PEE-WEE HARRIS F.O.B. BRIDGEBORO

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PEE-WEE REACHED OUT A LEG TO GET A FOOT HOLD.

PEE-WEE HARRIS F. O. B. BRIDGEBORO

BY
PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

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

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CHAPTER I
THE ONLY ORIGINAL

It was often observed by Roy Blakeley that whenever Pee-wee opened his mouth he put his foot in it. Unquestionably he put *something* in it on a very large percentage of the occasions when it was open, and there is no denying that it was open a great deal of the time; probably a hundred and twenty per cent of the time.

There was probably nothing about Pee-wee which he opened as often as his mouth, unless it was his scout handbook. And on one occasion when he opened his scout handbook, he put his foot in it with a vengeance. And thereby hangs a tale. There can be no doubt that Pee-wee knew all about scouting—oh *everything*. But the trouble was that he did not know all about scouts. And this was his undoing.

It is a harrowing story with a frightful ending. Scouts right and left died—laughing. As one of the girls connected with it said, “it was just killing.”

The story, as I shall relate it, begins with Pee-wee sitting on the railing of his porch, reading his scout handbook. He was glancing over the hints on camping, for he and Townsend Ripley were going to Temple Camp in Townsend’s flivver and although they would probably be not more than two or three days making the trip, Pee-wee intended to carry a commissary which would hold out for several weeks. He was not going to run any risk of being stranded in the desert wastes of Ulster County without supplies.

Pee-wee was now the “feature” of the new Alligator Patrol, of which Townsend Ripley was patrol leader. But in a certain sense it might be said that the new Alligator Patrol was a part of Pee-wee. It was just as much a part of him as his voice and his appetite, and these were certainly parts of him.

In a broad sense, it cannot be said that Pee-wee was *in* anything (unless it was the apple barrel in the cellar). Things were in Pee-wee, all sorts of things, patrols, troops, ideas, everything. He consumed everything that he touched. Even the Boy Scouts of America was a part of Pee-wee.

Pee-wee had deserted the Ravens of the First Bridgeboro Troop for the purpose of organizing a new patrol. That was at Temple Camp and he had organized the Pollywogs, consisting of two members who for a while submitted to his autocratic sway. But the Pollywogs became frogs and hopped away. There was too much coming and going at Temple Camp for permanent organization.

Returning to the more stable population of his own town, Pee-wee had

formed the Alligators and, like the true dictator that he was, had made Townsend Ripley patrol leader. But the power behind the throne was Scout Harris.

Shortly after the formation of the Alligator Patrol (which was intended to form the nucleus of a new Boy Scouts of America) it was annexed (in defiance of international law) to the First Bridgeboro Troop and thus came under the wise and kindly supervision of Mr. Ellsworth, scoutmaster of that familiar and lively troop.

With four patrols, Ravens, Silver Foxes, Elks and Alligators, Mr. Ellsworth, that never-tiring friend of scouting, had his hands full. In the new patrol was little Joe McKinny, alias Keekie Joe of Barrel Alley, so really Mr. Ellsworth's hands were more than full, they were overflowing.

When school closed the entire troop excepting Pee-wee and Townsend Ripley went to Temple Camp in the Catskills. The reason why Townsend deferred his going was because his parents intended shortly to go to Orange Lake, near Newburgh, to spend the summer and wished Townsend to drive them there in the flivver.

He intended then to motor on to Temple Camp, which, as all friends of the Bridgeboro boys know, is situated among the mountains five or six miles in from Catskill Landing. Pee-wee, who loved everything, above all things loved motoring, and he had lingered behind to accompany Townsend and, as he said, "show him the right way."

"You have our sympathy," Roy Blakeley of the Silver Foxes had said to the leader of the new patrol.

"That's all right," Townsend had said; "the flivver makes lots of noise and will drown his voice. Don't worry about me, I'm all right. We'll come rattling up to camp in a few days."

"Maybe we'll be there in two days," Pee-wee had shouted.

"Don't hurry," Roy had answered.

"Maybe we'll be there by Saturday," Pee-wee had announced in a voice of thunder.

"Any time you're passing we'd be glad to see you—pass," Roy had said.

"Drop in some time when you're at the lake," Connie Bennett had remarked.

And so they had gone and Pee-wee had spent three rather lonesome days waiting for Townsend's parents to get ready to go to Orange Lake. It was during that time that he had his great inspiration.

Pee-wee had had many inspirations; they seemed to grow wild in his brain. But this was by far the greatest one of all. And it furnished an example of how great events may flow from trifling causes. For this world catastrophe started with a gum-drop. When that fateful gum-drop hit the pavement in front of Pee-

wee’s porch, it was like the famous shot at the battle of Concord, which is said to have been heard around the world.

If, with that gum-drop (several years before), Pee-wee had hit the Grand Duke of Servia plunk in the eye, the universal conflagration could hardly have been greater than it was in this momentous summer, the events of which are now faithfully to be related.

CHAPTER II
THE FATEFUL GUM-DROP

Pee-wee sat upon the railing of the porch reading the handbook and eating gum-drops. The particular gum-drop with which we are conceived was black, symbolic of the dark cloud which overhung Pee-wee. He wore his negligee scout attire. His scout hat was on the back of his head exposing his curly hair.

Upon his round countenance was the well-known scowl which was partly the result of his deep schemings and cogitations and partly the result of his defensive attitude toward the troop, and toward Roy Blakeley in particular. It was not the scowl of ill nature. Rather was it the scowl of a hero. It seemed to say, “Come on, you bunch of jolliers, I can handle you!” It was a scowl that no artist could paint. It was a tremendous scowl to be worn by such a small boy, and it was said in the troop that this was the cause of his being top-heavy and falling off roofs and fences, and diving into cracker jars and provision barrels. Certain it is that wherever Pee-wee went, he went head first.

It may have been because his left stocking was afraid of his scowl that it always shrank from it, pursuing a downward course, and the act of pulling up his stocking had become second nature to Pee-wee, so that he did it instinctively whenever he started or stopped, whether it was necessary or not.

He traveled in two directions, horizontally and vertically. When he traveled horizontally he usually went scout pace. And when he went up in the air (which he did on an average of a hundred times a day) he traveled by means of his voice, which was of such volume as to strike terror. With the exception of the inside of his head, the parts of him which were most crowded to capacity were his pockets. To say that his brain was like an attic would be doing it an injustice. Rather was it like a rummage sale or like San Francisco after the earthquake.

There is no word in the English language suitable to describe Pee-wee’s appetite. Though he carried bananas stuck in his belt like cartridges and was usually provisioned with innumerable cookies, it cannot be said that he ate between meals, since his life consisted of one continuous meal. But he scrupulously observed one intermission from eating and that was the time spent in sleeping. Ingenious though he was, and full of inspirations, he had never hit on an idea for sleeping and eating at the same time.

When Pee-wee stood upon the ground he was exactly four feet and three-sixteenths of an inch high, but when he went up in the air his greatness baffles description. When in scout negligee he always wore his sleeves rolled up

which somehow bespoke his terrible combativeness. When he wore his jacket a score of merit badges were displayed instead of his bare arms. These were interspersed with campaign and advertising buttons. Upon the front of his scout hat was a lone button as large as a fifty-cent piece, advising the beholder to use *Rizeman's Yeast*. Perhaps this was the secret of Pee-wee's going up in the air so readily.

Need I conclude this faithful description by saying that Pee-wee was an all-around scout of the first class? When he held up his right hand with the three middle fingers extended, they reminded him of the three helpings of dessert which he often had at Temple Camp, and he remembered the twelve good scout laws because they were an even dozen like ten cents' worth of licorice jawbreakers.

So there he sat upon the railing of his porch looking over the camping hints in the scout handbook and eating gum-drops. Suddenly he dropped a gum-drop, a black one, and as he slid down from the railing in quest of it in the flower-bed below, his handbook slipped out of his other hand and fell among the bushes.

He first recovered the black gum-drop, and having dusted it off, placed it where it would never again go down except inside him. Then he lifted the handbook and casually noticed that it had fallen open at pages four hundred and four and four hundred and five. These were in the section describing scout games, and, as Pee-wee glanced half-interestedly at the headings, his idle gaze was arrested by a particular heading and he read the paragraph which followed it:

RELAY RACE

> One patrol pitted against another to see who can get a message sent a long distance in shortest time by means of relay of runners (or cyclists). The patrol is ordered out to send in three successive notes or tokens (such as sprigs of certain plants) from a point, say, two miles distant or more. The leader in taking his patrol out to the spot drops scouts at convenient distances, who will then act as runners from one post to the next and back. If relays are posted in pairs, messages can be passed both ways.

Suddenly, with a wild hallo, he announced to the world at large, "*I've got an inspiration! I've got an inspiration!* I'm glad I dropped that gum-drop, because I've got an inspiration! I know what I'm going to do! I've got a peach of an idea! *Oh, boy*, I know what I'm going to do!"

He did not know what he was going to do, far from it. But he knew what he

thought he was going to do.

“I’m going to—I’m going to start something!” he said in the full exuberance of his new idea.

