he was the main "rave." He was theirs. They had not as many awards as the Elks and the Silver Foxes but at least they had Pee-wee. He was their great exhibit.

Artie was perplexed and just a little troubled at heart. The three patrols were full, the only way to let Billy Simpson in was to start a new patrol. It

seemed likely enough that Pee-wee could do that; he was a born propagandist, a walking advertisement of scouting, but Artie did not want to drop him only to see him plunge into some outlandish enterprise which would land him nowhere.

He knew Pee-wee thoroughly, and he knew that Pee-wee, though he loved novelty and dealt in every manner of colossal scheme, after all loved his troop and his patrol and the fine, wholesome life of scouting. Good scout and good patrol leader that he was, Artie was not going to let Pee-wee be the victim of his own delusions. Moreover, now that it came to the point of actually deciding the matter he had a strange feeling something akin to homesickness at the thought of Pee-wee leaving the Ravens. Pee-wee's own irresponsible and cheerful willingness to do so rather increased this feeling.

"Well, Kid," said Artie finally, "as Mr. Ellsworth says, there's room for a half a dozen more patrols in Bridgeboro, and you're the scout to round some of those fellows up—"

"That's my middle name, rounding fellers up," Pee-wee interrupted with prompt enthusiasm, "and anyway I'll see you just the same, because it's all kind of like one family, isn't it?"

"You said it," said Grove.

"Sure it is," said Pee-wee, "and you can borrow my field-glass any time you want to just the same as you always did and—"

"Don't Kid," said Artie, visibly affected.

"And I'll let you use my cooking set for the patrol just the same as I always did, that's one thing sure; gee whiz, you can use it whenever you want."

They walked along in silence for a few minutes. In an hour more their weary legs would be swinging from the station platform at Catskill, while they waited for the Temple Camp bus. Oh, how good that old bus seat would feel! And the camp!

Pee-wee had skipped a summer at camp (the memorable summer spent at Everdoze) and he longed to be among the familiar scenes once more. So they hiked along, Grove kicking a stone before him, Artie silent, thoughtful. Only Pee-wee seemed bubbling with joy. Pee-wee who was going to be dropped. At least that was the way it seemed to Artie.

The day was drawing to an end, the flaky clouds in the west were bright with the first tints of the declining sunlight. The birds were still. High above them a hawk sped on its way, hastening toward the dark hills. Beyond those hills was the camp. A dainty little squirrel sat on a stone wall washing its face as if getting ready to go down to supper. And away far off, far enough for its harshness to be mellowed by the distance, a locomotive whistled, long, low, melodious. It seemed a part of nature.

“Anyway, we had a peach of a hike,” Pee-wee said; “gee, I hope they have corn fritters for supper, don’t you?”

But neither Grove nor Artie answered.

At Catskill, Artie, arousing himself from his pre-occupation, said, “Look here, Kid; we’ve got to decide about it now, because I want to send a letter to Billy Simpson. If he’s coming, he’s got to come Wednesday. Hanged if I know what to do,” he added, perplexed, and perhaps a little troubled in his conscience, “I wish Mr. Ellsworth was here. What do *you* think? If your—your—what d’you call it?—your scheme up here doesn’t work, do you think you can round up a patrol at home?”

“You leave it to me,” said Pee-wee; “don’t all my schemes succeed? You just leave it to me, I’ll fix it.”

“It’s all right then?”

“*S-u-re*, it’s all right.”

Still Artie hesitated. “I don’t know what to do, Kid,” he said.

“I’ll tell you what to do,” said Pee-wee in a burst of inspiration; “let’s go get some ice cream cones.”

CHAPTER XI
BILLY SIMPSON'S CHANCE

"You'll find us in the post office," Grove called after Pee-wee, who was descending pell-mell on Mrs. Westgrove's familiar candy kitchen.

"I'll get some jaw breakers too, hey?" Pee-wee called back.

"Jiminy, I don't know, it makes me feel awful funny to do that," said Artie to Grove. "We've never lost a member before. I sort of feel as if we were taking advantage of his good nature. If it wasn't that Billy Simpson is so crazy to get into scouting—Gee, I hate to see a scout go begging for a patrol. Suppose it was Doc. Carson or El Sawyer, or Wig Weigand? We wouldn't drop them to make room for another like that. Hang it all, why don't they make it nine instead of eight in a patrol?"

"Ask me," said Grove.

"What do *you* think?" Artie asked.

"Pee-wee's an odd number," said Grove; "he belongs everywhere. We couldn't get rid of him if we tried to. He's wished onto the troop, he—"

"I know, but he's a star scout, don't forget that."

"I'm not forgetting it," said Grove, "only I say he's sort of different from other members, he's troop mascot."

"He's so plaguy hard to talk seriously to," Artie said. "I wonder how much he really cares about us—I mean in our patrol?"

"You must remember, he's a world hero," Grove said, "and he can't bother with just one patrol. I say, let's give Billy a chance. I know the kid is rattle-brained but he's willing, you can see that. He'll land on his feet all right, or rather he'll be just as happy standing on his head."

"I wouldn't want the Elks or the Silver Foxes to get him," said Artie. "Roy jollies the life out of him but he'd grab him like *that* if he got the chance."

"They're both full," said Grove; "I say let's turn him loose and see what happens."

Artie could not quite bring himself to do this with an altogether easy conscience. But since there was no discussing it with Pee-wee and since he must do one thing or the other then and there, he led the way into the post office and wrote the following letter to Billy Simpson back in Bridgeboro.

Dear Billy:—

There's a place for you in my patrol if you want to come up. We have awards and initiations Wednesday. Walter Harris (I guess you know that fellow) is pulling out to start a new outfit. He's the scream of the troop, I guess you know him. His mouth is always black from eating roasted potatoes. We'll ring you in as a tenderfoot and you can learn a lot up here at camp. You've got the booklets already so I guess you know all about it. Tom Slade is camp assistant—everybody in Bridgeboro knows him. We'll see Harris all the time so it will be all right—he's everywhere at once.

It's going to be a lively season, they're camping all around the lake I understand. You'll make a hit all right only don't let your mother sneak any rubbers or cough drops or that kind of stuff into your suitcase. They're always trying to do that. Watch your step and feel down in the corners of your bag for witch hazel and don't bring an overcoat whatever you do. Pee-wee (that's what we call our wandering boy) says for you to come ahead and he'll show you how to get drowned in the lake. He's a four reel comedy, that kid is. Don't bring a book about "My Summer in Camp"; you'll be too busy to spill ink. The bus will be at the station (5.22) and if it isn't, I will.

So long,
ARTIE VAN ARLEN, P. L. RAVENS.

P. S. Don't worry about the kid, it's all fixed.

The funny thing about this letter was that it was mostly about Pee-wee. Artie seemed to welcome the coming guest, but to be thinking mostly about the departing guest. But there was one thing in the letter which perhaps threw some light on the character of Billy Simpson. And then again, perhaps it did not.

"Don't worry about the kid, it's all fixed."

Was Billy Simpson that kind of a fellow? The kind who would be likely to worry? The kind that would want to make sure that everything was all right? The kind that wouldn't step into another fellow's shoes? If he was, why then he had a pretty good preliminary equipment for scouting.

Evidently Artie knew something about him. . . .

CHAPTER XII
ADVICE FROM THE VETERAN

Pee-wee saw Billy Simpson for the first time on Wednesday when the awards were given out. At Temple Camp this was done at the beginning and at the end of the season. The first of these two occasions was mostly for the purpose of enrolling new scouts, the latter for the purpose of tendering the badges and other awards won during the season. The ceremonies were sometimes held under the Honor Oak, as it was called, or, if the weather was bad, in the pavilion.

If Pee-wee was beset by any lingering regrets at seeing another admitted to his place among the Ravens, he did not show it. He applauded and shouted uproariously when Billy Simpson had taken the oath and in a voice of thunder volunteered a valuable hint or two to the new scout.

"Make them let you sit in my place next to Uncle Jeb and you'll always get two helpings of dessert," he shouted. "Don't get near the foot of the messboards because there isn't any more by the time they get that far."

And again, while the tenderfoot badge was being placed on Billy's new khaki suit, and just as Artie was placing a Raven Patrol pennant in his hand, the voice of the veteran arose again, "Grove Bronson owes me two gumdrops for our hike up; tell him I said to give them to you so they don't have to go outside the patrol."

Presently Pee-wee himself was on the little platform receiving the star scout badge. Mr. Ellsworth, the Bridgeboro troop's scoutmaster, was not at camp that season, so Mr. Waring, one of the resident trustees, had the honor of raising Pee-wee to the dizzy altitude of the stars.

"Scout Harris," said he, "stands before us, a scout without a troop or a patrol, because no patrol or troop is large enough to hold him. (Great applause.) He resigned from a full patrol to make room for a new scout—a typical scout good turn. Those of you who were here two years ago will remember Scout Harris—"

"Tell them I'm the one that did the double-dip off the springboard," Pee-wee whispered to Mr. Waring. "Tell them I'm the one that stalked a wasp."

"Scout Harris," said Mr. Waring, laughing, "is the only scout that dipped a wasp—"

"Not dipped him," Pee-wee shouted.

"He is the only scout that ever stalked a wasp. Everybody knows Scout Harris. In the interval since last summer he has passed the several remaining

tests requisite to his becoming a star scout and I now on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America, present him with the star scout badge." (Great applause.)

"Tell them I chose life saving instead of pioneering, but anyway I'm going to win the pioneering badge to-morrow," Pee-wee said as the star award was being fastened to his elaborately decorated regalia. "Tell them I'm going to start a new kind of a patented patrol; go on, tell them."

It was not necessary for Mr. Waring to tell the audience anything for Pee-wee's voice could be heard to the very outskirts of the crowd, and a chorus of joyous approval greeted him.

"Hurrah for Scout Harris!"

"Three cheers for the ex-Raven!"

"Three cheers for the ex-ray!"

"What's the matter with the animal cracker?"

"Congratulations to the Ravens!"

"You're in luck, Artie."

"*I'm going to start an extensible patrol!*" Pee-wee fairly yelled.

"Tell us all about that."

"*I invented it!*" he screamed.

"Bully for you!"

"I'm a lance!" he shrieked.

"A how?"

"He means a free lance."

(Uproarious laughter.)

"Let him speak."

"How can we stop him?"

"I'm *more* than a patrol member!" Pee-wee shouted. "You can be more than a thing by not being a thing, can't you?"

"Oh, posilutely," one called.

"I'm a star—"

"Sure, you're a big dipper."

"You mean a little dippy."

"Anybody that wants to join my new patrol can do it," Pee-wee announced. "It's going to be named the Hop-toads—"

"Why don't you have a troop with three patrols; the hop, skip, and jump?" someone called.

"You think you're smart, don't you?" Pee-wee shouted.

"Where's your headquarters?" a scout shouted.

"I won't tell you because I've got an inspiration," Pee-wee called.

"Let's see it."

"Did you invent it?"

Pee-wee being the last honor recipient on the program, the gathering ended in a kind of grand climax of fun and banter, through which he more than held his own. He was too preoccupied with new schemes to think much about the Ravens and their new member. Neither was he greatly concerned about the opinion of the camp in general. He had often said that he could "handle" Temple Camp with both hands tied behind him. And so he undoubtedly could, provided his tongue were left free. . . .

CHAPTER XIII
AN INSPIRATION

The Hop-toad Patrol consisted of two small scouts besides Pee-wee. So there was plenty of room for extension upward. Willie Rivers and Howard Delekson were the names of these two tenderfeet, and what they lacked in size and numbers they made up in admiration for their leader.

Probably no army ever mobilized had such profound confidence in their commander as these two staring-eyed little fellows had for Pee-wee. To them he was not only a star scout, he was the whole firmament. One of them came from Connecticut, the other from New York, and neither had scout affiliations prior to their admission into Pee-wee's organization. The rule that none but scouts should visit camp was often waived to welcome some lone and budding tenderfoot into the community.

The way these two little fellows gazed at Pee-wee and the veneration in which they held his prowess and resourcefulness was almost pathetic. Their first dutiful tribute was to vote for him for patrol leader, and as he voted for himself, the election was carried by a "unanimousness," as he called it.

The pennant of the Hop-toads, bearing a crude representation of their humble namesake reptile, was displayed over an old discarded float which had been drawn up on shore, but after several days of patient waiting it became more and more evident that if Scout Harris were going to enlist a full patrol he would have to start a selective service draft. The star scout badge did not prove as magnetic as he had counted on its being, or else the stray scouts in camp were frightened away by the glamour of such fame and heroism. At all events, the unattached scouts (of whom there were not a great many) did not rally to Pee-wee's standard.

He soon abandoned the extensible patrol idea, (for Pee-wee's mind was quite as extensible as the purposed patrol) in favor of another which seemed to hold out some prospect of adventure and a very considerable prospect of financial success.

"Did you ever hear of sea scouting?" he asked his worshipping patrol.

"You go on the ocean, don't you?" Willie Rivers ventured to ask.

"As long as it's water it doesn't make any difference," Pee-wee said. "Do you know what an inspiration is?"

"Is it an animal?" Scout Delekson asked.

"Is it something you win—maybe?" Scout Rivers asked, doubtfully.

"It's something you *get*," Pee-wee said contemptuously. "I just had one and I don't look any different, do I?"

They gazed at him and were forced to admit that the inspiration had not altered his heroic appearance.

"It's a sudden idea," Pee-wee said.

"Oh," said Scout Rivers.

"That's why you can't see it," said Scout Delekson.

"Do you know what I'm going to do? Will you say that you're with me? Even if I go to—to—foreign shores?"

"Are we going to China?" Scout Rivers asked.

"No, we're going across the lake; *shh*, don't say anything. Have either one of you got an onion?"

Neither of them had an onion but they looked at Pee-wee as if they were ready to follow him to the ends of the earth.

"When the pilgrims started to come to America, everybody stood around crying," Pee-wee said; "but that isn't what I want an onion for. Did you ever hear of invisible writing? If you write with onion juice it won't show, but if you hold the paper over a fire the writing will come out plain. Shh."

The patrol stared, but did not utter a word. They realized that they were in for something terrible; they stared fearfully but were brave.

"If you take an onion to school with you," Pee-wee said, "you can write notes to the feller across the aisle and he can hold them over the radiator and then read them. But don't ever tell anybody; don't ever tell any girls because they can't keep secrets."

"Can't I tell my sister?" Willie asked.

"No, sisters are even worse than regular girls," said Pee-wee; "sisters are the worst kind. Now I'll tell you what you have to do. You sit here on this float and watch it till I get back, then we'll sail out on the lake with sealed orders; do you know what those are?"

"Like captains of ships have?" Willie ventured.

"Sure, and if anybody asks you what we're going to do you tell them I'm going to win the pioneering badge, but don't tell them anything else; understand?"

The two small boys sat side by side on the edge of the float watching their leader as he disappeared around the main pavilion. Their admiration of him knew no bounds. They felt that they were already a part of some dark mystery. It was very easy indeed for them to refrain from telling anybody anything, since they did not know anything to tell. . . .