Never in all his life did Scout Harris, Alligator, formerly Raven and Pollywog, say a truer word. He was certainly going to start something.

CHAPTER III
ANOTHER INSPIRATION

"Now I know who I'll have for a good turn guest! I'll have somebody I don't know!" Pee-wee shouted, entering the house.

"Is that you, Walter?" his mother called downstairs.

"It's me, and I've got an inspiration," Pee-wee shouted. "Where's the duffel bag and things that were here in the hall?"

"Did you shut the screen door?" his mother called.

"Where's the stuff I laid here?" Pee-wee demanded excitedly. "I left it here ready so as—

"Did you shut the screen door, Walter?"

"No,—because there's a fly inside and I want him to get out. Where's my camping stuff that I left in the hall?"

"It's near your father's golf sticks, under the hall table. Be sure to wipe your feet."

"Are there any more cookies?"

"Not unless you left some. Have you closed the screen door?"

"Sure, do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to start a relay race to Temple Camp and the last feller'll be my good turn guest. I want the map that's in the coffee-pot in the duffel bag. I got the idea from a licorice gum-drop that fell down where the pansies are—"

"I hope you didn't eat it," Mrs. Harris called.

"Don't you know a scout isn't supposed to waste anything?" Pee-wee shot back.

"Well, then I think he shouldn't waste his time packing up his things and then pulling them all to pieces again," said his mother gently, as she appeared at the head of the stairs. The occasion seemed so momentous to Pee-wee that Mrs. Harris could not refrain from surveying the tumultuous proceedings from the top landing of the stairs. "You're going to get all over-heated about nothing, Walter," she said gently. "Why don't you sit down and read a book?"

"You stick up for the handbook, don't you?" Pee-wee demanded. "Well, that's where I got it, *so there*! I put my road map in the coffee-pot, now where is it?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Walter, but I wish you'd be careful of your father's straw hat. Put the rug down at the corner where you kicked it up and do try not to get so excited." She gazed ruefully down at the litter at the foot of the stairs, where saucepan, shirts, belt-axe, fishing tackle, semaphore flags and every

variety of preserved edibles lay in utter chaos. “Pull that can of salmon out from under the hat-rack, Walter, before you forget it. And get that can of evaporated milk that has rolled into the parlor; I can see it under the piano. And close the screen door tight; how many times have I told you—”

“It isn’t in the coffee-pot,” shouted Pee-wee; “there’s nothing there but the mosquito dope and the ink—”

“You shouldn’t put bottles like that in the coffee-pot, Walter. Suppose they should break—why, the ink might get into the coffee.”

“Lots of people like black coffee,” Pee-wee shouted, hurling things right and left and suddenly pouncing on the elusive map.

“Have you got it?” called his despairing mother.

“Yop.”

“Where was it?”

“I never thought I’d need it, that’s why,” said Pee-wee abstractedly, as he unfolded the map in high excitement. “I forgot I put it there.”

“Where did you put it?”

“It was rolled up in the sweater.”

“The sweater I told you to wear every night at camp? And you expected never to unfold—”

“*Oh, look; oh, look; oh, look!* Westwood’s the first place north!” Pee-wee shouted. “It’s about ten miles, and that’s just right—”

“Walter, you’re not going to walk to Westwood,” said Mrs. Harris, descending bravely into the arena. “I don’t know what your plans are but you’re not going to walk to Westwood. And you’re going to pack these things all up again before you leave the house. Do you think I want the hall stand looking like a grocery store?”

“I’ll pack them up when I get back,” Pee-wee replied.

“No, you’ll pack them up again now and you’ll pick up that great slice of greasy bacon from the rug. The idea of putting that in a shoe box! I want—”

“Listen! Listen!” said Pee-wee, munching a fig which had fallen out of an empty compartment of his writing case. “I’ve got a dandy argument—listen, I—”

“Don’t talk with your mouth full, Walter.”

“Listen, you want me to remember to wear the sweater every night, don’t you? Don’t you? You said you did, so don’t you?”

“I want you to pick up—”

“I tell you what I’ll do,” Pee-wee vociferated. “The thing that I like best here is doughnuts, isn’t it? You admit I like doughnuts best, don’t you? You said I could ask Martha—”

“I never told Martha to give you a whole pail full of them; why they’ll be all stale—”

“Listen,” said Pee-wee. “I’ll take them out of the pail and wrap them up in the sweater and every time I want one, I’ll have to go to the sweater and gee whiz, that means about every hour, you ask Townsend when he comes, and besides I always—*always*—eat one right after supper at night, so I’ll have to go to the sweater, won’t I? And that’ll remind me to put it on, won’t it? So now can I go to Westwood?”

“What do you want to go to Westwood for, Walter?”

“Listen, I’ll tell you, it’s a dandy idea.”

CHAPTER IV
THE CARLSON-BATES MEMORIAL

When Pee-wee spoke about his good turn guest he referred to a sort of small bank balance which he had standing to his credit up at Temple Camp.

Once upon a time there was a tragedy at Temple Camp; a scout lost his life in trying to save the life of a comrade. Both went down in the shadowy waters of a lake. They had both come from the same town; in fact, had been members of the same troop. The fathers of these two scouts resolved to perpetuate their memories at the camp by an appropriate memorial which should exemplify at once the idea of heroism and of comradeship. Temple Camp was full of endowments of various sorts; special privileges could not be bought but could be won. Heroism bore interest at Temple Camp.

But there was something peculiarly gentle in the idea underlying this Carlson-Bates Memorial. For it perpetuated not only the strong quality of heroism but the gentler quality of friendship. And this quality of friendship was insisted upon. It was quaint and unique because it was a living memorial. The memory of those two who had gone was ever perpetuated by the scouts themselves in a continuous exemplification of scout comradeship.

The actual monument itself was simple enough. It was a little rustic cabin in a quiet grove, removed from the turmoil of the camp. Birds sang in the trees about it and squirrels poked their inquisitive eyes in and about its interior, sometimes even availing themselves, uninvited, of its open hospitality.

Within its one rustic apartment were two comfortable bunks, a tiny library with *Carlson-Bates Memorial* stamped on every book, a rough writing table, a cupboard for provisions, and even a fireplace of field stones, with two primitive high-backed chairs facing it. These looked as if they might have belonged to Daniel Boone.

Flanking this rough fireplace were pictures framed in unbarked wood, one on either side, of Horace Bates and Danny Carlson, scouts who had gone down together in Black Lake.

In both of these portraits the boys seemed to be looking straight at the beholder, and it was customary when showing a visitor over this tiny, hallowed reservation, to ask him to guess which of the two pictures was that of the would-be rescuer. There was nothing on either picture or anywhere else about the spot which hinted at this, for the place was as much a memorial to friendship as to heroism. Outside was another rough fireplace, also built of field stone, and intended for cooking.

The Carlson-Bates Memorial was everything that a rustic abode for two scouts should be. Money had not been spared to make it so, but care had been taken that the power of money should not overstep itself by making the place pretentious and modern. Over the fireplace, between the portraits, was a rough-hewn board in which were burned the familiar words which had a certain pathos there, TWO'S A COMPANY. On the center table were writing paper and envelopes, appropriately coarse and ragged on the edges, bearing the heading:

CARLSON-BATES MEMORIAL
TEMPLE CAMP

Two's a Company

Down at camp there was a rough sign on one of the trees with an arrow pointing; TO CARLSON-BATES MEMORIAL, it read. You followed a beaten path up through the woods, across a little brook, to a spot as dim and solemn and remote as any hermit's cave. And there you were. Visitors, whose casual expectations had pictured a marble monument, were wont to pause in silent astonishment on reaching the spot. Girls usually said they could live there for the rest of their lives.

Tom Slade, camp assistant, who usually took visitors to the quaint little outpost, would snap his fingers at the squirrels and whistle at the birds while the others gazed about captivated and enraptured. Sometimes a squirrel would scurry up his khaki trousers and perch upon his shoulder and he would tease it with some morsel or other while he answered questions.

"Is it ever occupied?" visitors would ask.

"Oh yes, sometimes, but a scout has got to go some to win the privilege," Tom would answer. Then to the squirrel he would say in his offhand way, "How 'bout that, Pete?"

"And does he live here all alone?" they would ask.

"No, he can invite a friend to stay all summer with him here. Can't he, Pete? Two's a company, read that? Only the friend must be some one who isn't at camp. Pete usually steals all their food from them. Don't you, Pete?"

"And which is the one who tried to rescue the other?" would be another query as the visitor gazed about.

"You're not supposed to ask that," Tom would laugh.

"But it *must* be *known*," a girl was almost sure to ask.

"Oh, it's known," Tom would say. "Danny, that one on the left, he was the boy. But they were friends, that's the point, hey, Pete?" he would inquire of the squirrel.

“It isn’t true that the place is haunted, is it?” was another question. “That colored cook you have says their ghosts come here in the dead of night.”

“Chocolate Drop?” Tom would smile. “Oh, you’re likely to hear all sorts of things from him.”

On the way back through the woods, Tom would usually be more communicative. “You know scouts have to do good turns, don’t you? Well, if any scout does six good turns, *big ones*, that are passed on by the trustees, he can live there for the rest of the summer and invite one other boy to spend the summer there with him. See? Provisions for two are sent up from cooking shack—the kids have no expenses. You see it’s a memorial of one great big good turn that didn’t work out, and of the friendship those two fellows had for each other.

“Let’s see, this summer it wasn’t occupied at all. Last summer a scout from Boston was up there and he invited a poor little shaver from his home town to share it with him. They lived on beans, those two. Did their own cooking mostly. Summer before that, let’s see—nobody. You see a scout has got to put over six big ones, then after that he’s got to be a *friend to one particular* fellow. He has to be host. Pretty good idea, huh? Private cabin, stationery, all primeval inconveniences, and everybody coming up with kodaks to take their pictures.”

“Oh, I should think it would be *bliss* living there,” one girl remarked after a visit to the hallowed spot, “and the idea of two’s a company, I think that’s just *wonderful*.”

“That’s the idea,” said Tom as they followed the trail down.

“Friendship means just two, don’t you think?” the girl asked, edging her way into a line of talk which girls delight in. “Just two, alone, together. Isn’t the idea *sweet*? *Friendship!*”

“That’s the dope,” said Tom.

“And is any one going to live there next summer?”

“Oh goodness, yes,” laughed Tom; “very muchly. I suppose I ought to be very proud, he’s a scout from my own home town in New Jersey.”

“Isn’t that *wonderful*! And he did six *heroic deeds*?”

“Good turns,” said Tom; “real ones. He specializes on those. He eats them raw.”

“Oh, and who is he going to invite up?”

“Now you’ve got me,” said Tom. “All I know is he sprang six stunts and went home with the Carlson-Bates certificate. He can invite whoever he pleases. He usually blows in about the Fourth of July; he goes off on the Fourth, they say home in Bridgeboro.”

“I should think you *would* be proud,” the girl said. “Is he tall?”

“Tall? Oh yes, he’s about six feet three inches or three feet six inches, I

forget which. But he’s a great hero, in fact, he’s eight or ten heroes.”

“I never know whether to believe you or not,” the girl said. “Will you tell me his name?”

“Positively,” said Tom. “His name is Harris—Walter Harris.”

“Oh, how proud he must be,” said the girl. “Just to think how he’ll live up there all alone with some poor—oh, I think it’s *wonderful*. And his summer will be consecrated to friendship. Do you know how I picture him? I picture him as tall, and—and—sort of slender and athletic. Not exactly dignified but—you know—kind of quiet and reserved. Like a—oh, you know what I mean—like a—kind of *aloof* and *silent*. That’s the word—*aloof*. I picture him as being *different* from other boys. Isolated.”

“Oh, he’s different,” said Tom.

CHAPTER V
CHAOS AND CONFUSION

It was ten months after the conversation just recorded and the momentous summer had come around, when our hero, so tall, slender, athletic and silent, sprawled on the parlor floor near the front hall and squirmed in heroic contortions in his endeavor to reach a can of spaghetti which he had supposed was under the Victrola cabinet.

"It isn't there," he said; "I had two cans; where's the other one?"

"I don't know, Walter," the hero's mother was tempted to observe as she sat watching his frantic maneuverings; "you're a boy scout and claim to be so good at tracking and trailing, I should think you could trail a can of spaghetti."

"Cans of spaghetti aren't wild animals," Pee-wee thundered. "That shows how much you know about scouting. Even you don't know what a relay race is."

"Well, I know you're not going to Westwood for any purpose whatever until you've picked up all the things you scattered about and repacked them. Suppose Townsend should come for you this afternoon. Isn't a scout supposed to be prepared? He'll find you off on some wild-goose chase—"

"All I have to do is to start the ball rolling," Pee-wee said, struggling to his feet after triumphantly recovering the can of spaghetti. "Then it will take care of itself."

"I think you've started enough things rolling this morning, Walter. Is that a bottle of olives under the leather chair? I never told Martha she could give you that."

"Will you listen?" Pee-wee pleaded in dramatic despair. "Is a relay race anything like cans of stuff? Do you think I'm going to roll cans of spaghetti and things all the way to Temple Camp? A relay race is where one scout—suppose I should send a letter to—*will you please listen?*"

"I'm listening, Walter."

"I'm going to choose a fellow to visit me and stay with me at Memorial Cabin, ain't I?"

"Don't say 'ain't,' Walter. Yes, you are."

"Well, you want to see me do it the scout way, don't you?"

"I thought you might ask Mrs. Gardner's son; they're very poor—"

"I'm going to start a relay race to Temple Camp, that's better. And the last feller, the one that brings me the letter, he'll be the one to stay with me and have my hospital—tal—"

“Hospitality, Walter.”

“Hospitalality, that’s what I mean. I’m going to write the letter and take it to Westwood, because that’s north of here and it’s on the way to Temple Camp and I know scouts there. Then the scout I give it to will take it to—to—maybe to Haverstraw or some place like that and give it to another scout and he’ll take it to—maybe to—to—Newburgh, say—and he’ll give it to another scout that’ll take it to—to—to—to—I didn’t decide yet, but anyway he’ll give it to a scout that takes it to Kingston, and he’ll take it to another place to a scout that’ll take it to Catskill, and the one that brings it to me at Temple Camp—”

“You mean you’re going to send a letter to yourself, dear?”

“Sure, but I’ll be in a different place when it comes to me, I’ll be in Temple Camp; see?”

“I see, but it seems like a good deal of running and hiking all for nothing. You write a letter to yourself and then motor up to Temple Camp and wait for the letter. Isn’t that the idea? I think it would be better to take Mrs. Gardner’s poor little lame boy up in the car with you. You’re going to a great deal of trouble and putting a number of other boys to a great deal of trouble just to get one boy. They’re going to get all over-heated—”

“It’s in the handbook! It’s in the handbook!” Pee-wee shouted. “It’s in the handbook about relay races. You told Mr. Ellsworth the handbook is all right, *so now*! The fellers get their fun out of the relay race. A relay race can be thousands and millions of miles long without anybody getting tired out. In most everything that a lot of people are in, only one wins, doesn’t he? Let’s hear you answer that. Maybe each one’ll only go about seven or eight miles, and maybe he’ll win a merit badge or something doing that much. Maybe one of them is trying for his first-class badge, how do *you* know, and he has to go seven miles anyway. All the scouts will be crazy about it, you see! What do they care who wins? Anyway, it isn’t who wins, because the last one is the one who lands at camp—”

“And gives you the letter you wrote to yourself?” his mother asked mildly.

“Sure,” said Pee-wee, quite out of breath; “and all I have to do is to start the ball rolling by going to Westwood, because you only have to hike going the one way, so can I go to Westwood? You have to say yes, because you told Mr. Ellsworth and dad and everybody that the handbook is all right and it’s in the handbook about relay races.” He paused again, and came up for air.

During this interval his mother casually inspected the road map and the handbook. “Well,” said she finally, “all I can say is that I think you have too many schemes and you’re going to get all over-heated and—”

“Will you answer me one question?” Pee-wee demanded.

“Yes dear, what is it?”

“A scout is supposed to give pleasure to others, isn’t he? They’re *all* going

to have fun, aren't they? Maybe the others will even have more fun than the last one; maybe he'll be sorry he wasn't one of the others; see?" This seemed likely enough considering his imposed proximity to Pee-wee for the summer. "Maybe the others'll be the lucky ones," Pee-wee added.

"Well, you are to promise me that you won't walk farther than Westwood," his mother said, yielding.

"Yop, sure I will, I mean I promise."

"And I think this outlay race, or whatever you call it, is perfect nonsense. The last boy will never get there, Walter; you'll never see him. There are too many slips between cup and lip, Walter."

"Not with me," Pee-wee vociferated. Which was true enough, for the full cup always reached Pee-wee's lips safe and sound. "You can ask Roy Blakeley if I don't always succeed, and I can prove it by Minerva Skybrow, because didn't I get all the eats at her lawn party?"

"I don't want you to be always boasting of that, Walter."

"Anyway, it shows I'm lucky, and a relay race is something scouts *have to* do. I could start a relay race around the world and nobody would have to get tired."

"Well, I think it would be better, Walter, for you to talk it over with Townsend first; he's your patrol leader."

"He always does what I say," said Pee-wee.

"And I think it would be very much better for you to leave half these things at home and make room for poor little Teddy Gardner in the auto. I can't imagine why you should take that nickel tube from the old vacuum cleaner with you."

"On account of the stars," Pee-wee said.

"You're not going to vacuum clean the stars, are you?"

"No, but I can put a lens in it and make a telescope out of it and study the stars, can't I? Don't you know scouts study astronomy? You don't suppose I'm going to listen to music all the time, do you, just because I take some old Victrola records, do you? We can eat off those, can't we?"

By the time he had gathered up his miscellaneous equipment and repacked it, his mother had resumed her sewing upstairs, but she called to him when she heard him go forth on his path of glory:

"Walter!"

"Yop."

"What are you eating?"

"A doughnut."

"Did you shut the screen door?"

"N—n—no—yop. Now it's shut," And he was gone.