CHAPTER XIV
THE AUTOCRAT

The enterprise which Pee-wee was now about to launch was the most gigantic of any that had ever emanated from his seething brain. We shall have to follow it step by step. His first call was at Administration Shack where he asked Tom Slade, camp assistant, if he and his patrol might have the use of the old float for cruising.

"You know the one I mean," he said; "it's the one I fell off of that summer when I was diving for licorice jaw breakers. Don't you remember the day my mouth was all black? It's got four barrels under it to hold it up —"

"What, your mouth?" young Mr. Slade asked.

"No, the old float, and the barrels are airtight, because they were filled with water when the float was drawn up and I've got two in my patrol and they haven't shrunk, I mean the barrels, so will it be all right for us to pitch our tent on that old float and kind of be sea scouts, because anyway all of us know how to swim and I saved a scout from drowning last summer. Can we?"

Young Mr. Slade was not too ready with his approval of this scheme; he said he would take a look at the old mooring float.

Pee-wee did not wait for his approval but proceeded immediately to the cooking shack where he accosted Chocolate Drop, the smiling negro chef.

"I want an onion and an empty bottle and a lot of other things to eat," he said. "Three of us are going camping on an old float and we want beans enough to last for a week and some Indian meal and some flour and some bacon and I'll give you a note to say we'll pay for them. We want some sugar too, and some egg powder and if the bottle's full of olives or pickles, it won't make any difference because we can empty it and we want some coffee too and some potatoes."

"*Lordy me*, Massa Pee-wee! What else you want, eh? Yo' hev a reckezishon from Massa Slade, hey?"

"I'll get it," said Pee-wee; "you get the stuff ready."

It was the rule that supplies for bivouac camping and camping outside the community limits should be supplied by the commissary at nominal prices. Scouts could give their I. O. U.'s for such supplies and these charges appeared upon the regular bills for board and accommodation. But

requisitions, properly endorsed by either scoutmaster or camp official, were necessary to the procuring of such supplies.

"I'll get it, I'll get it," Pee-wee shouted, waving all doubts aside; "I'll get it from Tom Slade. Do you know what an enterprise is? I had an inspiration about an enterprise and my patrol is going to make lots of money and we can pay for everything, because if you've got an inspiration about an enterprise you can get credit, can't you?

"Listen, Chocolate Drop, do you remember that summer when all the scouts were jollying each other about going scout pace around the lake? Do you remember? Do you remember you said that every scout that went scout pace around the lake in an hour could have three helpings of dessert for the rest of the season? Gee whiz, you're the boss of the desserts, you have a right to do that, haven't you? Gee whiz, you've got just as much right to offer prizes for scout stunts as anybody, haven't you? Because anyway you're an official. One thing sure, you're the boss of the eats, aren't you?"

Chocolate Drop was certainly the boss of the eats, desserts included. Not even John Temple himself was such an autocrat as Chocolate Drop in his Utopian dominion. Within those hallowed precincts he waved his frying-pan like a sceptre of imperial authority. He and he alone was never interfered with by officials higher up. Not even the National Scout Commissioner could tell Chocolate Drop what he should serve for dessert. The President of the United States could not add or subtract one dab of icing to or from those luscious cakes.

Every time an honor medal was awarded the proud recipient received an "honor pie" from Cooking Shack, a huge round medal, as it were, more precious than shining gold. Yes, the will of Chocolate Drop was supreme and he spoke to the multitude as no one else could speak.

His liking was expressed in crullers, his tribute to prowess or heroism found voice in puddings. He conquered with fried corn cakes. He made friends and converts with fudge. His cookies were like so many merit badges. He was such an artist that he could reproduce these in icing. Once, upon a mince pie (a hot one) Chocolate Drop designed in luscious jelly the First Aid badge. For Chocolate Drop had a sense of humor. . . .

CHAPTER XV
BON VOYAGE

Pee-wee had the freedom of the cooking shack. Being a specialist on eats, he was honored with this privilege. It was like a college degree conferred upon him, in testimony of his wonderful achievements in the world of food. He now sat upon a flour barrel strategically near a dishpan full of cookies. As he talked his hand made occasional flank movements in the direction of this pan. Sometimes he captured some prisoners.

"That offer still holds good," he said, as he munched a cookie, "because you never took it back. So it's open yet? . . . Isn't it?" he concluded anxiously.

"It's open yet, Massa Pee-wee, coze it ain't never been done nor ever will n' it was jes' a joke n' a lot of nonsense 'n' you better not try it coze 'f you do you'll jes get dem feet of yourn wet 'n' Chocolate Drop he hev ter put cough mixture in dem cakes. How you like dat, Massa Pee-wee?"

"Anyway will you cross your heart that if any feller hikes scout pace around the lake in an hour he can have three helpings of dessert for the rest of the time he stays?"

"So dats th' kind of a insperize you got?" Chocolate Drop laughed, showing his white teeth and placing his flour covered hand on Pee-wee's khaki shirt. "Dere's my hand on it, Massa Pee-wee. You jes' go scout pace around dat lake in sixty minutes n' you get dat three helpings all de time you here. You hear that?"

"Or any other scout?"

"Das it," laughed Chocolate Drop.

"Three helpings? Regular size ones?"

"You ain't nebber see no other sizes hab you, roun' here?"

"All right," said Pee-wee, jumping off the barrel and beating the flour from his shirt, "you're a scout just as much as anybody else here is, because Mr. Temple says that the rules are for everybody that has anything to do with scouting, and the rule says a scout has to keep his word, see?"

"It don't say nuthin' 'bout him keeping cookies, does it?" the cook asked. "Here, you take a pocketful 'n' doan' you lose no sleep 'bout ole Chocolate Drop keepin' his word coze he *am* a scout. 'N' you come back here with your paper signed 'n' you get rations for one week *'n' extrees*. Now how's dat?"

That was perfectly satisfactory and Pee-wee returned to the float where a curious throng of scouts was assembled. The two little hop-toads seemed rather embarrassed to be the center of so much interest.

Tom Slade was also there considering the seaworthy qualities of the old float. He found the four barrels (one under each corner) filled with water which had kept the staves tight, and it was only necessary to pump the water out to have as bouyant a raft as one could want, its flooring well clear of the surface of the water. So gayly did it ride when it was pushed in that it seemed more likely to go up in the air than to sink. As for tipping over, a ferry-boat was cranky compared with it. It was in no more peril of capsizing than a turtle is.

In the presence of the curious multitude (rivaling the watchers who had seen the Pilgrim Fathers depart), the food (properly requisitioned) was put on board, the tent was raised, and a couple of old grocery boxes and a dilapidated camp stool contributed as deck furniture. Nor was this all; for Tom Slade, always careful and thorough, made the two small followers of the great adventurer swim from the float to the springboard to determine their skill in that necessary art.

Since nothing less than a volcanic upheaval could capsize the float, the only danger seemed to be that of falling off it. This danger was greatly minimized by the placid character of the lake which was usually as gentle as a cup of tea. It would have been difficult for this gallant bark to drift out to sea by reason of the surrounding mountains which completely enclosed the little lake. The only real peril lay in the possibility of a storm so terrific as to lift the float and blow it over the mountains. But even then it would stand a good chance of alighting in the Hudson River and being stopped before it reached New York. For the rest, as young Mr. Slade said dryly, the reckless voyagers would have to take their chances.

Behold, then, the new Hop-toad Patrol standing on the deck of their gay platform as it bobbed near the shore, with Scout Harris, a patrol leader at last, posing defiantly upon a keg of assorted edibles and raw materials for cooking. Under one arm he held a tin lock-box (for what terrible purpose no one knew), while in his hand he held an apple (extracted from the keg), for what purpose everybody knew.

“What’s the big idea, kid?” some flippant scout called.

“Don’t hurry back,” called another.

This encouraged a laughing chorus as the float drifted out upon the lake.

“Come over and see us some time when you can’t stay.”

“If you happen to be passing we’ll be glad to see you—pass.”

“Remember, the other side of the lake is best for camping.”

“What’s the tin box for? Buried treasure?”

“Speech, speech!” half a dozen yelled.

“No hard feeling, is there?” one clear, earnest voice called. It was that of the new raving Raven, Billy Simpson. “You sure about plenty of fun?”

“Sure I’m sure,” Pee-wee shouted at the boy who had succeeded him in the patrol. He scorned to answer any of the others. “I’m pronouncing the world—”

“He means denouncing,” said a scout.

“Do you mean renouncing?” another called.

“I’ll give you a tip,” he called to Billy Simpson; “because I’m not mad at you on account of your joining—”

“He’s more to be pitied than blamed,” Roy Blakeley shouted.

“It’s better than if he was in the Silver Foxes,” Pee-wee screamed. “Hey, Billy Simpson, you look for a bottle with invisible writing and hold it over the campfire, so that proves I’m not sore at you! *It’s a mystery.*”

“A how?” several called.

“We’re going to make a fortune,” Pee-wee yelled defiantly. “We’re going to be the richest patrol—”

“On the other side of Black Lake,” a laughing voice called.

“You’d better all look at regulation seven,” Pee-wee shouted; “you’d better all look at regulation seven, that’s all *I* say!”

His mouth now embraced the remainder of his apple in a touching, last farewell. His voice was stifled by the clinging core. Then, in a kind of agony of parting forever, he threw the core from him and it floated through the air like a thrown kiss, and landed plunk in one of the twinkling eyes of Roy Blakeley, patrol leader of the Silver Foxes.

The Hop-toad Patrol was off upon its great adventure.

CHAPTER XVI
REGULATION SEVEN

"The plot grows thicker," said Roy. "What's all this about a bottle?"

"And regulation seven," said another scout. "What the dickens regulation is that? Let's go up and see."

Just for the fun of it they all strolled up toward Main Pavilion. Fastened to the trunk of an oak tree just outside it was the bulletin-board at which Hervey Willetts, the most picturesque scout that had ever visited camp, had thrown a luscious, soft tomato, which exploit had an interesting sequel elsewhere told. How strange the camp seemed that summer without the captivating personality of that wandering minstrel.

"He said he wouldn't be here this summer," said a scout reminiscently.

"That's what makes me think maybe he *will* be," said another.

"Anything's likely with him," said a third.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, here it is—*seven*," said a scout, following the rules down with his finger, and reading aloud:

> 7—The rights of property, owned or hired, are to be respected by all scouts. A scout shall not trespass upon any farm or other property while a guest at this camp. It is likewise unscoutlike for a scout to enter without permission the cabin, tent or precincts, of another scout, or of a troop or patrol of which he is not a member. He shall not use without permission any boat or canoe assigned to other scouts. No explanation of practical joking or of other innocent intent shall excuse him from the stigma of trespassing when he crosses or enters property officially assigned to others within the camp limits.

"What's the idea?" a scout asked curiously. "Just a few of us sat on the edge of the float. The kid didn't seem to object."

"Maybe he means we'd better not go near his stalking signs while he's away," another said. "He's watching a couple of nests in that big elm."

"I guess he's got the rule mixed up with some other rule," another suggested. "Everything is all jumbled up in his massive dome."

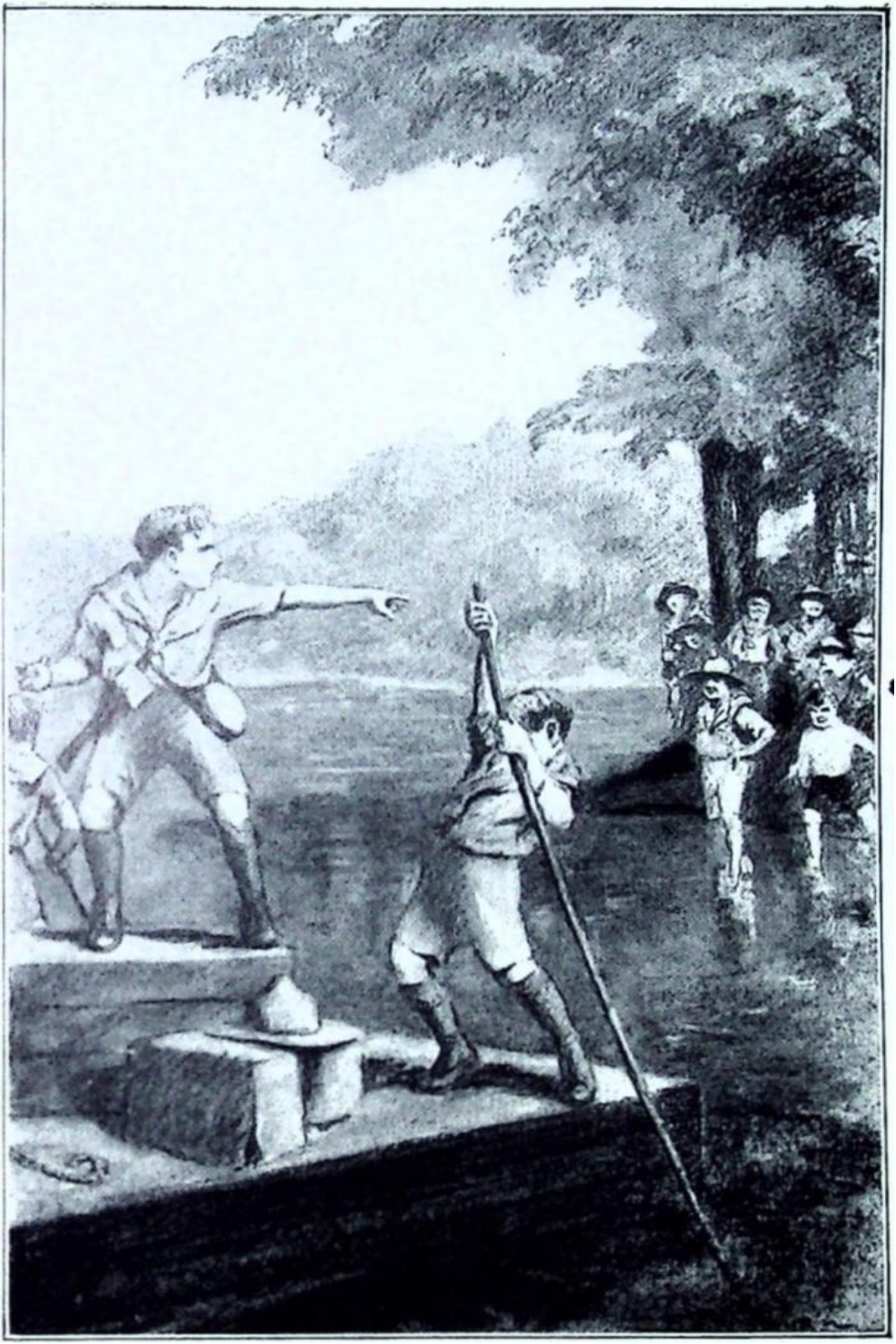
Since the scouts were in the habit of observing at least the spirit of this good rule, the group concluded that Pee-wee's ominous warning referred to

some other rule. He had been greatly excited, as was natural when setting off upon a cruise of perhaps a mile or more.

There was one scout among them, and only one, who entertained any serious thoughts about Pee-wee and his epoch-making enterprise. This was Billy Simpson. He could not rid his mind of the thought that his position in the Raven Patrol was somewhat that of a usurper. He had sized Pee-wee up very accurately and he had an uncomfortable feeling that the little former mascot was merely on a sort of adventurous spree and did not realize what he had done in his thoughtless resignation from the patrol.