CHAPTER VI
NORTHWARD BOUND

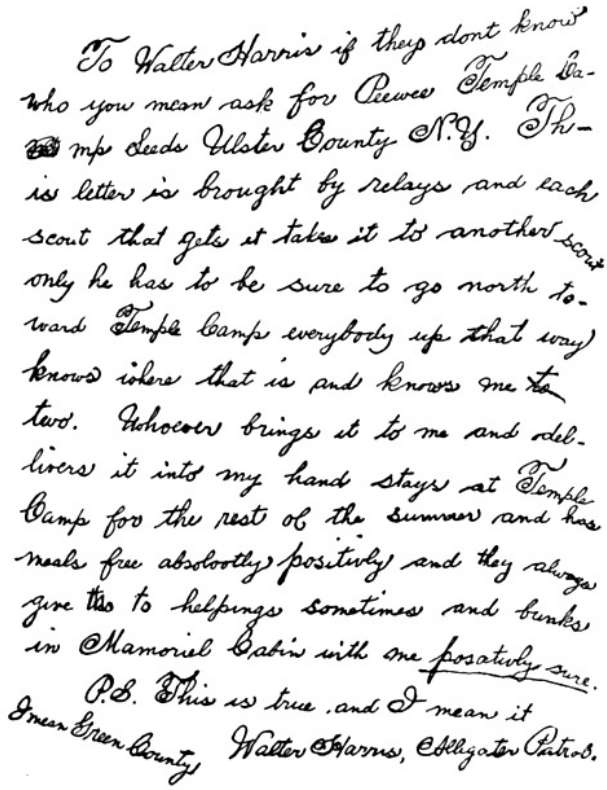
As far as it is possible to reduce Pee-wee's ideas to a common denominator, they comprehended a scheme somewhat as follows. I hesitate to ask the reader to study a map in vacation time, but road maps are not so bad, and if you will glance at the crude one which I have included here, you will see that the Hudson River formed a sort of backbone to Pee-wee's pilgrimage and colossal enterprise. The Hudson River rises somewhere or other, pursues a southerly course, and empties into the Hudson Terminal, whence it derives its name.

From the neighborhood of Bridgeboro there is a state road which runs up through Tuxedo, Newburgh, Kingston, Saugerties, Catskill and points north. It goes so far that it runs out of our story altogether, and it is a very good road except for motorcycle cops who lurk in the bordering woods. It does not run directly north from Bridgeboro but (as you may see) makes a rather sweeping curve between Bridgeboro and Newburgh. From that point north it runs pretty straight along the river. The bee-line way to go from Bridgeboro as far as Newburgh would be up through Westwood, Nanuet, West Haverstraw, and Fort Montgomery. From this latter point the hiker might (only scouts prefer not to) follow the state road all the way up to Catskill.

Now it was these towns somewhat east of the state road in its lower section that Pee-wee picked out as the points of his famous relay race. He did not intend to be autocratic in this matter and when the letter to himself was once out of his own hands, the hikers might go as they pleased so far as he was concerned. The one requirement was that each relay hiker should move *northward* to a town or village where it was known that scouts could be found.

Pee-wee's own responsibility would end at Westwood, which he now set out to invade, and where he intended to let loose his contagious enthusiasm. Then he would return to Bridgeboro and, on the morrow, set forth in the flivver for Temple Camp, where he would live in austere retirement awaiting the lone, unknown hiker who would be his guest and friend.

But before we accompany Pee-wee to his own chosen terminal we must pause to scan the letter which he prepared for eventual delivery to himself:



To Walter Harris if they dont know who you mean ask for Peewee Temple Camp Leeds Ulster County N.Y. This letter is brought by relays and each scout that gets it takes it to another scout only he has to be sure to go north toward Temple Camp everybody up that way knows where that is and knows me too. Whoever brings it to me and delivers it into my hand stays at Temple Camp for the rest of the summer and has meals free absolutly positivly and they always give two helpings sometimes and bunks in Memorial Cabin with me posatively sure.

P.S. This is true and I mean it

I mean Green County Walter Harris, Obligater Patrol.

With this official passport into the golden realm of Temple Camp, safely deposited in his trouser pocket, his scout handbook as a kind of high legal authority stuck in his back pocket, and the road map stuck in his belt, Pee-wee sallied forth from Bridgeboro eating an apple.

The last that was seen of him by any inhabitant of Bridgeboro was when a jitney driver saw him hurl the apple core at a willow tree along the road on the northern outskirts of Bridgeboro. He was then going about three miles an hour, scout pace. The jitney driver saw him take another apple out of his pocket. The weather was clear and warm, the wind north by east.

CHAPTER VII
SAID PEE-WEE—

Pee-wee knew who he wanted to see at Westwood and that was Alton Beech, a star scout, whom he had met at a scout rally in Bridgeboro. He knew him for an A-1 all-around scout, and the merriest fellow he had ever met into the bargain.

Alton Beech, as Pee-wee remembered him, had a smile that could not be washed off or sandpapered off; it was absolutely warranted. Alton had seemed to like Pee-wee, and the mascot of the Alligators was now going to draw this genial scout acquaintance into the terrible maelstrom of his enterprises. He looked for Beech in the ’phone book and was told by some one (it seemed to be a girl speaking) that Alton was mowing the lawn.

“You don’t need to call him,” Pee-wee said; “because I’ll drop around.”

“Oh, that will be so nice,” said the voice; “you’ll find him on the lawn.”

Alton Beech deserted his mower upon Pee-wee’s appearance at the low fence and came over and talked with him. They sat side by side on the fence and Pee-wee found Alton not only acquiescent but enthusiastic. “It’s a great idea,” he said, “only I don’t know who’ll take the next jump unless I do it myself.

“Let’s see your map. The next jumping off place above this would be—six or seven miles is enough for a hike, hey? Let’s see, the next place above here would be—would be—let’s see—Spring Valley. They’ve got a pretty good bunch of scouts up there, too. Then one of that crowd could take a hop, skip, and a jump up to—Haverstraw, I should say. Oh, it ought to be easy as pie. Something like passing the thimble, hey? I could go to-morrow if it comes to that.

“I know Charlie Norton in Spring Valley; he’s a fiend for hiking. I was up there one day and he hiked home with me and I didn’t want to be impolite so I hiked back with him, and he was going to hike back here with me again only his mother sent him to the store. He sticks like glue, that fellow.”

“That’s the kind of a fellow I like,” Pee-wee enthused.

“Oh, yes,” said Alton Beech, “he runs up moving stairways, that fellow does. That’s a pretty good letter you wrote, Bridgeboro.”

“It’s kind of official like,” Pee-wee said.

“I just happened to think,” said Beech, “that there ought to be some pretty good scouts up at Bear Mountain; that’s only about ten miles above Haverstraw, you know. Then there’s a boys’ camp up at New Paltz, too. There

must be a lot of scouts in Kingston. Oh, it'll be like a row of dominoes."

"You said it," vociferated Pee-wee. It was so seldom that any one ever gave unqualified approval of his schemes that he felt highly elated at Beech's spirit of ready cooperation. "It was an—an inspiration," he said.

"Some idea," said Beech.

"How long do you think it'll take?" Pee-wee asked.

"Oh, I don't know; short runs are best, that's what *I* think."

"That's what I think, too," said Pee-wee.

"You see each scout has got to find another before he comes back—"

"Sure," Pee-wee interrupted; "he has to show resource, that's another good thing about it. And it'll be a lot of fun because it'll be kind of—you know—it'll be kind of like a—a grab-bag sort of, because I don't know what I'm going to get."

"You might get a lemon," mused Beech.

"Scouts aren't lemons," Pee-wee shouted. "Anyway, the one that reaches me has to take a good hike before he gets there, hasn't he? So that'll prove he's all right, won't it? Gee whiz, I feel sorry for the others, but I can't help it, can I? They'll have adventures hiking, won't they?"

"Oh sure, leave it to them."

"That's what *I* say," Pee-wee agreed.

"I was just thinking," Beech mused, "I've got to make test four for the first-class badge—"

"I know that one," Pee-wee interrupted, excitedly, "you've got to make a round-trip to a point seven miles away, that's fourteen miles, and you've got to have a witness and you've got to write a satisfactory account of it when you get back; I passed that one. My scoutmaster said the hike I took was seven miles long and the account I wrote of it was seven miles long. Anyway, I believe in giving good measure, don't you?"

"Sure thing. I was just wondering when you showed up whether going round and round and round with a lawn-mower would be a round-trip—"

"It's a teckinality," said Pee-wee.

"I bet I've pushed that little old lawn-mower seven miles this morning," said Beech, "and you see that way I don't have to make a trip seven miles and back, because I'm always back; it's a good idea. Do you think I could get away with that?"

"Nnnnooo!" with the authority of one who knew the scout law. "Because how about a witness?"

"I thought of that," said Beech; "there's a hop-toad on the lawn, I've passed him a dozen times; he must have seen everything."

"It's got to be a brother scout," Pee-wee said; "hop-toads don't count. Anyway, you really don't have to have a witness."

“Sure of that?”