It consoled him somewhat, and eased his conscience, to know that at least Pee-wee was having the time of his life as a leader, even though he had only two followers. He could not do otherwise than laugh at Pee-wee, but all the while he had a queer feeling about the whole matter. He hoped that everything was all right and that Pee-wee knew his own mind.

As if there was anything that Pee-wee didn't know. . . .



“WE’RE GOING TO MAKE A FORTUNE,” PEE-WEE YELLED DEFIANTLY.
Pee-wee Harris in Camp. Page 90

CHAPTER XVII
TEARS

Pee-wee had sticking in his belt an envelope which he had sealed and addressed to the Hop-toad Patrol. Being the only one in authority in that patrol he now opened it and read aloud the letter within it which he had likewise written himself. Its contents must have surprised him greatly for he scowled as he read the portentous words:

> The cruiser Hop-toad will go to the other side of the lake and we will get it into Goldenrod Cove so as it's wedged in, kind of. Then we'll eat.
>
> After that we'll write a message with an onion and cast it in the sea—that's the same as the lake. That message will tell them they can hike around the lake in sixty minutes and we'll charge them five cents each to cross our property and I'll be the treasurer and we'll divide up even. If anybody wants to back out he can say so now or he can stay till the death.

"Are we going to get killed," Willie Rivers asked anxiously.

"Staying till the death means till it's all over," Pee-wee explained. "Now I'll tell you about those sealed orders, only usually nobody but the captains know about those. Last year Chocolate Drop, he's cook and I stand in with him, last year he said every scout that could go scout pace around the lake in an hour could have three helpings of dessert for the rest of the season. But anyway nobody did it because on account of Goldenrod Cove; that's an outlet of the lake.

"So now we're going to sail into that cove and you'll see how it is when we get there. It's kind of like a cove only different. So now we have to do what it says in the sealed orders. And you'll see how I'm going to win the pioneering badge too."

"What are we going to write in the note that's invisible?" little Howard Delekson ventured to ask.

"We're going to tell them the way is clear for them to hike around in less than an hour if they want to."

"Why don't we send it right away so they'll be sure to find it soon?" Willie asked.

"Because the bottle's full of stuffed olives and we have to empty it first but anyway that reminds me that I'm hungry."

"Can we help you empty it?" Howard asked tactfully.

"Sure you can," said Pee-wee, fishing the bottle of olives up out of the keg; "I never knew I wanted some olives till you reminded me."

The bottle was soon emptied, and now Pee-wee, kneeling at an old grocery box, stood his precious onion on it like an inkstand. Having next produced his scout note book and laid it solemnly upon the grocery box, he brought forth a deadly skewer which he had extracted from a ham in Cooking Shack, and with it stabbed the onion to the heart. Perhaps it was because their gallant bark was nearing the middle of the lake and the beloved camp receding in the distance, or perhaps it was from sheer joy at the great good turn he expected so soon to perform, but it is a fact that at the very moment he punctured the onion with his makeshift pen, his eyes filled with tears.

With the pensive tear-drops standing on his round cheeks and with eyes glistening from the sadness of parting, or from some other equally logical cause, he penned the following missive, stabbing the onion afresh for every tender word he wrote, and weeping so copiously that he could not have deciphered the writing even if it had been visible. These were the words, all unseen, which he penned with the magic onion juice.

> The offer of three helpings all through the season is still open and the cove is bridged and any feller can hike around scout pace in less than an hour so now's your chance.
>
> HARRIS—HOP-TOAD,
> EX-RAVEN

He strained his eyes to read those memorable words which were to mean so much to him, and to all the scouts at camp. To say nothing of the camp commissary. But the spirit of the onion spoke not to those who did not know its secret. Not a sign of writing was there upon that virgin page.

Pee-wee rolled the missive, injected it into the bottle, and corked the bottle tight. He then produced a small limp article connected with a short stick. On blowing through the stick the limp attachment swelled to astounding dimensions as Pee-wee's cheeks puffed more and more till they seemed like to burst. Now upon the inflated balloon appeared the words *Catskill Garage* in conspicuous white letters.

The limit of Pee-wee's blowing capacity having been reached, he jabbed the blow-stick into the onion to check the egress of air, when suddenly that humble vegetable, so modest that its very blood shunned the gaze of prying

eyes, threw out a veritable spray in every direction like an electric sparkler, as the balloon grew smaller till it staggered, then collapsed, leaving the Hop-toad Patrol weeping and sneezing and groping frantically for their handkerchiefs, no doubt as flags of truce.

"I—eh—eh—chhh—ew—chh—I—llchew—try it—again."

CHAPTER XVIII
THE BATTLE OF THE BURS

The gallant bottle with its aerial companion attached was not yet set free upon the angry waves of Black Lake. For the epoch-making announcement must not be premature and the good bark *Hop-toad* had still some yards to travel before bunking against the farther shore.

Indeed, it did not bunk against the farther shore at all. Like the ships of another famous adventurer (Christopher Columbus) it reached a destination, but not the destination intended. It flopped against the shore at the northern extremity of the lake, where the natives (consisting of three turtles) fled precipitately upon the approach of the explorers.

"We'll have to pull it around," said the leader of the Hop-toads; "we'll have to coast along shore. Our port is due west of the camp. Maybe it's kind of south by due west. Come on, let's pull."

"Is it deep enough all the way around by the shore?" Howard asked.

"You mean the coast, not the shore," said Pee-wee; "we have to go coastwise; we have to hug the coast; that doesn't mean putting our arms around it."

By reason of the surrounding hills the shore of Black Lake was precipitous all the way round, except where the camp was. The water was therefore comparatively deep, even close under the shore. Wriggling in and out of the tiny passes near the lake wound a trail which would have completely encircled it, notwithstanding many smaller obstacles, save for Goldenrod Cove which was the beginning of the lake's main outlet.

By dint of pulling on the bushes and pushing with a couple of scout staffs and dancing on the unsusceptible platform, they succeeded in getting it along the shore till the camp was almost opposite them across the water.

The progress of the gallant bark was something like the progress of a stubborn mule, and it certainly hugged the shore with an altogether affectionate embrace. It would flop along but nothing would tempt it to tear itself away from the sheltering bushes. These hung so low that in places they playfully removed our hero's hat and ruffled his curly hair and deposited volleys of clinging burs upon his martial regalia.

Scout Willie and Scout Howard wrestled valiantly with these leafy tormentors, closing their eyes and sweeping the assaulting clusters aside as the noble float flopped resolutely along. But they were covered with burs from head to foot; there were prickling burs on their stockings, down their

necks, and worst of all, in their shoes. Burs lurked in their hair and would not be routed. One bur, more valiant than the rest, dared to penetrate within the khaki shirt of our hero, taking up a strategic position in the small of his back where it kept up a running assault with a hundred million tiny prongs. It was in vain that he approached this invader from the rear; in vain that he wriggled and twisted and almost tied his heroic body in a knot. The tormentor was not to be harried or dislodged.

"I got burs all over me," said Scout Willie; "wait a minute, I have to take off my shoe."

"Feel down my neck," said Scout Howard; "it tickles."

"Do you think that an explorer—do you think that—Peary—was scared of burs?" Pee-wee demanded contemptuously, the while madly scratching his back.

"Maybe they don't have burs at the North Pole," Scout Howard ventured.

"Don't you suppose there were burs in France?" Pee-wee said.

"Maybe French ones aren't so bad," Howard suggested, removing his shoe and extracting a whole regiment of burs, while Willie made a sudden raid up one sleeve with his hand.

"Burs are—they're just like natives," Pee-wee said. "You're not scared of natives, are you? Scouts are supposed to love everything in the woods."

"They ain't in the woods when they're on stockings, are they?" Willie asked, rather boldly.

Our hero was now reduced to the use of one arm in poling the float, his other hand being continually engaged in scratching his writhing back. With that one stalwart arm he tried to keep the float far enough off shore to be clear of the assaulting legions. Willie Rivers, having battled nobly, sat helpless on the stubborn float, holding a shoe in one hand and clearing the gory field of his stockings with the other. The naked, undefended area between the ends of his loose khaki trousers and the tops of his stockings was swarming with the enemy.

The tent, knocked askew by the assaulting branches, was covered with clinging burs. It seemed to reel and stagger under the attacks of the aroused and enraged brush. All the famous sea fights of history were nothing to this. Scout Howard, warding off the relentless onslaughts with one sturdy arm, was trying vainly to reach the small of his back over his left shoulder with the other.

Suddenly the voice of our hero rose above the roar of battle, "Look out for the poison ivy! Give her a push out! Quick!"

Withdrawing his hand from the forlorn enterprise down his back, Scout Howard grasped a scout staff and gave a mighty shove against the shore

sending the harassed cruiser clear of this ghastly peril just as a low hanging branch, lurking unnoticed like a sharpshooter, toppled over the keg of provisions and it went rolling into the water.

This dastardly attempt to starve out a gallant adversary was met by quick action from the leader of the Hop-toads. Giving one frantic look at a package of Uneeda biscuits floating near the bobbing keg, he plunged into the angry waters and returned triumphant with several varieties of commissary stores, while Scout Rivers, forgetting all else at the thought of his commander's wrath, reached out with his scout staff and brought the rolling keg safely aboard.

But alas, just in the moment of this heroic rescue, the float, unguided for the moment, bobbed plunk against the shore and into a veritable jungle of tangled vines.

"Wild roses! Wild roses! Look out for the thorns!" cried Commander Harris.

But it was too late. Already they were surrounded, enveloped, embraced, in a very labyrinth of Nature's barbed wire entanglements. The wounds and scars of battle were already upon them. The uncovered portions of Scout Harris were tattooed with a system of scratches which ran here and there like bloody trails. A scratch was on his nose and his hair was pulled up in the combing process of the thorned tentacles. The martial regalia of the three warriors was in tatters.

But they did not give up. Lying flat upon the raft they pushed with all their might and main till their staffs sunk into the spongy shore. And at last, by dint of superhuman effort, the cruiser *Hop-toad* emerged from this fearful trap and was happily caught in the flowing water which bespoke the neighborhood of Goldenrod Cove.

CHAPTER XIX
SAIL ON, THOU BOTTLE!

This famous cruise to the remote farther shore of Black Lake is famous in camp history. And the awful conflict there is often spoken of as The Battle of the Burs. The losses on the side of the invaded coast were about fifty million burs, several entire branches of the Wild Rose Battalion and a ton or two of grassy earth.

The losses of the exploring party were one khaki jacket, three scout hats, six stockings, one box of egg powder, four cans of condensed milk, one scout staff, a package of spaghetti, one shoe, four buttons and three tin spoons. The wounded were one nose, three ears, two knees, two heads of hair, three arms and about one square mile of scratches. There is at present a movement in Temple Camp to safeguard the neighborhood from the recurrence of such a frightful world catastrophe.

One thing remained unscarred after this sanguinary adventure. The bottle with its companion balloon had been safe within the tent. The *Hop-toad* was now carried merrily into the cove upon the hurrying water and proceeded as far into the outlet as its dimensions would permit it to do. Here it stopped, just as its far-seeing navigator knew it would do, wedged immovably between the two shores. Pee-wee had always claimed to be lucky, and his luck was faithful to his purpose here. For the two ends of the trail ended at the opposite sides of the lumbering float. A line across the float and the trail would have been unbroken.

Goldenrod Cove could not quite be seen from Temple Camp across the lake, but in the early fall its profusion of yellow was visible like a dab of gold across the water. And when that dab of gold appeared, the scouts still at camp knew that presently school would open and the camp close for the season. Some fanciful youngster had said that that golden area was the shape and color of a bell, and it came to be called The School-bell by the scouts of camp. But the momentous affair of Goldenrod Cove was in the earlier summertime and there was no school-bell there.

Let us observe the geography of this dim, quiet spot, made memorable by the immortal exploit of Pee-wee. The cove at its widest point (that is, where it joined the lake) was about twenty feet wide. It narrowed gradually till it was just wide enough to let a little brook from the lake pass through. This trickling outlet found its way to the lordly Hudson.

Hiking around the lake by the trail, the scout came upon the shore of this cove where it was perhaps fifteen feet wide. You will say that he could swim across, and so he could. But that is just where the joker came in, for the standing offer of Chocolate Drop stipulated for an unbroken hike. The unbroken hike around Black Lake was like the fountain of perpetual youth that old What's-his-name searched for in Florida. There wasn't any.

The tempting offer of three desserts for the balance of the season as a reward for an unbroken hike was just a practical joke. A very, very cruel practical joke to those who love and reverence desserts. Every new scout tried it with high hopes till he reached the challenging shore of the cove. If he followed this shore to a point where he might wade across he would consume more time than he could afford.

That smile of Chocolate Drop's which showed all his white teeth was not a vain and meaningless smile. "This thing could not be did," as Roy Blakeley had said. It had come to be the hoary-headed tottering old practical joke of the camp. And so it remained until Pee-wee Harris touched it with the wand of his genius.

"Sling the bottle in the water," he said; "throw it as far as you can."

This romantic form of announcement, borrowed from shipwrecked mariners of old, was of course not essential to Pee-wee's mammoth enterprise. But in the field of romance and adventure he was nothing if not thorough.

The bottle splashed into the lake beyond the area of outflowing water and the balloon advertising the Catskill Garage was caught in the breeze and wafted off upon its mission. It hovered a yard or more above the bobbing bottle, leading and dragging it eastward like a child with an unwilling pup. On, on, and ever on, toward the populated eastern shore, it flew, ducking, jerking, and skimming the water like a playful seagull. And ever after it bobbed the corked olive bottle with its inspiring message to the hungry scout camp.

The shadows of evening gathered, the waters darkened in the pervading twilight, the wooded hills about the lake looked solemn as the night drew on apace. And merry voices rose about the messboards at Temple Camp, while smoke as black as Chocolate Drop himself floated above the sacred temple of the laughing chef.

Laugh on, Chocolate Drop! He laughs best who laughs last. You know not what awaits you. . . .

CHAPTER XX
THE NIGHT BEFORE

"Hand me my belt axe," said Pee-wee, after they had restored their tent to a respectable posture and eaten a toothsome supper within it.

"What are you going to do?" Hop-toad Howard asked.

"I'm going to make a ticket office out of this grocery box. You take this pack of cigar coupons and write *O. K. W. Harris, per H.* on the back of each one. And you," he said, turning to Hop-toad Willie, "take the cardboard out of that other box and take this trail sign marker and print *Positively no Trespassing* in good big letters on it. Make them good and black."

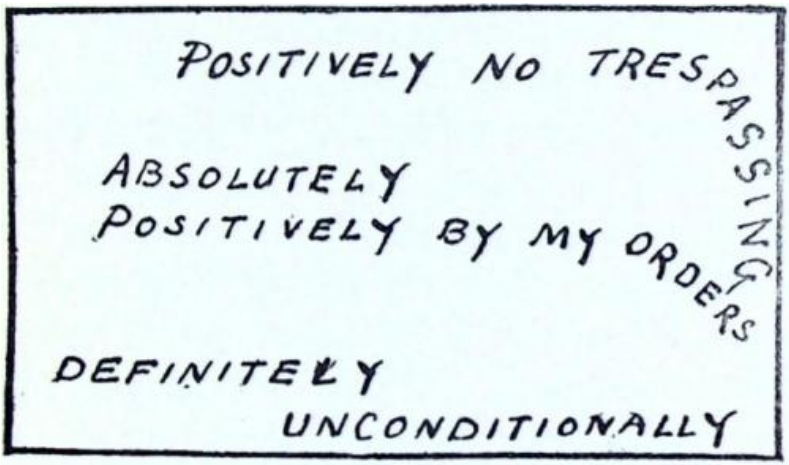
"Shall I say under *penalty of the law*?" Willie asked.

"No, but be sure to say *Positively*; you'd better say A*bsolutely positively by my orders*. Underneath that you better put *Definitely*."

"Shall I put v*iolators will be reported*?"

"No, because I don't know how to spell violators. Anyway put *Unconditionally* and make a hand pointing to it."

The following accurate reproduction of this sign is from a photograph taken with Dorry Benton's stalking kodak:



This authoritive warning was supplemented by others which read *This is our private float. We've got the use of this float. Private property. Remember Rule 7*. On the grocery box in which a sort of pigeon-hole had been hacked out was printed *Buy tickets here to cross this float, 5¢, no war tax*.

Before the settlers turned in for the night the trees on both sides of the cove were decorated with warnings and announcements. The float itself looked like a miniature amusement enterprise with its grocery box ticket office, festooned with a couple of scout scarfs. It stood upon the provision keg ready for business. Behind it stood the ramshackle camp stool for the accommodation of the ticket agent. Across the float a black line had been drawn with the marker connecting the two loose ends of trail, an idea borrowed from the unfathomable wilderness of the New York subway. Close to it were the words *Follow black line*.

But this was not all. Upon the boards were sketched crude representations of slices of pie, of saucers with arctic mountains of ice cream (wisely labelled), and other loaded saucers labelled *fruit pudding*, *rice pudding* and the like, intended to influence hesitating and penurious scouts. Across the tent was printed *Hundreds of helpings for a nickel! Tickets accepted at messboards! Here's your chance! Start a run on the First National Cooking Shack! Place your nickel where it will bring results!*

At about nine o'clock the Hop-toad Patrol, weary with travel and warfare and art, lifted the door of its decorated tent and retired to refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER XXI
SCOUTS AND SCOUTS

It was just about when Pee-wee was falling asleep that a canoe moved noiselessly through the water near the camp side of the lake. One of its two occupants sat in the stern, paddling idly, aimlessly; the way one paddles on a moonlit night. The other sat in the bow. He was a queer looking fellow to be in a canoe, being exceptionally long and lanky and wearing horn spectacles. He sprawled in an attitude of utter and heedless comfort with one long leg resting over the knee of the other, his foot pointing up in the air. There was a suggestion of whimsical philosophy in his drawling voice and funny manner, which seemed to amuse his companion.

"You want to go in? Tired?" the latter asked.

"Not as long as you're doing the paddling," the other drawled. "Funny, I can watch another fellow paddle all day without getting even stiff."

"Gaylong, you said your name was?"

"Yep, Brent Gaylong; my bunch comes from down Newburgh way. We usually flop up the river every summer and squint around."

"First class scout?"

"Yes, I've got a room on the top floor."

There followed a silence, broken only by the dripping of the paddle.

"You think he really means business then?" the paddler asked.

"Who, the Bridgeboro giant? Oh yes, he always means business."

"I mean about starting a patrol?"

"Ye-es, starting patrols is his specialty. He usually starts about two a minute. This is a kind of an off season with him; he's only started one."

"Then you don't think it will amount to anything?"

"Oh, everything about him amounts to a great deal. If he didn't start a patrol, he'd be starting something else. He's guaranteed to start something. How do you think you like it, now that you're in the game?"

"Being a scout, you mean?"

"Mmm; great life if you don't weaken, huh?"

"You bet your sweet life I'm not going to weaken. I'm going to finish up my second class tests this week. Then I'm on the home stretch for class one. Hang it all, I wish I didn't have to wait sixty days for that."

"Ye-es, they put that sixty days in just to try your patience. There was a misprint or whatever you call it in my book and I got in in six days. I see you've got the fever all right. I must try to hunt that handbook of mine up

and let you use it; it has several good misprints. It said a fellow must have a dollar in the bank to get in, or something like that. The last two letters of *dollar* didn't print so I took a doll belonging to my sister and put it inside of a tin savings bank. I only had fifty-seven cents. You'll make out all right. You ought to learn things fast in a place like this? Ever meet Slade, the assistant? He'll put you wise to a lot of stuff. What you say your name is; Simpson?"

"Yes I stepped into that kid's place."

"Stepped in where angels fear to tread, eh? Well, that's a great patrol, the Ravens. You'll have to step lively to keep up with that outfit. Van Arlen, Bronson, Weigand, they're pretty good scouts. The kid's the biggest scout of the lot. He's the smallest boy and the biggest scout. If you're taking his place you've got your work cut out for you."

"Well, I'm doing my best anyway," said Simpson. "Second class in less than a week; that isn't so bad, is it? I've got a list of the merit badges I'm after just in the order that I'm going to try for them. Safety First heads the list—"

"Safety First first, eh?"

"Yes, and next comes Life Saving; I thought maybe my rowing and paddling would help me there. What do you think? Next I'm going to hit the trail for Archery and after that Stalking. I've had some practice shooting arrows, it's a kind of a fad with me—"

"Your spear of action, huh."

"Spear of action is good; I hope to be a ten badge scout by fall; that's the star you know. Some program, hey?" he laughed, breathless from his own enthusiasm. "Oh, I'm in for it for all it's worth. Gee *williger*, didn't I jump out of my skin when I got that letter from Artie Van Arlen telling me to come up! Funny thing, it came just on my birthday. Some birthday present, hey? Oh, you needn't be afraid I'll weaken. I'm not that kind. I don't suppose you'll believe it because you're one of those—what do you call them—Philistines? But I wouldn't give up this chance for a—a—an *airplane*—I wouldn't!" An airplane was the most delightful thing this enthusiastic novice could think of at the moment, and so he said airplane. "You never get excited do you?" he added. "Just sit there smiling while I rattle on. I got that habit of rattling from driving a Ford; that's another one of my accomplishments. I'm going to try for the Automobiling badge too, but not this summer."

Brent Gaylong slowly readjusted his lanky legs and looked at the moon over the top of his spectacles. "And good turns?" he drawled in his funny way. "You haven't forgotten about those? Carried a gentleman's suitcase off the train, I suppose? Passed somebody the butter?"

"Yes I did—I mean about the suitcase," Billy Simpson said sheepishly, for he caught the note of ridicule in his companion's voice. "You're a mind reader."

"No, I'm a scout reader," said Gaylong.

"Wasn't it all right?" Simpson asked.

"Sure it was."

"Well, what are you smiling about then? Gee, I can't understand you at all. I like you," he added with characteristic frankness, "but I can't understand you. Somehow you make me feel, I don't know, sort of not sure of myself. Good turns are part of the game, aren't they?"

"I'll say so," drawled Gaylong. "Did you hold the door open for a resident trustee yet? Don't forget about that."

"Yes I did," said Simpson rather testily, "and what of it?"

"And you're paddling me around the lake; *there's* real sacrifice for you."

"That's your good turn, not mine," said Simpson generously.

"It isn't a good turn at all, that's the point," said Gaylong. "Politeness is all right, if you don't overdo it, and kindness and going to the grocery store for your mother are all right. Only don't jot them down. If you're going to be a scout at all, be a big one. Be one like Slade. Know what I mean? Look at that moon," he drawled, squinting at it in his funny way; "it's going to be hot to-morrow. That means ice cream. Did you turn the freezer for Chocolate Drop yet? That's one of the regulation good turns up here."

"I know what you mean," Billy Simpson said in his customary, generous, eager way. "But gee, it's pretty hard to tell when you're serious. I don't know how to take you, honest I don't. What would you call a good turn?"

"Look at that moonlight on the water; pretty huh?"

"What would you call a good turn?"

"Oh, now you'll have to find out for yourself," Gaylong drawled; "scouts are supposed to be resourceful, you know. There are big scouts and little scouts. Harris is a big one—tremendous. I could name you a fellow pretty near six feet high who's a little one. If you drop a cent he'll pick it up for you and jot it down in his scout memo. book. You can't expect *me* to tell you what's a good turn. I'm just a kind of an observer here—war correspondent. Only if you're filling little Harris's place be sure you *do fill it*. Then we'll all live happily forever after. Poke her nose in toward shore, what do you say? They're all around the camp-fire. Looks pretty, doesn't it, reflected in the water. Well, it's a great life if you don't weaken."

"I'm not going to weaken," said Billy Simpson.

CHAPTER XXII
THE VOICE OF SCOUT HARRIS

Billy Simpson did not immediately follow Brent Gaylong to the camp-fire but stayed to haul the canoe up and put the paddle and lazy-back in the locker. He was very particular to disabuse his mind of the remotest thought that this was a good turn. Brent Gaylong had started him thinking, as Brent Gaylong had a way of doing. Brent had not even offered to attend to this trifling duty. Billy paused a moment, paddle in hand, pondering. He could see the ambling figure of his friend, visible as in a spotlight, as he approached the camp-fire. He heard a chorus of merry voices greet him.

"Here's old Brent!"

"Look who's here; old Grouch Gaylong!"

"Tell us a yarn, Brent."

"Go on, tell us a funny one."

"Good old Brent! Sit down here with us; take this milk stool."

"Tell us a story, go on, Brent."

"Hurrah for old Doctor Gaylong."

"Give the professor of philosophy a seat!"

"Give him a couple of seats."

"Go on, criticise us, Brent!"

Billy Simpson listened wistfully. He envied the popularity of his whimsical, humorous friend. He was going to win many badges, oh many, *many*. But would he ever win the frank love of the whole camp? He was a scout, yes. But Brent Gaylong was a personality. Brent Gaylong, Pee-wee Harris, they were more than just scouts; they were *characters*. They had reached the hearts of the camp. One had ambled in, the other had rushed in. But both of them dwelt in the hearts of the camp.

Would he, Bill Simpson, ever do that? He could talk with Brent or with any other scout there. He was a good chum. But he could not handle them all. He was just a little too shy for that. He was even shy with the Ravens, his own patrol. Scout Harris had the camp eating out of his hand. He admitted it. And surely he must have known. On a question of eating, who was a greater authority than he?

Billy Simpson might have hurried after Brent, but he did not, and now it was too late, and he just could not approach the camp-fire alone. There were so many of them there! He was not afraid of any one of them. He was not

exactly *afraid* of all of them. But he was shy. He would draw attention if he joined them now. He was not good in a crowd like Brent—and Pee-wee. . . .

He perched on the railing of the float and looked off on the moon-glinted water of the lake, and on the dark surrounding hills. He was not afraid of all the wonderful scout stunts that he was going to do, and so he thought of those. Those, at all events, did not abash him. Astronomy, the First Class badge, Angling, Athletics, Cooking, Forestry, Marksmanship, First Aid, star scout, *eagle scout*!

Eagle scout! The man in the moon looked down on Billy Simpson sitting on the railing, and winked his eye, as if to say, "Go to it, Billy." And in his joy, his elation, with all these honors of scouthood swarming in his mind he looked up at the man in the moon and said, with the very joy of Christmas time beating in his heart, "Yes, and I'll study you too, old top. And you stars, too, I'll make you show me the way home yet, I will. A scout," he mused, "a scout can speak to a scout—with signals—a scout can speak to a scout miles and miles off—"

He paused in his joyful reverie, and gazed out upon the glinting water. Yes, a scout was speaking to him already—from far off! For bobbing toward him in the moonlight was the gallant balloon of the Catskill Garage, dripping from its adventurous voyage, and dragging after it the dancing olive bottle with its invisible message to the world.

Billy Simpson might keep away from the festive throng, but he could not get away from Scout Harris.

CHAPTER XXIII
MOBILIZING

Billy Simpson intended to be a regular out-and-out scout. So before starting for Temple Camp he had spent the trifling amount of money which he had for several things he had seen advertised as being indispensable to scouts. One of these was a pocket flashlight. The advertisement had conveyed the belief to him that he could hardly expect to be a scout without one of these flashlights. "*Say fellows! Just the thing!*" the ad had begun. So poor Billy had bought one of those flashlights. A tried and true scout would have had better sense.

He now turned this flashlight on the paper which he fished out of the bottle, but not so much as a syllable was there written upon it. The reticent onion was true to its reputation. Billy laughed as he thought of Pee-wee.

Here was he, Billy Simpson, with the most modern kind of a device, a nickel-plated flashlight that would "throw a glare continuously for two hours or your money refunded," and its value was set at naught by a homely onion in the hands of a true scout. The onion had cost nothing. Yet the most dazzling flashlight in the world could not render visible one word upon that scrap of paper. Only *heat* could do that. You don't have to know anything to buy a flashlight. But you have to know something, that is you have to be a scout, to know the tender uses of the onion. . . .

Yes, Gaylong was a real scout. And Harris was a real scout. And Billy was greatly dissatisfied with himself. Like most boys who do not mix readily and do not quickly become popular with the multitude, he was given to a morbid disgust with himself. He conceived his shyness as a sort of deficiency. He thought he was not likable.

He was now sorely at odds with himself. He had started out by helping somebody off the train and had jotted this down as a good turn. Then Gaylong, in his quiet, drawling way, had knocked this good turn into a cocked hat and made it seem trivial. He had bought a fine nickel flashlight —"just what every scout needs"—and Pee-wee Harris had made this "scout" trinket ridiculous. They were real scouts here at Temple Camp, not little tin scouts. They could *do* things. True, Pee-wee was a walking rummage sale, but what he carried on his diminutive person was nothing to what he carried in his head.

Billy Simpson was beginning to get the hang of this thing now. He pulled out of his pocket a handful of beans which he had intended to drop

along the way in his pathless explorations so that he could find his way back. He scattered them into the lake. "If I can't find my way without those things I deserve to get lost," he said. Contemptuous of his own weakness he threw away a whistle he had bought, a boy scout whistle—"*just the thing, fellows*," of course. "I ought to be able to make as much noise with my mouth as Harris can," he said, disgustedly. That was saying a good deal. . . .

Then he sauntered up toward the camp-fire and instead of treating himself to the small glory which the discovery of the bottle might have brought him, he slipped in among the assemblage unnoticed and gave the paper to his patrol leader, Artie Van Arlen. And all the while Billy Simpson was the best oarsman at Temple Camp. In his hands a canoe paddle became a thing of magic. But he could not "join in"; he just didn't know how.

His brief connection with this paper was soon forgotten in the paper itself. He sat down out of the immediate range of the flame and was lost in the crowd and the surrounding darkness.

Meanwhile a clamorous chorus greeted the discovery.

"Hold it over the light."

"Don't burn it."

"The voice of Scout Harris."

"The plot grows thicker."

"Invincible writing again."

"E-pluribus onion."