“Sure, I’m sure,” said Pee-wee.

“Well then,” said Beech, “why couldn’t I take care of the first relay, seven miles and back? I’ll trot up to Haverstraw and give them good measure.”

“Gee whiz,” said Pee-wee, “I like you. I wish you were going to be at Temple Camp.”

“I’m on the wrong end of the line,” said Beech. “I bet that’s a pretty nifty place up there. Bathing and everything?”

“Bathing?” shouted Pee-wee. “You *said* it! Bathing and boating and fishing and stalking and tracking and everything. And the cabin where I’m going to live—Memorial Cabin—it’s about a half a mile from the regular camp, and you can live there all separated from the camp and do your own cooking and—and—and eating—”

“That must be fine to do your own eating,” said Beech.

“It’s—it’s requested,” said Pee-wee.

“What, that you do your own eating?” Beech asked.

“No, I mean it’s all by itself with nobody to bother you, sort of.”

“Oh, you mean sequestered,” said Beech.

“And Chocolate Drop—he’s the colored cook—he sends stuff up for two all through the season. You can cook it yourself if you want to. That’s the way I’m going to do, because it’s kind of more wild like. Wouldn’t it be dandy if I got a feller that’s an Eagle scout, hey? I’ve got a patrol, the Alligators, only I’m not going to stay with them this summer. I’m going up to-morrow in an auto with my patrol leader.”

“That isn’t very wild like, is it?” Beech asked innocently.

“In an old Ford it is,” Pee-wee said. “I wouldn’t ride in a Packard, because nothing ever happens to Packards—Cadillacs either. But it’s all right for a scout to go in a Ford, because things happen to Fords and it’s adventure. See? I’m going up to-morrow by the state road and when I get there, do you know what I’m going to do? I’m going to have Chocolate Drop send up canned stuff for two, enough to last all summer, and besides I’m taking a lot of things with me, doughnuts and bacon and spaghetti and salmon and, oh, gee, a lot of things.”

“Well, I’ll start the ball rolling,” said Beech. “I’ll bang up to Spring Valley first thing in the morning and see if I can find Norton. I’ll get my first-class badge in the bargain, so don’t have any vain regrets about *me*. Kill two birds with one stone, hey? I dare say the last scout will come trotting in in a few days. So long, I’ll see you again some time, Bridgeboro. Hike up some Saturday in the fall, why don’t you? Ever play basket-ball?”

Pee-wee liked Alton Beech. He was attracted by the offhand, friendly way in which Beech came over and sat on the fence with him, as if they had known

each other for ages. Pee-wee was accustomed to hearing his schemes and enterprises treated with disrespectful mirth and it fired him with the wildest expectations of sensational triumph to know that his great relay race was in competent hands. It would have served his mother right if she could have seen Alton Beech fall at her son's feet.

As he waited for the bus back to Bridgeboro, he pictured the lone, unknown scout who would cover the last stretch of country to Temple Camp. Perhaps this scout would arrive at midnight, out of the dark woods, like some Indian runner in days of yore. Who would he be? What would he look like? What exciting narratives passed from scout to scout in the long series, would he have to recount? He would bring tidings of the others and what they had done and what had happened along the way.

Of one thing Pee-wee was resolved. He was not going to say a word at Temple Camp about his great enterprise. And he was going to swear Townsend Ripley to secrecy. He would take up his abode in mysterious and solemn isolation at Memorial Cabin, explaining that his guest and comrade would shortly arrive. When he should arrive, then the sensation. He was rather sorry that Alton Beech would not be that last, lonely deputation. But anyway, Alton would improve the occasion to win his first-class badge, and that was something.

Pee-wee was not the only one who liked Alton Beech; everybody liked him. He was so agreeable and friendly and ready and accommodating. He did not jump out of his skin at every new idea as Pee-wee did. But he was always ready to try something—anything. He never objected. He was not the great inventor and organizer and promoter that Pee-wee was. He had not Pee-wee's open mouth. But he had an open mind. The scouts of Westwood liked him immensely. *All* scouts liked him immensely.

That was just the trouble.

CHAPTER VIII
ENTER LIZZIE

When Pee-wee spoke about Fords he was thinking of Townsend Ripley's Ford, and when he said that things happened to it he never said a truer word. Many things had happened to Pee-wee, but not nearly so many as had happened to Townsend Ripley's Ford.

Townsend's Ford had a long and checkered history extending years back prior to the time when it enters this story. It got on the downward path when it was very young, continued going down till it struck a tree and terminated its youthful escapade upside down in a mill pond.

One would say that this should have been a lesson to it, but no such thing. Within a week it had parted with one of its fenders. The life of a Packard or a Cadillac would be tame and prosy, indeed, compared with the sprightly history of Townsend's Ford. Townsend often said that Pee-wee was the Ford among scouts. Perhaps it was because he made so much noise and things were always going wrong with him.

When Townsend's flivver came to make its home with the Ripley family it was seven years old, minus a top, and with three fenders which looked like ancient tomato cans. In regard to the other fender, it was not. It might have been in good enough condition, only it wasn't there. Townsend said it was the best of the four, but no one had ever seen it.

A unique feature of the car was its pair of headlights. These, to put it plainly, were cross-eyed. Their columns of light formed an X on the smooth highways. Townsend had done his best to cure this affliction but had only made it worse. The lights had a way of joggling back to their eccentric posture. Nuts, wrenches, wire and clothesline, were all in vain. Townsend's car could not look you in the face.

Townsend had not reached the age at which a citizen of New Jersey is thought to be qualified to drive a car. His was one of those cases where a license may be secured under the requisite age, upon satisfactory proof of competency. He was just seventeen. The exact age of the car is unknown. It was undoubtedly old enough to enjoy the respect due to age. But it did not enjoy this respect—far from it.

To see Townsend sitting upright on the front seat of his flivver, utterly regardless of the mirth it occasioned, was as good as a circus. Long familiarity with the car's eccentricities had given him a sort of magic power over it, so that it would obey him as a dog obeys its master.

Certain it is that it would never start for anybody but Townsend. And it is a fact that when he said "*lay down*" to it, it would stop. Some said that these words of stern command were never uttered until the engine had already made up its mind to "lay down." If that is the case then Townsend must always have sensed its intention well in advance, for it invariably complied with his mandate.

On the morning following Pee-wee's trip up to Westwood, the Townsend flivver rolled up to Pee-wee's home with Townsend at the wheel, looking as if he were running a Rolls-Royce. In the rear seat sat Mr. and Mrs. Ripley. Townsend pushed the horn button but the horn did not honk. He then took the crank, which was lying on the floor, and reaching through the opened windshield struck the hood with it. Instantly the horn began to honk and would not stop honking till he hit the hood again. Townsend did all this as a matter of course.

Presently our hero, laboring under a mountain of luggage, appeared.

"Can you take all this?" he called.

Townsend would never admit that there was anything he could not carry in his Ford; if Pee-wee had appeared with a piano, his answer would have been the same.

"Sure thing," he called cheerily; "the more the merrier."

It required a few minutes for Doctor and Mrs. Harris to chat with Mr. and Mrs. Ripley and wish them a pleasant summer and to say, "A Ford always gets you there."

"Yes, but it's so outlandish," said Mrs. Ripley; "I positively think that Townsend is proud of it. But it's really amusing. Townsend, make it say good-by for Doctor Harris. Doctor, I just want you to listen to it."

"Giddap!" said Townsend soberly. "Say good-by."

As it started the car gave forth a weird noise which was not unlike the words *good-by*. A parrot would have to practice long to say it as well.

"Did you ever hear such a thing in your life?" Mrs. Ripley called back to Doctor Harris. "It's a broken spring, I think."

"I'm going to teach it to say, 'Be Prepared,'" said Townsend to Pee-wee. "The scout motto, good idea, huh?"

There was no sign of a smile on his face.

CHAPTER IX
ADVENTURES WITH A FLIVVER

Townsend's flivver, as he said himself, was slow but unsure and they were three hours reaching Orange Lake. Here, at a pleasant summer boarding house, Mr. and Mrs. Ripley alighted. It was funny to see with what an air of sober complacency Townsend drove up the winding private roadway and saying, "whoa," stopped in front of a spacious veranda filled with summer boarders.

"Make it talk for them," whispered Pee-wee.

"I'll make it say, 'hurray,'" said Townsend. He leaned far out of the car, rocking it somewhat, and it undoubtedly did utter an uncanny response which sounded for all the world like that joyous call.

"Make it sit up and beg, can't you?" asked a man in a hammock.

"I've got an inspiration," whispered Pee-wee; "let's make it talk and take up collections wherever we go. Will you? We can get a lot of money that way. I'll pass around my hat now, shall I, and then we'll make it say 'good-by.'"

"We don't want any money," said Townsend; "you'll spoil all the fun. It talks for love, like you. It doesn't talk for money. I wonder if I could borrow a hatchet while I'm here?" he asked aloud.

"You going to chop down your little Ford?" the genial occupant of the hammock inquired.

It seemed that a hatchet was the only implement which would reach a certain bolt and act as a screw-driver.