"Don't hold it so near the flame, you'll have boiled onions."

"Let's see what it says."

"Wait a minute, it takes time."

"He has a strong handwriting."

"Sure, it's a strong onion."

"Oh it's getting visible."

"It's more likely to get risible."

"Read it, go ahead."

Artie Van Arlen read aloud as the writing slowly came into view under the influence of the heat. It was interesting to see how the words appeared, slowly, slowly, like a person emerging out of a fog.

> The offer of three helpings all through the season is still open and the cove is bridged and any feller can hike around scout pace in less than an hour so now's your chance.
>
> HARRIS—HOP-TOAD.
> EX-RAVEN.

"*What?*" demanded a dozen voices.

"Let's see it!"

"You're kidding us."

"What the dickens is he up to now?"

"What do you mean—bridged?"

"Let's see it."

"Don't crowd."

"Look out, you'll tear it."

"Well—I'll—be—" Roy Blakely began, elbowing his way into the excited throng.

"What do you suppose he's been doing?"

"Let's hike around."

"Not to-night," said a scoutmaster.

"It isn't true," a scout shouted. "Remember the false armistice."

"It's too good to be true."

"It *must* be true, it's written with food."

"Let me dream again," called another scout reeling.

"The world is made safe for dessert," shouted another.

"This will kill Chocolate Drop," laughed still another.

"The kid's crazy," another yelled.

"He's seeing things again."

"Let's go over there in the morning and kid the life out of him."

"I'm game."

"Right after breakfast, hey?"

"And his two aids—or lemonades, we'll have some sport with them; what do you say?"

"Answered in the positive."

"Yes, but home sweet home by noontime; to-morrow's ice cream day."

At this Roy Blakeley jumped upon an old barrel that was about to be offered to the flames and shouted:

"I scream, I scream
When we have ice cream
And I do not roam
But stay at home—

"All in favor of making a raid on P. Harris to-morrow will say Me, I mean Aye, and be ready for a hike around the lake at ten P. Q. and we'll jolly the life out of him, and everybody that isn't back by one I can have his helping of cream as a tribute—I mean a herald—I mean a tribute; I don't know what I mean, shut up, I will, thanks be seated!"

"Aye."

"Aye."

"Me."

"Us."

"We."

"Also."

"Likewise."

"Who said *likewise*? Slap him on the wrist, he's a highbrow!" shouted Roy. "We're getting up an exhibition, I mean an expedition to chastise Pee-wee Harris for making us hungry and other forms of frightfulness and perpetrating a ruse—"

"A what?"

"A ruse, it's the same as a bluff only different; for trying to play a cruel joke on us—"

"Maybe it's true; there's many a true word spoken in a jest," a hopeful voice called.

"There's many a bunk bunked by a pest, you mean," shouted Roy. "I was happy till he put the idea of three desserts in my head. He shall suffer for this—and his official lemonades too! That's what comes from being a free lance. He got out of the Ravens and now he's wished onto the whole camp. There can be no peace while he lives. He's crazy with his three desserts; I would have been satisfied with four before he went west and sent us a message by Western Onion. The whole thing is a Ford, I mean a fraud. Don't be fooled, scouts! He's always talking about mysteries and foiling people with tin-foil; he's a tin-foil scout. Let's start an exhibitionary force to-morrow and make him vaccinate the place, or evacuate it or whatever you call it. We were just going to turn in for the night when he starts us thinking about desserts. Can you beat it? If that isn't like a raving Raven. Once a Raven, always a Raven if not more so!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted a score of voices, while several trustees and half a dozen scoutmasters stood about smiling.

"Where? Where?"

"Hear, hear!"

Several of the Ravens pushed the barrel out from under the irrepressible Silver Fox and down he went, sprawling on the ground.

"There! There!" called a dozen laughing voices.

"I may be down but I'm never out," said Roy; "come on, let's turn in. To-morrow's the big day—the puny exhibition."

"You mean punitive expedition," said Artie Van Arlen.

"I should worry about what I mean," said Roy.

CHAPTER XXIV
A PROMISE

The next morning Billy Simpson was out early for a row on the lake before breakfast. The lake seemed to attract him like a magnet. But he always went either early in the morning or after dark, and usually alone, from a morbid shyness about showing his skill.

He dreamed about honors, and he had been betrayed into talking freely with Brent Gaylong about his hopes and plans. But he could not, he simply *could not*, show off. Of course, to let them see him row or paddle would not be showing off. But that was what he called it.

So the skill that he had cultivated on the river near his family's country home was not known to the camp or even his own patrol. He was afraid that if he did anything publicly it might have a look of crudeness, an amateurish touch, in the eyes of these denizens of the woods and water. He had made a mistake about good turns and he was ashamed of himself for being what Brent called a "little" scout. He was ashamed at having brought a pocketful of beans to show him the way when he was lost. And a whistle! He was not going to put his foot into it in the matter of his skill with oar and paddle. Gaylong might come along and drawl out some criticism of an obvious defect. And Roy Blakeley! How he dreaded the uproarious banter of that embodiment of merriment. He had seen what Roy could do in the way of banter. No, not for *him*. . . .

He paused on his way down to the lake to look at the bulletin-board. He always found much of interest there. And on this occasion he found something of preeminent interest. He had heard some talk of it in Patrol Cabin, but here was the official fact in black and white before him:

> The canoeing event for the Mary Temple cup will be held on the lake July 27th. The cup, now held by the First Bridgeboro, N. J., Troop, will be defended by Conover Bennett, Patrol Leader, Elk Patrol, of that troop. Troops intending to enter the contest should register in Administration Shack not later than July 15th.

So his own troop held this cup. Billy Simpson wondered where the cup was. He supposed it must be held by the Elk Patrol, since an Elk scout was to defend it. It was characteristic of him that he felt a bit chagrined that a contest involving his favorite form of outdoor exercise should be in

preparation without regard to him. Of course his own morbid shyness was to blame for this, but the announcement hit him in a tender spot just the same.

One thing that this announcement showed him was that such contests were usually troop affairs. It was troop against troop and not patrol against patrol. Conover Bennett represented the troop.

Billy sauntered down to the lake, quite at odds with himself because of this little jar to his pride, which no one was to blame for but himself. On the float stood a solitary early riser, one of his own troop.

"H'lo Simpson," said the latter, cheerily; "*some* day, huh? Out hunting for the early worm?"

"I was just going to take a little spin—flop I suppose you'd call it. I like to—to drift around."

"I don't blame you for turning out early, the way that Bronson snores up in your cabin. Come ahead out and watch me practice, don't you want to? I'm the goat, you know."

"Oh you mean about the cup? You're Bennett?" Billy asked, rather taken aback.

"Sure, they're all going around the lake to make a raid on Scout Harris—your prepossessor as Blakeley calls him."

"My predecessor seems to have them all guessing."

"So this morning's my chance to practice, and I'm going to keep at it," Bennett continued. "I'm off the desserts anyway for the present, and I guess there's nothing to that kid's big announcement. He's a scream, that kid is. He's a regular institution; I don't know what we'd do without him; die of ong-wee, I guess. I'd like to know what he's up to over there. What do you say we paddle over after the parade starts?"

Billy Simpson did not know whether to go out with Bennett or not. A foolish, childish pride deterred him. He was sensible enough to conquer this. Moreover, he did want to see Bennett paddle. Fearful of himself as he was, he was still just a little jealous.

"I've got the hang of this twirl pretty good now," said Bennett as he gave a long pull, sending the canoe gliding out into the lake. "Ever paddle?"

"Only in the dark," said Billy.

"I'm going to hit it straight for that tree," said Bennett, "without any straightening up. Can I do it?"

"Guess so."

"You lose a lot of headway in rudder work. Keep her straight—straighten her with each stroke, that's the secret."

"How many of you will be in the race?" Simpson asked.

"Only two of us. You see, we've got the cup in our troop. The other troops fight it out among themselves and I have to face the best one of the

bunch. Sort of like the world series, only different. But I can see what's coming all right. That red-headed fellow in the Ohio troop, he's got me scared. He's putting them all to sleep one after another. He's got *me* feeling a little drowsy."

"He has a jerky stroke?" Billy said, respectfully putting his observation in the form of a question.

"Yes, but he gets there. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as Pee-wee Harris says."

"Do you think he'll succeed with his new patrol?"

"Who, the kid? Oh, I don't know; he's a joke. He's wished onto us. He's here because he's here, no matter what he does. Didn't you know him in Bridgeboro?"

"No, I live across in East Bridgeboro."

"Oh, I see. Well, here goes for a glide and then breakfast. Now watch."

Billy Simpson did watch and thought that Bennett paddled skilfully. But he could not help noticing that his companion breathed rapidly. He seemed to spend all his effort in the first part of his stroke, and each pull left him somewhat winded. His stroke seemed remarkably strong and effective, but it was spasmodic. With each stroke he caught the canoe and sent it forward again instead of keeping it going at a smooth, even rate of speed.

The one way would correspond to the action of a one cylinder motor, the other to a two or four cylinder motor. That is to say, the effect of one stroke was not merged into the effect of the next. Whatever this kind of work meant in point of speed, it certainly did not conserve the strength of the paddler.

"They talk to me about the long stroke," said Bennett, breathing heavily and shaking his falling hair up off his forehead; "but I'm as I am, that's what I tell them. The best way to do a thing is the way you do it. Isn't that right? Some fellows bat best left-handed, huh? Results are the things that count."

"I'll say so," said Billy.

"If you ever go in for paddling look out your paddle doesn't get underneath when you twirl; it just holds you back. Let it get way in back of you—then drag. See, like this."

Why didn't Billy Simpson tell how he could actually paddle, using but one hand, all the while keeping the canoe in a bee-line course? Why did he not speak of the back sweep? Of the little trick in the steering twirl? Well, he did not know them by those names, for one thing. He had never had any athletic connections and he had no technical talk. But why on earth didn't he ask for the paddle for just one little minute and show what he could do with that wonderful wrist of his? Why didn't he loosen up as he had done with Brent Gaylong? Well, fellows did loosen up with Brent; there was

something about him. . . . Old Doctor Gaylong didn't have any particular kind of talent to be afraid of. He did not have a name to strike terror to the shy amateur. He was just good old Doctor Gaylong.

And Billy Simpson, he was just Billy Simpson. And that is why he did not tell that he could paddle right or left, it made no difference. He just did not know how in the presence of this self-possessed, easy-going young champion. That was Billy Simpson, all over.

But one thing he did say, and an observant scout might have noticed that he seemed to ponder before saying it.

"You—in the race—you paddle alone?"

"Oh, I'll have a fellow to steady the canoe. A fellow hasn't got any control unless he has some weight forward, you know."

"N—no, I suppose not."

"A bag of sand is good enough, only there's no life to a bag of sand. I like to have a pair of eyes looking at me. A girl's the best thing really, only they don't fit into a race. I can pick out any fellow I want. Some like more weight than others; it's just a matter of choice, there's no rule. I thought of having Pee-wee for my mascot; he yells and creates a breeze and that's good, you know."

"Did you promise him."

"Oh no, it's early yet."

A pause followed. Billy seemed to wrestle with himself. Then he spoke.

"Would you be willing to let me do that?"

"Sure—guess so. Only maybe the kid would be disappointed."

"If you will, I'd like to."

"It's only the kid—" Bennett mused doubtfully.

"I asked you first, didn't I?"

"All right, it's a go," said Bennett.

"Thanks," said Billy Simpson.

When Bennett got to thinking it over afterward he thought it rather strange that this new scout, who had taken Pee-wee's place in the Raven Patrol, had not seemed disposed to yield this other little post of honor (if indeed it was that) to the redoubtable mascot. That would have been more scoutlike. It put Billy in a rather unpleasant light, that ignoring of Pee-wee, and thinking only of himself. It seemed just a little cold and selfish.

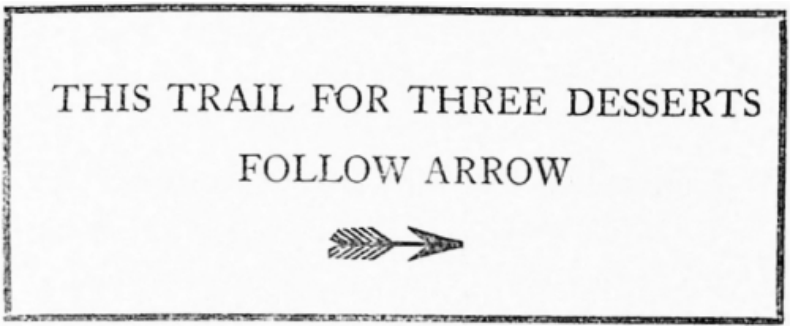
It was the fate of Billy Simpson, not only to have his light hidden under a bushel, but to be misunderstood as well. But how could anyone understand him when he hardly understood himself?. . .

CHAPTER XXV
BIG BUSINESS

The expeditionary forces were early in starting. The advance guard, consisting of a few stragglers, set off on the trail around the lake, bent on mischief. They intended to amuse themselves with jollying Pee-wee and making fun of whatever childish claptrap he had contrived.

His famous observation tower near Storehouse Cabin had blown down before he had the chance to take any observations from it. His patented springboard had sprung into the lake and floated away. So the scouts did not think seriously about his bridge. That, too, would collapse if indeed there was one in existence.

But they reckoned without rue, these scouts. When they reached the neighborhood of the cove they became aware that operations in that sequestered spot had been going on on a stupendous scale. At the farthest outpost from headquarters they came face to face with a sign which read:



A few yards farther along they came upon another sign on which was a detailed mathematical appeal.

THE NEW WAY

One month scouts . . . . 90 helpings

Two month scouts . . . . 180 ”

THE OLD WAY

One month scouts . . . . 30 helpings

Two month scouts . . . . 60 ”

A NICKEL TRIPLES YOUR HELPINGS

Still again they came to another one, calculated to stagger them by sheer weight.

TONS OF PIE FOR A NICKEL! MOUNTAINS OF ICE CREAM FOR A NICKEL!

And then they came in sight of the cove. There behind the grocery box sat Willie Rivers ready for the mad rush for tickets. Howard Delekson, armed with an enormous stick and looking very much afraid, was strutting around the float to keep off trespassers. And Scout Harris stood upon the rescued keg amid a very carnival of signs, some tempting, others threatening, shouting at the top of his voice.

He had seen barkers displaying dollar bills held between their fingers and spreading out like fans to catch the public eye, and an "inspiration" had seized him to use a large piece of raisin cake as a kind of flaunting bait. To make this the more piquant, he took a large bite occasionally, for advertising purposes only.

"Here's where you buy your tickets!" he screamed, taking a huge bite. "It costs you only a nickel—five cents! Remember scout regulation seven! It means you! It means everybody all the time, no matter what. Trespassers will be persecuted. No trespassing—absolutely, positively. Anybody that trespasses on this private property without paying five cents gets his name sent to Tom Slade. To-day is ice cream day, don't delay! Five cents to cross this float! This is the path to three desserts as long as you stay! Follow the black line! Get your foot off this float—go on! Your nickel is safe, the cooking shack is in back of us—"

"I don't see it," called a voice.

"I mean financially about food," Pee-wee shouted. "Tickets honored at messboards or your money back! Hey, Howard, rap any scout in the shins that sets foot on this float. The cost of desserts has come down! The problem has been solved by engineering skill. We may go away from here any time. Now's your chance!"

There was no doubt about the bridge. If the desserts were as substantial as the bridge there would be no cause of complaint. And there were two things (both printed in black) which the scouts of camp respected. One was regulation seven, the other was Chocolate Drop. Chocolate Drop was absolutely solvent. The cooking shack was as good as the Bank of England.

"Your nickel is safe!" shouted Pee-wee. "Right this way! There's where you buy your tickets—get your foot off this float, you North Carolina scout. Hit him a crack with the stick! Stand back! Private property! There's only

one way around! The cooking shack is with us! Maybe the price will go up to-morrow! *Maybe it will go up in five minutes!*"

This last thundered warning brought the hesitating misers to their senses, and financial transactions started on an unprecedented scale. The surging, clamoring throng in the Stock Exchange was nothing to it.

"Hurry up, lend us a nickel."

"Lend me one too, will you?"

"Do you think I'm a millionaire."

"Hey, lend us a nickel, will you?"

"Positively no trust!" screamed Pee-wee, anticipating a demand for credit.

Scouts fortunate enough to have loose change with them were already across the float, hurrying helter-skelter to the promised land. One or two did a thriving business in small loans, accepting promissory notes of pie or pudding as security. Those who could not borrow gazed wistfully at the passing show, under the stern and watchful eye of Howard Delekson.

"Hey, give us a bite, Pee-wee?" the financially embarrassed shouted.

"Buy your tickets!" shouted Pee-wee, disdaining to answer.

As the scouts, singly, in pairs, and in small groups, passed across the float, the merry jingle of money sounded in the tin-box behind the ticket office, and mingled harmoniously with the other sounds of hustling prosperity. As the scouts reached the opposite shore of the cove they hiked away through the woods, talking, laughing, jesting, till the woods echoed with their voices. Some arrived in canoes to see the fun, but these were refused tickets, because they had not hiked around. Pee-wee's operations were conducted strictly on the square.

It was to the credit of all, particularly the loiterers who had no funds, that no one forced a crossing to the happy domain beyond. It is true that some, in their eagerness, advanced far enough to be reminded of a scout's honor by a vigorous rap in the shins. But no one sneaked across.

The news of this colossal enterprise spread like wildfire, and now scouts came in droves and stood in line to purchase tickets. Dorry Benton took a snapshot of the scene, but alas, it could not reproduce Scout Harris's voice.

"As long as you stay!" he shouted, waving his small remaining fragment of cake and looking scornfully upon the loiterers; "even if you stay till Thanksgiving. Then you'll get three anyway, and three more makes *six*! The chance of a life time! Watch them cross! O-o-o-h! Watch them cross! They can't wait! It's only half an hour to dinnertime! A nickel well spent! Cross the eats bridge while it's still here. O-o-o-h! Use the Hop-toad dessert multiplying system! The cooking shack is back of us with all its vast resources—push that feller back, hurry up! Only a few more tickets left. We

start on another cruise to-night! O-o-o-o-o-h! Here's where you get your tickets!"

By noontime the crowd began thinning out and business slowed down. Pee-wee gazed anxiously across the lake at the signal poles but no sign of weakening was there at Cooking Shack. No signal to withdraw the offer was to be seen.

Chocolate Drop stood the run, the greatest run on any cooking shack in financial history. He smilingly made each scout sign his name on his ticket and drop it in a bread-pan. He stood ready to pay in full, remarking only, "What dat kid up to next! Lordy, *Lordy*! He use up ebry last bit of flour I got! I done got not—one—last—cranberry—left! *Lordy*, he do hab some inspirize! He cer'n'ly do, dat kid!"

The boisterous procession had entirely ceased when Brent Gaylong came ambling around, bought a ticket in the most solemn manner, and went his way. He did not much care for desserts, but he wished to pay his tribute to Pee-wee, whom he greatly admired.

In a little while the sound of the dinner-horn sounded faintly across the water and the hero who had made the camp safe for three desserts, was reminded that his own stock of provisions was running low. Business was at a standstill now, and as the adventurers sat on the float counting their gains, they were conscious of an inner craving which their depleted commissary could not supply. Some of their provisions had been lost in the sanguinary battle of the burs, while other edibles had been freely used for advertising purposes.

It now appeared that what remained was the subject of attack by an army of ants which decorated the food like ornamental cloves on a ham. It seemed likely that the enterprise was all over. And since the ants were likewise all over, the speculators considered what they had better do.

They had begun as poor boys; they were now worth two dollars each. Their operation on that foreign shore had been perfectly legitimate; just as legitimate as Uncle Sam's enterprise in Panama, where the precedent of charging tolls was established. But the ants were hurrying back and forth across cake and bread and had even penetrated to the fastness of the sugar can. They lurked among the corn flakes. And the edible territory not thus conquered was wet.

"I tell you what let's do," said Pee-wee; "there are two things we can do. We can hike down to Catskill and buy ice cream and candy and go to the movies. I know a trail that goes into the Catskill road from here. Or we can drift across the lake and get there for dinner."

"I say let's go down to Catskill," said Willie Rivers.

"I say let's drift across," said Howard Delekson.

“I’ve got an inspiration!” shouted Pee-wee. “Let’s hike down to Catskill and buy a lot of stuff—jaw breakers, those are my favorite things because they last longer and you get four for a cent. And we’ll have some sodas, too. Come ahead, get your staff and push out from shore.”

He wet his finger and held it up to determine the direction of the breeze. The side of his finger that felt the first chill settled this matter definitely. Never in all Pee-wee’s life had it settled it correctly, but that made not the slightest difference to him. His faith was boundless.

“It’s blowing over toward the camp,” he said; “it’s due east. We’ll drift over in about five minutes. Come ahead, *push*. Push as hard as you can.”

CHAPTER XXVI
MAROONED

"All the things you said made me hungry," Willie Rivers shyly confessed. "The way you talked made me hungry."

"Me too," said Howard.

The gallant bark *Hop-toad* was now clear of the shore and sailing majestically.

"It's going in a direction south by south!" shouted Pee-wee, frantically holding up his finger, as if to reprove the deceiving breeze. "I can tell because it's going the other way from the way I thought it would go."

"Won't we get any dinner?" Willie asked.

"How am I to blame if the breeze doesn't do like it says it's going to do?" Pee-wee demanded. "If we held a rag up somebody might think it was a flag of truce."

"We're not having a war, are we?" Howard ventured to ask.

Pee-wee was too busy poling the float to answer. His scout staff touched bottom, and as the float moved the water became shallower, until soon there was a scraping sound beneath them and the float refused to be pushed any farther. Not only that, it refused to be pushed in any direction whatsoever. It did consent to turn a little like a merry-go-round, but thought better of it presently and became as motionless as a stubborn mule.

"It's grounded," Pee-wee said; "come on, push hard; push with all your might."

The united strength of the three adventurers failed to budge the lumbering float. It sat securely on the gravelly bottom and all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't start it moving again.

"We're marooned!" Pee-wee shouted. "That means kind of like being on a desert island only there isn't any island; it's a desert float, but it's just as good. We're on a reef; you can tell a reef by closing your eyes and opening them all of a sudden and looking very sudden at the water. It'll seem kind of gray, like, where the reef is."

Both of the younger scouts squinted their eyes, in accordance with this valuable bit of nautical lore, but saw nothing. Pee-wee had tried it on every lake and river he had ever seen but never had it revealed anything under the water. It was his choicest bit of scout knowledge with one exception. That was his device for getting a light without matches, only he had to light a match in order to see to work it.

The spot where they were now marooned was a shallow area of the lake near the scene of their sensational adventures. But a few yards of unfathomable depth (six feet deep at least) lay between them and the shore. As for the camp shore, that seemed miles upon miles away, but they could see the sportive smoke circling above the cooking shack, and they gazed wistfully at it, as they thought of the hot stew and boiled potatoes which were being served at the messboards.

In their minds' eyes, they saw mounds of ice cream standing in saucers, surrounded by little lakes of melted cream. And on each luscious island a cherry, marooned. Not only one helping did their fancy picture forth, *but three helpings*!

That Pee-wee himself should have sung of these delights (or rather shouted) and that now they should escape him! That he should bellow forth the joys of ice cream and cake and then not have any!

"Let's send them a signal that we're starving," Willie suggested.

"There are four crackers in that box, let's eat them," said Pee-wee.

"I guess they're having roast beef," said Howard; "they have it on Wednesdays."

"I saw Chocolate Drop killing some chickens," said Willie. "I like the part with the wishbone best."

"I like roast beef because it's got all brown gravy over it," Howard observed; "I like dumplings, too."

"Do you like apple dumplings?" Willie asked.

"Yes, but I like cottage pudding better. I like corn fritters, too."

"*Will you shut up!*" screamed Pee-wee.

"Can't we even talk about it?"

"No, you can't talk about it," Pee-wee said, pouring the last remaining crumbs out of a biscuit box into his hand and lapping them up with his tongue.

"I guess they're just about starting with dessert now; hey?" said Willie.

"I can kind of smell cooking; anyway I *think* I can," said Howard.

"We've got six dollars anyway," said Willie.

"We're foiled!" Pee-wee shouted. "What good is six dollars? We promised we wouldn't go in the water and we can't get to camp. I know a way to cook moss if you're starving, only I haven't got any moss and if I did have, I haven't got any matches."

"I can see all those signs about desserts and things; look over there toward the cove," said Willie. "Don't you know you said the way to see was by taking off your jacket and holding up your sleeve so as to kind of make a telescope out of it—don't you remember? Do you think we'll be peruned long?"

“Now you’re talking about prunes!” Pee-wee fairly yelled in despair.
“Don’t you like prunes?” Willie asked innocently.

CHAPTER XXVII
RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

We will not describe the sufferings of the marooned Hop-toads. Under direction of Scout Harris they tried several of the most approved expedients for preserving life in such perilous predicaments as theirs.

Pee-wee knew of a way, highly popular in the days of the explorers, of extracting nourishment from shoe leather by soaking it in water. But the life-giving soup thus produced was not palatable. These things are matters of taste, and this did not taste good.

"I know a way, a scout way, to make fishes come to you by focussing the sun with your watch crystal," said Pee-wee; "and I can light a piece of paper that way, too. That's the way pioneers do when they haven't any fishing tackle, only they use quartz crystal or maybe a locket with their mother's picture in it; you can use anything that shines."

Pee-wee's canteen, his aluminum saucepan, his watch and his star scout badge, were used to deflect a tempting spot of brightness into the water, but the only thing that ventured near it was an inquiring pollywog, which whisked away again disgusted with the ruse. Nevertheless, the Hop-toad Patrol seemed greatly edified at this wisdom of scout lore.

"Wait a minute," said Pee-wee, excitedly, "there's oil in bone and oil is nourishing because don't you know cod liver oil? Scouts in the Great North Woods get oil out of deer's horns: you don't ever need to starve if you're a scout. Let's take the buttons off our shirts and pound them up and we'll get some oil. You have to mix water with it."

A dozen or more buttons were contributed to this culinary enterprise and the result was a gritty concoction not unlike silver polish. Pee-wee pretended to eat this with a relish but the others rebelled. The very mention of cod liver oil had been sufficient for Willie Rivers.

"Don't you know oil of wintergreen?" Pee-wee said contemptuously. "Sailors can live on the oil from turtles' shells."

"Why don't they eat the turtles?" Howard asked innocently.

"Because maybe they already ate them!" Pee-wee shouted at him. "Maybe they were in the last pangs of hunger. That shows how much you know about scouting."

"Do you have to be hungry to know about scouting?" Howard summoned the courage to inquire.

"You have to be resourceful," Pee-wee said. "*Now* I can see which way the breeze is blowing, because look at the smoke over the cooking shack; it's blowing away from the lake. That means it's going to rain to-night, and to-morrow there'll be more water in the lake and we'll float away."

"Won't we have any dinner till then?" Willie asked.

"Sure we will," Pee-wee answered, "because Nature is full of food only you have to know how to get it. You can't starve because Nature is abundant."

"How soon will it be abundant?" Howard asked.

It was not abundant throughout that afternoon at all events, and three more desperately hungry scouts were never seen disporting amid Nature's bounty. It was just short of suppertime, in fact, when they were discovered and the nature of their predicament suspected. Then a couple of scouts rowed out and brought them to camp.

Pee-wee carried the tin box containing his share of the profits accruing from their adventurous voyage and this jingling receptacle of treasure, together with his somewhat rakish aspect, gave him not a little the appearance of a pirate of old. A flippant crowd awaited the rescued mariners at the shore.

"What are you going to do now, Kid? Settle down and live a respectable life?" one asked.

"Are you going to bury your treasure? Up behind the woodshed is a good place. Three paces from the trunk of the big elm tree—"

"We're going to eat," said Pee-wee.

"You arrived by boat I believe?" a scout asked. "That's too bad. Otherwise you might have had three desserts at dinner. We expect to have three at supper. Ain't we got fun? You just ought to see us. It's really well worth seeing. We charge nothing—*absolutely, positively*. We'll expect you to supper then?"

"Oh *do* come; don't miss it," chimed in another.

"Hey Delicatessen," a scout shouted at Howard; "you've got to go home, your mother sent for you. How do you like a life on the ocean wave, Willie Rivers? Going to settle down and reform now?"

"I'm going to eat first," said Willie Rivers.

CHAPTER XXVIII
BRENT AND PEE-WEE

The unexpected return of the Hop-toad Patrol and its almost immediate dissolution had some very far-reaching consequences at Temple Camp.

Howard Delekson had to go home and Willie Rivers' parents stopped at camp with their auto and took him for an extended tour of the Catskills. So Pee-wee became in fact a free lance. This did not trouble Artie Van Arlen because he knew that once back in Bridgeboro Pee-wee would start a new patrol of permanent residents, and probably make a success of it. It would be a joke patrol, but that would be better than a lifeless patrol of which there are many. You can't keep a good scout down.

But there was one at Temple Camp whose amusement at Pee-wee turned to sympathy as he saw the sturdy little scout going about by himself, always busy, yet sometimes lingering wistfully around the Ravens' cabin. This quiet, keen observer was Brent Gaylong.

Pee-wee was so much a camp institution, and had been so thoroughly a raven of the Ravens that it seemed grotesque to observe him now, emerging from the wreck of his own disbanded enterprise without any troop home. He seemed to be flopping around like a fish out of water. Probably he was in need of no sympathy or assistance, being a host in himself. But the sight of him and the thought of him impressed good old Brent so much that he stopped the Lone Star, as Pee-wee was now called, and had a little chat with him. It was on the veranda of the main pavilion where Brent liked to sit tilted back with his long legs against the railing.

"Anything new?"

"Sure, everything's new, I got a lot of new ideas. I'm going to get a snapshot of Connie Bennett when he's racing and I'm going to give a print to each member of the Elks. I can get a dandy snapshot because I'm going to sit in the canoe with him, because I did last summer."

"If he wins," laughed Brent.