"Maybe it won't talk any more if you do that," Pee-wee warned.

"Oh, yes, it'll sing for a while now," said Townsend. And so it did, a weird oriental tune, for eight or ten miles till they stopped to get gasoline. This was at a little supply station in a shack and the proprietor of the establishment could not be found. After wandering about, and whistling and calling, Townsend decided to go on to the next place.

"Have we got enough gas?" Pee-wee asked concernedly.

"I don't know where the next place is," Townsend said. "What do you mean by enough?"

As Pee-wee never had enough of anything himself he was not able, when put to it, to say just what was meant by that word.

"I don't intend to take the seat up to find out," said Townsend, "because there isn't any plug in the tank and every time I move the seat straws from inside of it get into the gas supply and come out through the carburetor. I've lost a lot of straw that way."

By a series of gymnastic contortions, Townsend rocked the car and a faint, distant splashing was heard below them. “We’ve got a couple of gallons or so, I guess. Do you want to get out and pick up the rear license plate?”

“How do you know it fell off?”

“It always falls off when I do that,” said Townsend.

They were in a pleasant country now, above Newburgh. Here the road runs between the Hudson and the Wallkill Rivers. The car jogged faithfully along, keeping up a sort of clanking lullaby except when it went over bad places when it raised its voice into a medley of squeaks and rattles like a traveling jazz band. Nothing seemed to surprise Townsend. He knew all the noises and the mysterious depths whence they emanated.

They passed several rural garages, but at each one Townsend rocked the car and received a faint, splashing reassurance from below the seat that the gas was holding out. “We’ll get some at the next place,” he would say.

So they traveled without mishap or adventure until dusk. Slowly the wooded hills changed color, patches of crimson lingered on the summits and faded and died away, leaving the heights in the solemn hue of the deepening twilight. And then the gathering darkness. It seemed as if the sturdy, clamorous, little flivver were all alone in the world, rattling merrily on as the mantle of night fell.

The road wound like a ribbon through the dim country where miles and miles of vineyards border the way. High in the air a solitary bird soared through the darkening sky, imparting a suggestion of wildness and loneliness to the scene.

Lights appeared in the few habitations which they passed. The voices of frogs could be heard in ponds and brooks, sending up their outlandish greetings to the night.

Somewhere in the vast stillness an owl was hooting. It was the wistful hour of homesickness, if one is given to that, for in those solemn, changing hours nature seems to be drawing her cloak about her and withdrawing from human company. The merry little Ford rattled along, up hill and down dale and around bends, and was pretty good company. Say what you will, a Ford is a pretty good sport.

CHAPTER X
ADVENTURES WITH A FLIVVER—CONTINUED

“Now we’re coming to a place,” said Townsend, as a brazen sign greeted them with the word GARAGE when they went around a bend. “Now we’ll give Liz her supper, hey, Liz.”

“Y-kks,” said Liz.

“You made it do that?” said Pee-wee astonished.

“And at the next good place we’ll *all* eat,” said Townsend. “We ought to be able to scare up a grove or something to camp in.”

“I’m going to make a hunter’s stew,” said Pee-wee.

“At your peril,” said Townsend; “I’m going to have an omelet, if anybody should ask you. That’s one great thing about the valve-in-head motor, you can beat eggs with the rocker arms. With a Ford you have to beat them by hand.”

At the garage they were doomed to disappointment. The proprietor, wearing conspicuous suspenders and a straw hat as big as a parachute, told them that the gasoline wagon had not come along that day. He had not, it seemed, enough to take out a grease spot.

“How far is Mideno, or whatever they call it?” Townsend asked.

“Waaal naow, some sez ’ts seven mile n’ some sez eight,” said the proprietor of the shack. “Yer keep right ter this here road. Purty soon yer cum ter a hill n’ yer go up that n’ foller the main road, yer can’t go wrong.”

“They keep gas there?” Townsend asked.

“Waal, they keep it but more’n like they’re closed up. There’s a circus thar __”

“G—long, Liz,” said Townsend impatiently. By the time they reached the foot of the hill it was dark. They started up gayly, their thoughts now bent on supper and camping for the night. The car struggled up, pounding but resolute, a model of indomitable perseverance. But after a while it began to sputter and then it stopped and gave unmistakable evidence of an intention to retreat down the hill again.

“Won’t it make the hill?” Pee-wee asked.

“Get out and put a couple of stones under the wheels,” said Townsend. “The gas is too low, it won’t flow up hill.”

The flivver had balked, not in fear of the ascent, for it would have been glad to walk up where elevators fear to go, but for the good and sufficient reason that the gas tank was under the seat and the small supply of gas within it at a lower level than the carburetor.

“It’s a gravity feed,” said Townsend; “your father’s car has a vacuum pump.”

“Gravity, that means it’s serious, hey?” said Pee-wee.

“No, the situation isn’t grave,” laughed Townsend; “only I don’t know whether we can turn around here or not, the road is so narrow.”

“Are we going home?” Pee-wee asked in great agitation.

“Positively not,” said Townsend. “The trouble with you is you’ve been fed up on Pierce-Arrows and cars like that and you don’t know anything about a real friendly, companionable car. This car is a pal, Kiddo.”

“Like my unknown pal, hey?” said Pee-wee.

“Something like that. We’ll just turn around and go up backwards. Then the gas will flow like water.”

“Can you drive it all the way up backwards?” Pee-wee asked.

“Positively,” said Townsend, maneuvering to make the turn and at the same time keep from ditching the car. “Once headed in the wrong direction and our troubles are over. We’ll go the right way without any trouble. I can even make her laugh going backwards, listen.”

The shabby little tin hero was now lumbering up the hill rear end first, and the alteration of its plane caused several small articles to slide down in the pan. “That’s a spark-plug and a couple of nuts,” Townsend said. “I leave them there because I like to hear her laugh when things go wrong. The Ford with the smile wins. She always starts to laugh when she goes up hill backwards. G’long, Liz, you’ll make it. Laugh and the world laughs with you.”

It was a very long hill and as Lizzie’s cross-eyed lights illuminated the road they had traveled, Pee-wee looked down along the lighted area and saw that the way was bordered with thick woods. As for Townsend, he kept his gaze fixed behind him and steered the car with difficulty up through the darkness.

“The great advantage of traveling this way,” said he, “is that if we run over any one the lights shining down the road below us will show us that we have done so. Keep your eye out down the hill and let me know if I have run over any one.” At last they came to the top of the hill but kept going backwards, because they hoped to find a suitable spot for camping very soon, and it was easier to keep going than to turn.

“We don’t want to go down the other side of the hill this way, do we?” Pee-wee asked.

“No, we’ll camp up here,” said Townsend; “I guess this spot right here is as good as any. What do you say?”

“Gee whiz, it suits me,” said Pee-wee enthusiastically; “it’s nice and lonesome and everything along here.”

Townsend ran the car a little off the road, stopped it and turned out the

lights. Then they took their things and entered the thick bordering woods.

CHAPTER XI
THE ENDLESS CHAIN

They found a good camping spot about a hundred yards in from the road, a little knoll on which they pitched a tent, although the foliage was so thick overhead that they hardly needed it. Outside the shelter they kindled a fire and fried some bacon, and sat by the companionable blaze eating their supper.

To avoid the grease from the bacon they put the slices between crackers, making sandwiches of them, and they were not half bad. This novel dainty, however, suggested to Pee-wee's inventive mind another which proved (to Townsend at least) not so delectable. It consisted of a banana with slices of bacon plastered against it.

"I know what we'll call it," said Pee-wee, munching one with unconcealed relish, "a banakon, because that kind of suggests bananas and bacon both. Or maybe a bacanna—that's a better name, *bacanna*; hey? I invented lots of things to eat. The man that invented Eskimo pies took the idea from me, because I put shrimps between chocolate bars, and I invented radish shortcake, too. Do you know how to make that?"

"Break it to me gently," said Townsend.

"You take a piece of sponge cake," said Pee-wee, "and you lay some radishes nice and even on the top of it, then you take another—Oh, I know what let's do, let's make ice cream cones out of birch bark, we can roll it up just like cones, I know how to do it, and—"

"How about the ice cream?" laughed Townsend.

"We'll use pot cheese," Pee-wee said; "it looks just like ice cream. Pot cheese cones, isn't that a good idea? We'll call them scout cones," he vociferated. "I've got a jar full of pot cheese and it won't keep."

He was right, it didn't keep. In fifteen minutes it was all gone. They made out a pretty good supper (except for the banana experiment) with omelet and boiled rice and crackers.

"Most of the things our cook gives me don't keep," said Pee-wee.

"Yes, I noticed that," said Townsend.

"Let's open some salmon, hey?" Pee-wee suggested; "so as to finish the rice, hey?"

"All right," Townsend assented.

But things didn't come out even; the salmon used up the rice and there was some salmon left over.

"I tell you what let's do," said Pee-wee. "Let's open a box of sugar wafers

so as to use up the salmon, hey?”

“All right,” assented Townsend.