"Sure he'll win, because we've got to keep that cup in our troop—I mean his troop. Gee whiz, I keep forgetting. I bet they'll be glad to get those snapshots, hey?"

"If he wins," laughed Brent.

"Sure he'll win; we've—they've got to win—the Bridgeboro troop."

"Wish you were back in it?" Brent drawled.

"Sure, now that the race is coming on. Gee whiz, I was in that patrol since it started—I was in it *before* it started even, because I was with Doc. Carson when he thought of it. We were drinking sodas in Bennett's—that's in Bridgeboro—and he said the Ravens would be a good name and I said yes, only we'd have to wear black scarfs and I hate black but that's not saying I don't like licorice. Yum, *yum*! Anyway, I like Billy Simpson only most of the fellows don't, because he doesn't mix in with them, I guess. When he shook hands with me, oh baby, didn't he twist my hand! He's awful strong in the wrist, that feller is. Do you know how to not make a noise when you sneeze? I can do that. That's good when you're stalking."

"He shook hands with you? Talked with you?"

"Sure, he's not mad at me."

"You get kind of lonesome sleeping in the dormitory?"

"Gee whiz, you can't be lonesome when you're asleep."

"No, that's true. But when you're awake."

"Part of the time I'm eating. I bet you don't know how to tell if it's going to be cold by moss."

"No. You go up to the cabin much?"

"Sure I do, because all those fellers live in my town, don't they? El Sawyer lives right across the way from me. You know him, don't you? He's got a birthmark on his neck but you can't see it. It's the shape of Australia. That's one place I'd like to go to—Australia. I bet it's nice there."

"Ed and Grove Bronson, they're in the Ravens, aren't they?"

"Sure, didn't I bring them in? I knew how to handle their mother, all right. They've got an Airedale in their house."

"And Benton?"

"He's in the Silver Foxes, that's Roy Blakeley's patrol. I can beat him in an argument, I mean Roy. He's a special chum of mine. My patrol has, now you count them; Artie Van Arlen, Doc. Carson, Grove Bronson, Ed Bronson, Punkin Odell and Wig Weigand and El Sawyer and myself—I mean Billy Simpson."

"And I bet you'd join again if there was a vacant place, now wouldn't you? I bet you're sorry you ever left them."

The question seemed to strike home. It subdued Pee-wee in an instant. He was sitting on the railing and to Brent's surprise he turned his head and looked out across the lake.

"Am I right? Huh?"

He only nodded his head up and down and kept looking away. It was funny how that casual question just caught him and silenced him, as a cloth thrown over its cage will suddenly silence a singing bird. . . .

CHAPTER XXIX
BRENT AND SIMPSON

Brent Gaylong understood Pee-wee, and he understood Temple Camp. The next day, as if by accident, he fell in with Billy Simpson. Gaylong had a kind of genius for falling in with people *by accident*. Billy was scrutinizing a rock along the trail which went up through the woods to the main road.

"Scout signs?" Brent queried.

"Looks like a *turn to left* sign," said Billy, still absorbed in it; "but I don't see any trail to the left, do you?"

"Why don't you get one of the fellows to help you, Simpson? I mean, to show you the trails around here. Any one of them would be glad to. Must be kind of hard, doping things out by yourself."

"I guess that's the way I'm made," said Billy.

"You know, Simp—"

"That's a good name for me, I guess."

"Oh, I didn't mean it that way," said Brent, lifting himself lazily onto a stone wall in a familiar, friendly way. His very manner of doing this encouraged Simpson to do the same.

"You know, Simpson, you can't expect two hundred fellows to run after you. You're only one; you've got to run after them."

"Don't rub it in," said Simpson, "I know I'm not popular."

"You were so enthusiastic that night we were out on the lake," Brent said kindly. "I think the trouble is you don't mix in; you don't let them know what you can do."

"Look at Everson—"

"I know, but Everson did something *big*; he saved a fellow's life. You do something big and they'll fall all over themselves; they'll make a pathway to your door as old somebody-or-other said. That's the short, quick way. Otherwise you just have to mix in."

"Yes," said Billy with a pitiful air of self disgust, "but there are scouts here that don't do anything so very big and they—look at Blakeley."

"I know, Blakeley has personality, he attracts, sort of like a magnet."

"So have you," said Billy.

"Thanks," Brent said.

"Trouble with me is I want to do something big and I don't know how to do it. What you said about little stuff and little scouts sticks in my mind. I know I don't feel at home with them. That isn't my fault, is it?"

"Surely not," said Brent, thoughtfully, as if he were honestly trying to understand this strange, unhappy fellow.

"I just can't hand a trustee a whisk-broom and—you know what I mean. And it's the same with stunts. If I can't do something *big* I won't do anything at all."

"Well, that's the heroic spirit, I suppose," Brent mused, trying to favor Billy and to see his side of the thing.

"Oh, I guess nobody understands," Billy said: disheartened with himself.

"You needn't be afraid to open up with me," said Brent in his whimsical way. "I'm a good target; all you have to do is just shoot. You see I haven't got any talents and things to frighten you away with. . . . What seems to be the trouble, Billy?" he shot out suddenly.

That quick, friendly candor, seeming to invite candor in return, caught Billy Simpson the same as it had caught Pee-wee. You could not get away from old Doctor Gaylong. . . .

"Oh, I don't know," said Billy, despairingly. "I can't understand myself, I suppose. Maybe you'll understand. All alone by myself I can do things—"

"Paddle," Brent reminded him cheerily.

"Yes, and in the presence of a great big crowd I could do something—I wouldn't care if a million people were watching me. If I saw big crowds standing around and they were cheering and all that, I'd forget myself and wouldn't be—"

"Self-conscious? Sure, go on," said Brent.

"I wouldn't be afraid then. I suppose you think I'm crazy, huh? Afraid of a dozen or so fellows and not afraid of a thousand! I can't do anything unless I forget myself. Maybe you'll say I'm just spectacular. I guess I'm morbid. I'm all the time dreaming about being a hero—"

"And meanwhile you don't make friends," Brent said kindly.

"I can't help it, I can't butt in, I just can't."

There followed a pause. Brent felt very sorry for this fellow who could not seem to fall in line with others; who could overcome his shyness and self-consciousness only on some occasion quite out of his reach. Those who dream of being heroes are seldom heroes. Billy did not seem to fit into the scout program or the scout habit. And his undoubted talents were going to waste.

"Will Simpson," drawled Brent, partly to cheer him and partly to come around to the main purpose of the talk, "I'll say this much for you—you're not little. You may be even too big for this crowd. Only you're not having much fun. Anyway, you're no sharpen-the-pencil-for-teacher scout. You're no tie-my-handkerchief-in-a-knot-so-as-not-to-forget-my-good-turn scout, that's sure."

"Thanks," said Billy; "I started out that way but you set me right."

"I'm like a guide-post," laughed Brent; "I point the way but never go there. I wonder whether you'd be interested in a—what you might call a middle class good turn, Simpson? I've got a job lot of good turns I'm trying to dispose of. This one isn't very big, and it isn't very little. It's a little under your size perhaps. What would you think of letting Harris sit in the boat with Bennett in the races? It seems he did that last summer, and he's sort of counting on it. He has an inspiration, it seems; you know he gets those. I guess nobody has told him about you being promised the place. I don't suppose you care two straws about it."

"If I hadn't cared about it I wouldn't have asked," said Billy.

"Good," said Brent, "then that makes the good turn all the gooder. It sort of comes up to your size—"

"I'm not willing to do it," Simpson broke in.

"Oh," said Brent, rather taken aback; "all right, I just thought I'd ask. You're in the kid's patrol, or rather he used to be in your patrol, and I thought maybe you'd be interested in him. He's kind of—kind of an odd number just now. Poor little codger. He's full of troop spirit and he wants to be there when Bennett pulls in. I think Bennett will win, don't you?"

"He's got a kinky side and he works too hard," said Simpson. "He'll win if he doesn't go to pieces."

"Well then, why not let the kid act as ballast? Acting as ballast, you wouldn't exactly call that something *big*, would you? You and I were chatting about good turns and all that sort of stuff; now here's one made to order for you. A middle sized one, that's what I call it. . . . Not interested?"

"Nothing doing," said Simpson.

"Well then, the kid will have to stand on shore. I only thought—he's sort of—sort of—out—"

"Oh yes, I know," said Simpson. "I suppose you think it would be a good thing for me to get out of the Raven Patrol and let him go back in."

"I never thought of that," said Brent, not unkindly but with a little suggestion of disappointment and surprise. "I'd call *that* something really big. Almost too big."

"The largest size made, huh?" said Billy. "Well, you needn't worry, I'm not going to do that just at present. I'm not a quitter."

"Well, there's no hard feeling?" Brent asked, still sorry for him. "If I happen to have a job lot of heroic acts, vast multitude stuff, I'll bring them around and let you look them over. You may find something to fit you."

There was just the faintest note of sarcasm in this last remark, and Billy Simpson realized that he had lost some measure of regard from the only real friend he had in camp.

CHAPTER XXX
THE COMING EVENT

Brent said nothing of his talk with Simpson, but in some mysterious way these things get abroad in a large camp, and it came to be known that Billy Simpson had refused to yield his place in the canoe to Pee-wee. No one would have thought twice about it except for Pee-wee's position and the fact that he was such a universal favorite.

That Simpson should hold Connie Bennett to a casual promise in a matter so trifling caused the camp to look on him with a kind of tolerant contempt. He had never been popular but now he became unpopular. To Brent it seemed that the scout who had wanted to do something big had done something unspeakably small. But he did not say this. The view that most scouts took of it was that it was too small to talk about.

Nor was there time to talk or think about it, for the big event was now close at hand, and the three patrols of the Bridgeboro troop united in the troop cause of keeping the Mary Temple Cup in their own scout circle. "United we stand, divided we sprawl," said Roy Blakeley; "when we race and when we eat we're all one—we're a league of rations."

About the most pathetic sight at Temple Camp was Pee-wee, aroused by this troop spirit, united with his old colleagues in the common cause; shouting, boasting, denouncing, arguing, belittling, extolling, predicting, like the loyal little rooter that he was.

He won the big race twenty times a day, and several times in his dreams each night. He championed even the Silver Foxes, and the Elks, of which Connie Bennett was leader, were the subjects of his unstinted eulogy. There were no patrols now, just the troop, and he was *for* it if not *of* it. He had his camera ready for a close snapshot of Connie if chance should still smile on him and let him sit in that canoe. He made a new pole for the troop pennant which the canoe would carry. He dangled his legs from the springboard and said the red-headed fellow from Ohio didn't stand a chance. His imagination overcame the obstacle of non-membership and he became the voice and spirit of the troop—*his* troop.

"Do you mean to tell me," he demanded, "that they—we—I mean they—can't beat everybody because don't we live in Bridgeboro where there's a river and we all have canoes—except a few that haven't?"

"They're born with paddles in their mouths," said a Virginia scout.

"And oars!" Pee-wee shouted.

It went to Brent Gaylong's heart to see Pee-wee trudging down from the Ravens' cabin at night to go to bed in the pavilion dormitory. He might have stayed on cabin hill but only one full patrol could bunk in a cabin. Pee-wee never questioned the camp rules or the rules of the scout organization. "Gee whiz, they're good rules all right," he said. And he never overstepped the privilege of a non-member. That was the pathetic part of it. He watched them wistfully when they voted, contented, happy, just to be among them.

Just in proportion as he made a pathetic picture, just in that same proportion did Billy Simpson become more and more an object of tolerant contempt. If he had made the little sacrifice in the matter of the canoe it would not have been so bad, but now they were ready enough to think ill of him, reasonably or not. And often their dislike was without reason, for indeed he was as much a member of the Raven Patrol as any other Raven was.

If there was any criticism in that matter Artie Van Arlen should have borne it. It is only fair to Artie to say that from the day he summoned Billy Simpson from Bridgeboro, he was friendly to him, and fair to him, and seemed to believe in him. He did not study him, as Brent might have done, because it was not given to him to do that. But he treated him with a wholesome cheerfulness and with the same fraternal air which characterized his demeanor toward all. If he was disappointed he did not say so. If he had expected Billy to bring honors, merit badges, to the patrol he renounced that hope amiably. He was a pretty good all-around sort of a fellow, was Artie.

The camp assistant, young Mr. Slade, spoke to him one day. "You know, Van, this is an impossible situation," said he; "Pee-wee's a Raven. You're taking liberties with nature, you fellows are."

"It can't be helped now," said Artie; "besides I'm not worrying and I'll tell you why. Do you want to know?"

"Go ahead, shoot."

"Pee-wee doesn't belong to the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts of America belong to Pee-wee. Just wait till he gets back home. You're not afraid he's going to drift away, are you?"

"Well, it knocks me clean to see him," said Slade.

"You and old Doc. Gaylong ought to camp under a weeping willow, you're so tender-hearted. How about the race?"

"Nothing about it," said Slade; "except everything's ready, and Connie Bennett is going to win it."

"Sure thing?"

"That's what Pee-wee says," said Tom. "He says we've won it already."

"Well, to-morrow's the day," said Artie cheerily. "Pee-wee says if the cup gets away from *us*, he'll never look Mary Temple in the face again. But

he’ll accept an ice cream soda from her.”

CHAPTER XXXI
THE SAND-BAG

The regatta was always the big event of the season at Temple Camp. Pee-wee always had to suck lemon drops for several days succeeding it to ease the huskiness in his throat. Sometimes he continued sucking them for several weeks, for a scout is nothing if not thorough.

The institution of the regatta (and the lemon drops) dated from the season when pretty Mary Temple, daughter of the camp's founder, had offered the silver cup. A Rhode Island troop had won it, then it had passed to a Pennsylvania troop, and then to the Bridgeboro Troop. The Bridgeboro scouts took a particular pride in keeping it because Bridgeboro was the home town of the Temples.

Each troop chose its challenger or defender by its own process of selection, paying a certain regard to the claims of its patrols. Naturally the merit badge for Athletics, or for Physical Development, or for Seamanship, would imply eligibility for the honor of challenger or defender. And these things counted in the selection.

Particularly had they counted in the selection of Connie Bennett of the Elk Patrol for defender. How much they really counted in a race was another question. Also, as in the selection of a presidential candidate the claims of the states have to be considered, so in this business the patrols had to be considered, and it was now considered to be the Elk Patrol's turn. Thus Connie Bennett had been put forward.

There was no complaint about this and no anxiety, but there was just a little undercurrent of feeling (which Pee-wee could not browbeat out of the troop's mind) that the cup was not *quite* so secure upon its little velvet box as they could wish it to be.

A course was marked around the lake by long poles driven in about fifteen to eighteen feet from shore. Some of them had to be pretty long to reach the bottom. They were saved from year to year. A heavy cord was carried around the lake caught at each of these poles and from this cord hung troop and patrol pennants at intervals all the way round. The whole thing made a very festive and inspiring sight. The cup race (always a canoe event because Mary Temple thought that canoes were scoutish, being of Indian origin) consisted of one complete round of the lake. There were other races of course; comic events, tub races and the like.

I wish to tell you of this thing just as it occurred for it is talked of at Temple Camp whenever scouts get around a camp-fire. And in a sense it has never been fully explained.