But still things didn’t come out right. The sugar wafers put an end to the salmon but there were still quite a few sugar wafers, and it was necessary to open a jar of peanut butter to put the sugar wafers out of business, which left them with a jar half full of peanut butter. A detachment of Holland rusks was therefore called up to eliminate the peanut butter. The Holland rusks tasted pretty good with peanut butter on them, but without peanut butter they were dry.

“I don’t like them without anything on them, do you?” Pee-wee asked, feeling his way to the next step.

“No, I don’t,” said Townsend; “they have about as much flavor as a whisk-broom, but did you ever hear the story about the man with one leg shorter than the other one? They sawed his right leg off to make it even with his left one and they sawed it too short. So then they had to saw his left one off to make it even with his right one. And they sawed off a little too much so—”

“That’s a dandy argument,” shouted Pee-wee; “I tell you what let’s do. We’ll throw the rusks away so the birds can get them and then start even with two things.”

“If we throw the rusks away we *will* be even,” said Townsend. “Otherwise we’ll be like the man who ended by not having any legs.”

“That didn’t stop him from eating though,” said Pee-wee.

“Well, I’m going to stop *you* from eating,” Townsend observed. “What do you suppose would happen to you if they sawed off your appetite?”

“It would grow again,” said Pee-wee.

“Well,” laughed Townsend, “I’m going to saw off some sleep.”

“That’s another thing I like to do,” said Pee-wee.

“Sleep?”

“Yop.”

“How do you know you like to? How do you like to do a thing when you don’t know you’re doing it? You can’t enjoy being asleep because you’re asleep when you’re asleep. In order to enjoy being asleep you have to be awake, and then you’re not asleep.” He tousled Pee-wee’s curly hair by way of capping the argument. “So there you are, it can’t be did.”

“Do you call that logic?” Pee-wee roared. “Don’t you suppose I enjoy doing lots of things when I don’t know what I’m doing?”

“Oh, undoubtedly,” Townsend laughed.

“Su—u—ure I do,” Pee-wee said, conclusively. “You can’t prove anything by my not knowing what I’m doing because, gee whiz, then you’d have to say I never have any fun, and nobody can say that. I didn’t know what I was doing when I started the relay race, did I? Let’s hear you answer that.”

“I can’t answer that,” said Townsend; “the relay race is your business. But I’m mighty sorry you’re not going to be in the patrol cabin with us, Kid; you see, the fellows in our patrol are new at Temple Camp.”

“Don’t you care,” said Pee-wee. “I’ll see you a lot. Gee whiz, when I’m at Temple Camp I’m all over. That’s why they call me a scout at large, only that doesn’t mean that I’m large.”

“No, I understand,” said Townsend; “but you’re a pretty big scout at that.”

The intention of turning in for the night seemed to have passed for the time being and Townsend idly threw some more sticks on the fire and sat gazing into it, his hands clasped about his knees. He looked ruminatively across the mounting blaze at the small scout who sat opposite him, and as he looked, he smiled amusedly, yet kindly.

“I—I bet you like your flivver better than any other friend you’ve got,” said Pee-wee.

“I bet I don’t,” said Townsend, with a kind of enigmatic smile. “So you lose.”

“Anyway, I bet you like it ’cause it’s kind of old and sort of ramshackle, I bet you do.”

“Maybe,” said Townsend.

“Gee whiz, anyway I like you better than any friend I’ve got except Roy Blakeley, and he’s kind of more like an enemy only we’re good friends.”

Townsend laughed outright. “We’re going to have a great patrol, Kiddo,” was all he said.

“*Sure*, we are, and I’m glad you’re the leader of it. I bet if you met a big feller your own size you’d like him better than me, wouldn’t you? Because I knew lots of fellers that were friends with me till they got to know fellers their own size.”

“Yes?”

“Sure, I did. But anyway I have lots of fun. Gee whiz, I wouldn’t blame you.”

“No? Well, how about the little Ford? You say you think I like that.”

“Better than a—a—an eight-cylinder Packard?”

“You said it.”

“Does that mean maybe you might like me better than a big feller?”

“Didn’t I just tell you you’re one of the biggest fellows I ever met?”

“I can’t be big if I’m small; do you call that logic?”

Townsend didn’t answer, but just sat there with his hands clasped about his drawn-up knees, smiling, oh such an amused and friendly smile across the fire.

“Hear that cricket?” said Pee-wee.

“Huh-huh,” said Townsend.

“Gee, you’re funny; I don’t understand you at all,” said Pee-wee. “I never

know what you really mean.”

“No?”

Then, perhaps by way of conveying what he meant, Townsend arose, stretched himself, and as he lowered one of his upraised arms, gave Pee-wee’s hair a good tousling and pushed him right over backwards.

“Time to turn in, Kid,” said he.

CHAPTER XII
IN CAMP

When they awoke in the morning they heard the steady patter of rain on their little shelter. The downpour, broken by the friendly trees, fell gently on the tent, but looking out they could see that the rain was coming down in torrents. The sky was dull and cheerless.

“Rain before seven, clear before eleven,” said Pee-wee.

“Only it’s half-past eight, do you call that logic?” laughed Townsend. “I bet Liz is good and wet; I should have turned the seats upside down and tied my rain-coat over the hood. No matter. She ought to squeak fine after this. Last year I had her singing the Star Spangled Banner after a three days’ rain. What shall we do; eat?” he asked, rubbing his eyes and surveying the woods. “How’d you sleep? Some rain, hey?”

“I’m going to start a fire and make coffee,” said Pee-wee.

“Now that’s what I call a *real* inspiration,” said Townsend, sleepily. “I didn’t hear the alarm clock, did you?”

“There isn’t any,” said Pee-wee.

“That’s probably why I didn’t hear it,” Townsend yawned. “Where are you going to get dry wood?”

“Didn’t you see me roll that piece of log under the tent last night?” Pee-wee asked him. “That’s one of the things you always have to do first of all in case it rains next day. Now where would you be if I hadn’t brought my belt-axe?”

“I’d be in tears,” said Townsend. “We haven’t got much gasoline to burn. We might fry some griddle-cakes on the engine I suppose. I wonder if we could beat eggs with the fan? You start getting things ready while I trot over and wake Liz up.”

He soon returned, reporting that the car was all right and better for sleeping in the fresh air. He found Pee-wee valiantly demolishing the small end of the log which he had thoughtfully put under cover the night before. A merry little fire was soon blazing away under a tree, defying the rain.

And pretty soon the fragrant odor of coffee permeated the damp air. If you ever hear any one say anything against coffee tell him that he has probably never been stalled in a little tent in the woods on a rainy day. If he continues to talk against it, don’t listen to him, walk away. He is like a man who would slander a life preserver.

Some people put an egg shell in coffee, and I think that is good. But a

spool of linen thread is not so good. Pee-wee used a spool of linen thread in his coffee. At all events there was a spool of linen thread in the coffee-pot and several emergency buttons.

“Are these supposed to flavor it?” Townsend asked.

“They happened to be in there,” said Pee-wee.

“Hadn’t we better strain it for needles and hooks and eyes and things?”

“Don’t you know scouts have to economize space?” Pee-wee shouted. “You put one thing in another when you’re packing camping things. See if there’s a bottle of ink in it.”

Townsend fished around in the coffee-pot with a lead pencil and pronounced it free of other contents. They drank their coffee, one out of a collapsible metal cup, the other out of an empty mustard can. Coffee is very good in such receptacles. It should never be sipped from a respectable breakfast cup, *never*. But if you use a mustard can be sure that there are no pieces of chalk or crayon in it. These things are good in tracking and blazing, but not in coffee.

That morning, Pee-wee tried his hand at griddle-cakes, while his patrol leader gazed wistfully on. They were not half bad. And when you come right down to it, coffee out of tin cans, and griddle-cakes not too delicate, form a toothsome repast on a dull, rainy morning, when the drops patter down on your cosy little shelter and the little fire burns merrily outside, and the landscape is hazy and you have no forks or spoons. If you go to having forks and spoons you will spoil it all.

PEE-WEE AND TOWNSEND WATCHED THE CHIPMUNK.

CHAPTER XIII
A SCOUT IS POLITE

They liked it so much lolling under their little tent in the rain that they lingered there till noontime. The water trickled down the little knoll and they were as dry as if surrounded by an elaborate drain ditch. It is fascinating doing nothing and just watching the rain; that is, it is when you are camping and in no particular hurry.

Their talk was as it should have been, aimless, bantering, idle. They told Ford jokes by the dozen. Pee-wee told about Temple Camp. They discussed the great relay race.

For fully half an hour they watched a beetle trying to climb up a wet, slippery leaf. They watched this beetle and found it diverting. They stood an olive bottle some yards from their shelter and, sitting in the doorway of the tent, threw pebbles at it. They counted the drops that fell slowly, one after another, from a limb.

Oh, the things they did were very important. They put a griddle-cake directly under the dropping point to see if in time the drops would bore a hole through it. But a chipmunk came and took the griddle-cake and they watched him eat it.

Every now and then they wondered if it was going to clear and told some more Ford jokes. They watched a busy little glutton of a bird hopping about and pulling worms out of the ground and they wondered how he knew just where to plunge his bill in. They even went out to see if there were holes in the ground, but there were none. Then they told ghost stories.