Mary Temple, with her parents, came up from Bridgeboro by auto, reaching camp early in the afternoon. They received an ovation as usual. Mary was exceedingly pretty and looked the more so because of the color which the breeze had blown into her cheeks. She reached down out of the car and shook hands merrily with Connie Bennett and handed Pee-wee an enormous box of peanut brittle, which caused much laughter.

"Oh, I know you, too," she said, reaching out her hand to Billy Simpson who lingered in the background. "I often see you in Bridgeboro."

Billy Simpson seemed greatly embarrassed, and he never looked quite so much alone as he did then, for all the clamor ceased as she shook his hand, and the throng fell back silent. There was nothing intentional in this; it just happened that way. But one or two scouts noticed that Simpson was more perturbed and shy than the very commonplace little incident seemed to warrant. He just stared at Mary Temple and did not take his eyes from her. Brent Gaylong said afterward that there was something in his eyes, he did not know what, but that he seemed like one possessed. . . .

He was not seen again until the time of his destiny. A tub race took place, a graceful affair in which all the participants fell in the water. This was followed by a swimming race, and a couple of boat races. Next followed a race of several canoes. And then the event of the day.

The scout who had wriggled his way to the position of challenger was a red-headed fellow from the Middle West. Pee-wee loathed him for no other reason than that he dared to try for the cup.

He was lithe and slender, and had a rather attractive way of holding his head. He looked the young athlete through and through and there was a kind of aggressiveness about him such as to disconcert an opponent. His troop seemed very proud of him. He did not show off exactly, but his manner was such as to make one think he took his victory for granted. A little deference to his opponents would have been more becoming. Having seated himself in his canoe and his companion being seated also, he waited at the float with a blasé air of patience as if he were anxious to get the thing over with.

This cut and dried assurance was in marked contrast with Connie's demeanor, which was modest and painfully nervous. The throng, gathered about the float and alongshore for many yards on either side, cheered as he stepped into his canoe and nervously accepted the paddle that was handed him.

A silent, solitary figure in a black sweater stood upon the float near Mr. Currie, the starter. He gazed out across the lake, seeming very nervous. He

seemed to be trying to concentrate his eyes and thoughts on something quite removed from the scene about him. One might have fancied something exalted, spiritual, in his aspect, but the coarse, black sweater and rather hulking shoulders, spoiled that.

"This your sand-bag?" Mr. Currie asked. He meant nothing disrespectful. It was just the name used for the one going to steady the canoe. But there was a tittering here and there in the crowd as the figure in the black sweater stepped into the bow of Connie's light, bobbing little craft and sat hunched up there.

No one thought of him again. They were thinking of pleasanter things. . . .

CHAPTER XXXII
SOMETHING BIG

The two canoes glided forward abreast. It was a good start. A chorus of cheers went up from the crowd near the float and was taken up by the groups which dotted the shore for the distance of half way round the lake.

The inner side of the course was lined with canoes and rowboats, and even Pee-wee's ship, the *Hop-toad*, had been dislodged and floated to the cord line and anchored. A group of scouts upon it cheered themselves hoarse. Goldenrod Cove was filled with canoes. But the preferable stand was at the float where the race began and would end. Here a great throng waited, and on its outskirts scouts sprawled upon the grass, perched upon the roofs of shacks, and crowded on the diving-board till it almost broke with their weight. Here the judges waited. Here the string was stretched low across the course to be snapped asunder by the gliding bow of the victor. Across the course, at intervals, scout officials rested on their oars and waited, watchful for violations of the rules.

The green canoe of the red-headed scout crept ahead a yard—two yards—three yards. Connie strained every muscle and, in his apprehension as the distance between the canoes widened, he fell to using shorter strokes. The shorter stroke seems to keep time with the beating heart; it looks like speed and feels like speed; it is *hustling*. It is hard for the amateur to believe that calmness and the long, mechanically steady stroke, are the only things to depend on.

"Make your stroke longer, not shorter whatever you do," said Simpson.

"I'll take care of it," said Connie, breathing heavily.

Simpson caught the rebuke and sat silent, watching apprehensively. Connie seemed to think that his speed would be proportioned to his frantic exertion and he was surprised to see the distance between the two canoes widening. His spectacular efforts were received with applause for *action* is what the multitude likes, and that strengthened Connie's confidence in his method, which was no method at all. He gained a little (for a spurt will always accomplish that) but he lost in fatigue what he gained in distance.

"Don't look at him," Simpson pled anxiously. "It would be better if you were rowing, then you couldn't see him. Bend way forward, reach out your lower hand—"

"Who's doing this?" Connie panted. "Don't—don't—don't—don't you—you—know what you're—you're here for?"

The look of hurt pride on Simpson's face turned to one of grim disgust and accusation. He saw the green canoe a couple of lengths ahead, and saw flags waving, heard the deafening cheers all about him. He was not shy or fearful now.

"Can't you guess what I'm here for?" he said, between his teeth. "*It's so that the kid's troop will win.* It's because I *knew* you'd go to pieces. Don't look at the crowd, you fool! Bend forward—far—"

"I—I can't," Connie panted, releasing one hand long enough to press his side. The fatal kink had come, as it is pretty sure to do in erratic striving combined with frantic fear and excitement.

"Shall I take it?" he heard.

"*You?*" he said, surprised. "You can't—anyway—it—it—wouldn't be a race—they'd—they'd—"

In a sudden, abandoned frenzy of striving, Connie brought his canoe within a length of the other. In its way it was a feat, but it spent his last ounce of energy and left his side hurting as if he had been stabbed. Encouraged by the cheering he drove his paddle into the water with a vertical force that eased his panic fears, but had no effect upon his progress. The canoe seemed to halt and jerk like a balky horse.

Now he heard the deafening cheers as in a kind of trance.

"Walk away from him, Red!"

"You're losing him! Keep it up!"

"Step on it, Red!"

"Give her the gas!"

"Let her out, Red!"

"*Oh boy*, watch him step!"

"All over but the shouting!"

Not quite, oh crowd. As Connie Bennett's hand left the paddle to press his agonized side, he felt another gently take it from him. What next happened he felt rather than saw. He heard deafening cheers interspersed with cries of "*No fair!*" And then derisive shouts and cat calls. He felt the right side of the canoe dip until his trembling hand which grasped the gunwale felt the cooling touch of the water.

He was conscious of a form crawling past him. He heard a voice, hoarse and tense it seemed, urging him to move forward. It all happened as in a vision. The shouting, the cries of surprise and derision, sounded far away, like echoes.

He was better now, but his heart was thumping; he had almost fainted. He saw a rowboat with an official pennant very near. He saw canoes across the course line. He saw Billy Simpson in the stern of the canoe; not sitting, not kneeling, but sort of crouching. He looked strange, different. . . .

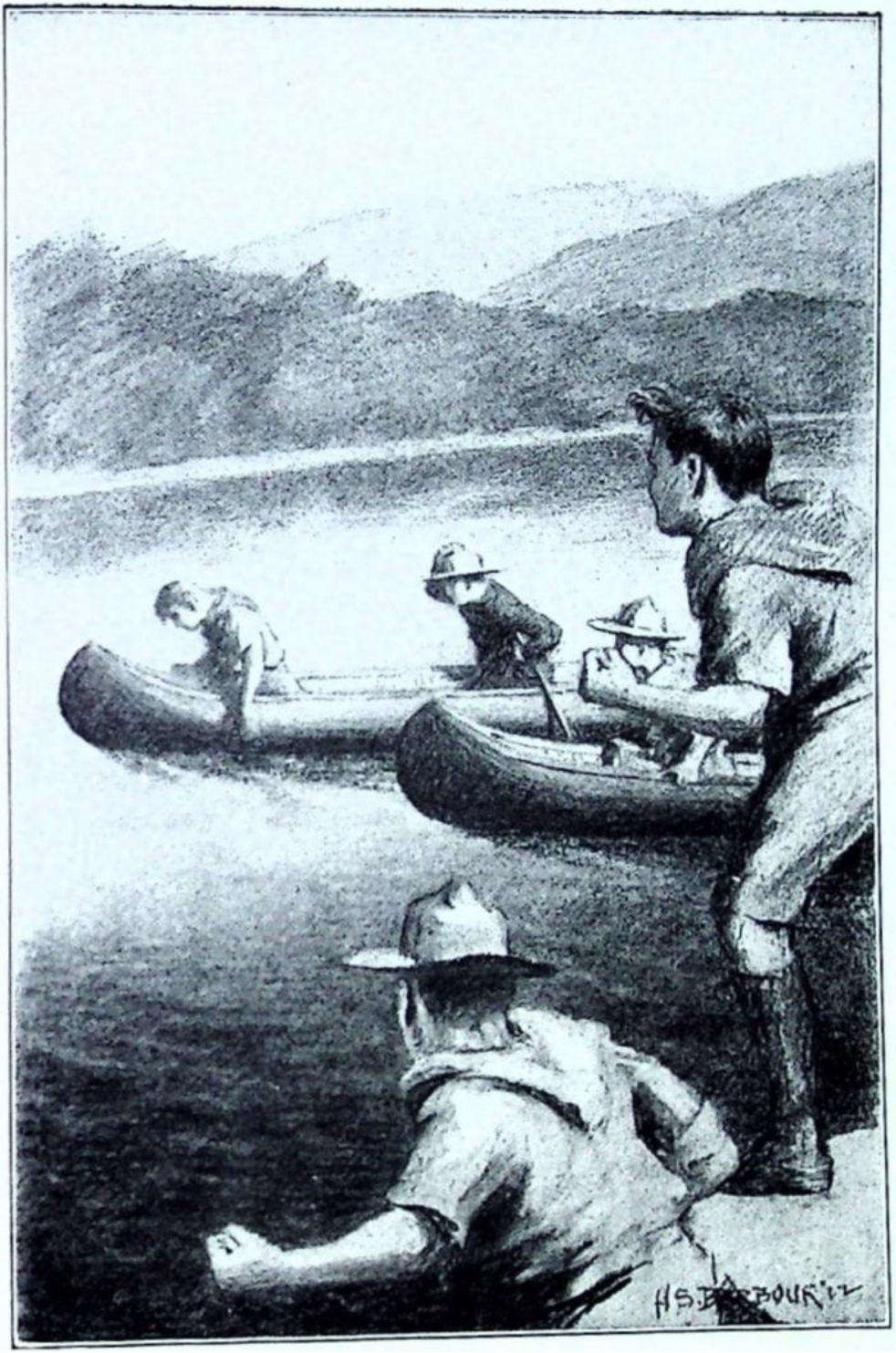
“You can’t do that,” the man in the rowboat said.

“Let’s finish anyway,” said Simpson; “I’ll take a handicap that will shut their mouths. After that if they want to call it off, let them do it.”

He had already grasped the paddle in a strange fashion; his left arm seemed to be wound around it and his elbow acted as a sort of brace. The other hand he held above his head, grasping his hat (the ordinary scout hat) so that all might see. The shorter reach which this one handed paddling enforced was made up by the lightning movement of his body back and forth in the canoe. For a moment the crowd laughed in derision. But as the white canoe of the Bridgeboro Troop shot forward, those who hooted paused in gaping amazement.

Now his bow was close upon his rival’s stern. Now it was abreast of the red-headed figure. Now past it, and clear of the green bow.

The red-headed scout was too proud to complain of a one-armed rival. And his troop comrades could not see him sheltered by any rule or custom in the face of such a phenomenal display.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BILLY SIMPSON WON THE RACE WHILE PADDLING WITH ONE HAND.
Pee-wee Harris in Camp. Page 197

Steadily, steadily, the white canoe glided forward. The reach of the red-headed paddler was extended. But he could not vie with that human shuttle which worked with the monotonous steadiness of machinery. He seemed disconcerted by the mere dull regularity of that relentless engine just ahead of him.

They came in sight of the float two lengths apart. The distance increased to three lengths. The crowd went wild with excitement. Amid a perfect panic of yells including weird calls of every patrol in camp, the white canoe swept abreast of the float, snapped the cord and danced along to the curving shore beyond the finish.

It was in that moment of tumult and clamor, amid the waving of flags and scarfs, and a medley of patrol calls which made the neighborhood seem like a jungle, that Pee-wee Harris, forgetting himself entirely, hurled piece after piece of peanut brittle after the receding victor, which action he later regretted and dived here and there to recover these tribute missiles. But alas, they were gone forever.

CHAPTER XXXIII
AND SOMETHING BIGGER

But the Mary Temple cup was safe upon its little velvet pedestal.

There was only one name upon the lips of all, now. But he heard the shouts only in a sort of trance. He heard his name called, and it sounded strange to him to hear *his* name—Billy Simpson—shrieked by the multitude. It sounded like a different name, somehow. He could not face them—no, he could not do that. And no one saw him.

No one saw him as he crept up through the bushes far from the screaming, howling, clamorous, worshipping crowd. No one saw him as he sped around the edge of camp and past Outpost Cabin where his own name echoed against the dead, log walls. *His own name!* No one saw him as he climbed up through the woods to Cabin Hill. Yes, one person saw him. A tenderfoot scout who thought more of some bobolink or other than of the race, saw him. He was gazing up into the tree, a small lonely figure, when the victor, the hero, sped by. It seemed to him that the fleeing figure spoke to him; anyway, it spoke.

"Tell her—tell her I couldn't have done it if she hadn't been watching me."

The tenderfoot scout did not know whom he was speaking of, so no one was ever told anything. He thought the fleeing figure in the black sweater might be a thief.

Reaching the Ravens' cabin, the victor paused just a second, and listened to the spent sound of the cheering down at the shore. Then he fell to ransacking his suitcase for a writing tablet. He had no duffel bag, for you see he was only a new scout. He had come hastily, with heart beating high.

Upon his writing tablet he scrawled a few lines, and left the whole tablet, with a stone for a weight, upon the stump outside. He had stood by that stump when he had taken the scout oath. His one frantic fear was that Brent Gaylong would amble along and show him that what he was going to do was all wrong; call him a quitter.

A sound! No—yes! No, it was only the breeze in the quiet trees.

He gathered together his few poor belongings, then paused for a last glimpse at the note.

> Tell Gaylong I don't bother with little things. Tell Pee-wee Harris the cup is safe till next summer anyway. Tell him his place

is open in the patrol because I'm through. He knows what fixing means, because he's a fixer. So tell him I fixed it. He's the best little scout that ever was—*he's my idea of a scout*.

Then he was gone. He hurried up through the woods and waited for the bus. He had to carry his suitcase continuously in his right hand, because his left hand and arm were nearly numb. The driver had to help him up into the bus, he was so stiff and lame.

As he sat in the seat, nursing his stinging hand, and saw the beautiful Catskill country, the wide fields where the men were cutting hay, the woods through which the scout trails ran, the distant smoke arising from the cooking shack at Temple Camp, the whole episode of his coming, of his triumph and of his going away seemed like happenings in a wonderful dream. . . .

THE END

Would you like to know what became of the good friends you have made in this book?

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PEE-WEE HARRIS FIXER
PEE-WEE HARRIS: AS GOOD AS HIS WORD
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TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.
[The end of *Pee-Wee Harris in Camp* by Percy Keese Fitzhugh]