At last, about three o'clock in the afternoon the rain ceased to fall, though the sky continued dull and threatening.

"Now's our time to make the break if we're going to," said Townsend. "We can't make Catskill to-day, no matter what. The roads will be horrible. What do you say? Shall we move on?"

"It's nice here," said Pee-wee.

"It is nice," said Townsend.

"I tell you what let's do," said Pee-wee; "I'll throw this stone at the bottle and I'll try to hit it; see? If it hits we stay and if it misses we go, and I hope it hits, because I'd rather stay. We didn't play mumbly-peg yet; we can do that."

So it happened that their going partook of the same delightfully aimless character as the way in which they had spent the day in their cosy little tent. For Pee-wee missed the bottle. But just the same he didn't leave it there, for a

scout has as much respect for the woods as he has for the parlor in his home. Not a sign did they leave of their presence, except a little charred spot under a tree. They did not want to go, but now the die was cast and they would not go back on their resolution.

The patient little Ford was waiting along the roadside and really seemed glad to see them. Townsend toppled the seat cushions over to their proper positions, threw their camping paraphernalia in behind, then he and Pee-wee climbed into the front seat, and Townsend instantly got out again to crank the engine. “I dreamed I had a self-starter,” he said.

It required several crankings to get started, but at last they were off, the car looking quite clean after its bath.

“Good-by, old camp,” said Townsend as they rattled away.

“So long,” called Pee-wee, waving his hand.

“Gee whiz, it was nice in there, wasn’t it? We had a lot of fun there, didn’t we?”

“Sure thing.”

“If two fellers like each other they kind of have fun anyway, don’t they?”

“That’s what they do. You read the books and you’d think you couldn’t find any fun this side of South Africa. How about that, Liz?”

“Kkkkkk,” said the Ford.

“How did you make it do that?” Pee-wee asked.

“It’s the back door on the other side; slam it, will you?”

“Don’t forget we’ve got to hunt for gasoline,” said Pee-wee.

“The boy hunters,” said Townsend, “hunting for gasoline. Leveling his rifle, our young hero crouched behind the garage, fixing his eagle eye upon the distant gas pump—”

“You’re crazy,” said Pee-wee.

“When suddenly,” said Townsend, “a terrific report rent the air and there at the brave lad’s feet—”

“What?”

“Was a blown-out tire.”

“That shows how much sense you have,” said Pee-wee, with a kind of mingled pride and amusement in his friend; “you’re crazy.”

They rattled merrily down hill for half a mile or so, then around a bend and a couple of miles along a straight, level road. Then they made another curve and stopped, plunk in front of the little supply shack where the man with the suspenders and the straw hat had given them the direction. He was sitting on a bench in front of his place with a straw in his mouth and his eyes squinted as if he had not moved hand or muscle since the previous night.

Townsend did not appear to be at all surprised; he maintained a dignified calm, but Pee-wee was plainly dumbfounded.

“How do you do?” said Townsend.

“*What does it mean?*” Pee-wee gasped.

“It means we forgot to thank this gentleman for directing us,” said Townsend, “and we have come back to do it. Friend, we thank you.”

With which commendable demonstration of scout politeness he turned the car around and rattled away again in the direction from which they had just come.

“A scout is supposed to be polite,” said Townsend soberly.

“You forgot to turn the car around where we camped up on the hill,” said Pee-wee in thunderous accusation. “You forgot to turn the car around and you thought we were going down the other side of the hill instead of back the same way we came from. You forget that we went up the hill backwards. *Haaah, haaaah!*”

“Kiddo,” said Townsend, “a scout is supposed to be polite. Last night when I lay awake listening to the rain, I happened to remember that I never thanked __”

“You make me tired!” yelled Pee-wee.

CHAPTER XIV
UP IN THE AIR

After backing up the hill a second time, Townsend turned the car and coasted down the long grade on the other side. The momentum took them to a point where a railroad track crossed the road; indeed, the car would have gone farther than that if caution had not required Townsend to stop on hearing the whistle of a locomotive. Presently a train went whizzing past.

The place at which they now were was apparently the site of a deserted village, which in its flourishing day had boasted of a set of railroad gates and a little tower house for a gateman and switchman. The four gates were standing stark upright now and they did not so much as bow when the train went by.

A ladder which had probably been the means of access to the tower house lay below it, broken and rotted, one of its uprights entirely gone, while three or four rungs stuck out from the other one like the few remaining teeth of some aged crone. It looked more like a giant, dilapidated rake than a ladder.

The tower house stood quite high upon a rotting trestle. Its roof was almost entirely bereft of shingles. There was no sign of glass in either of its windows which commanded views north and south along the track. How long it may have been since any solitary watcher stayed in that aerial shack, one could not guess. For a shack that held itself so high it was very shabby. Through one of the windows the boys could see a tall lever standing at an angle; whether it was a switch lever or the gate lever they could not say. It was red with rust.

A few small houses clustered about the spot but they seemed all to be forsaken and falling to pieces, save one. This one was surrounded by a picturesque fence ingeniously devised of laths, old bed springs, chicken wire, grocery boxes and barrel staves.

In front of the house was a very small and shabby porch and upon this sat an Italian woman of enormous dimensions. It was impossible to determine what she was sitting on for no part of this was visible, but undoubtedly she was sitting on something, for she was in a sitting posture.

The only other living thing on this romantic hamlet was a billy goat within the enclosure, who, upon seeing the Ford stop close by the tracks, dropped a rusty tin can which he had been chewing on, and sauntered toward the edge of his domains surveying the visitors through an old woven wire bed spring.

“You don’t suppose he wants to eat the flivver, do you?” Townsend asked.

“Bah—h—h—h,” said the billy goat.

“Quite well, thank you,” said Townsend. “How are *you*?” Then to Pee-wee

he said, “Let’s see how much gas we’ve got, I mean how little.”

They both climbed out and Townsend lifted the front seat cushion, revealing a veritable feast of torn burlap and disordered straw at which the goat seemed to cast a yearning eye.

“*Jumping Christopher*, we’ve only got about half a pint,” said Townsend. “If we get across the tracks we’re lucky.”

“We should have kept on going,” said Pee-wee.

“In that case we would have knocked the train over,” said Townsend. “Wait a minute, I’m going to ask the lady if we can get gas anywhere around here.”

He strolled over to the table d’hôte fence and called to the hostess of the establishment: “Gasoline? Can we get gasoline anywhere around here?”

“Idner,” the woman responded, shrugging her shoulders.

“I say is there a gas station near?”

“Gess (shrug) lotterdamile gess, Idner.”

“Very far—long way?”

“Gess yer Idner,” said the woman with another shrug.

“There must be a place or a man named Idner somewhere,” said Townsend.

“She means, *I don’t know*,” said Pee-wee.

“Baaah—h—h,” said the goat.

“How’s that?” said Townsend.

“I’ve got an inspiration,” shouted Pee-wee.

“Baaah—h—h,” said the goat.

“I don’t know which of you to believe,” said Townsend.

“Do you want me to tell you?” Pee-wee yelled.

“Oh, certainly, when you have time.”

“Didn’t that man back at that place say he was expecting the gasoline wagon? I’m going to climb up into that switch tower and see if it’s coming. I bet I can scan the landscape from up there.”

“You can what it?”

“Scan it; I bet I can see a—a vista.”

“We don’t want a vista, we want some gas.”

“You’re crazy,” said Pee-wee, “a vista is when you see a long way up a narrow road, like. I can look both ways; back over the hill, too, I bet.”

“I’m going to take one more chance with Mrs. Spaghetti,” said Townsend. And raising his voice he asked again, simplifying the query, “Gas? Makadergas. Way far?”

The woman shrugged her shoulders again, “Wayerderfer Idner, makerderfergess Idner. Idner spiggedyamer.”

“Very well,” said Townsend, “if that’s the way you feel about it. It looks as if we’ll have to stay neighbors; we might as well be friends. Let’s push the car

over to the side of the road, Kid. I don't think much of this for a camping spot."

They sat in the car for a few minutes discussing the situation while the goat looked on intently through the woven wire mattress. Abandoning, apparently, all vain hopes of eating the Ford, he had picked up his rusty tin can again, holding its crumpled rusty cover in his mouth while his gaze still lingered on the strangers.

"Gee whiz," said Pee-wee, "I'll eat anything that comes out of a can but I won't eat a can."

"Good for you," said Townsend.

He seemed to think it pleasant enough sitting there and for a while appeared to be altogether oblivious to their predicament.

"Shall I shin up the gate?" Pee-wee asked again, finally.

Townsend glanced idly at the gate. "Might be a good idea," he said. "Do you think you could do it?"

"*Sure* I could do it. I'll scan the horizon, hey?"

The crossing gates, as is usual, were in two pairs. They were of the customary sort which are lowered to a horizontal position by cogwheels. When not down they stood perfectly upright like four emaciated giant fingers pointing skyward. One of these stood close to the old tower house and was at present the only means (though a rather doubtful means) of access to it. The open framework on which the little edifice stood did not extend out to the edge of it on any side, so that climbing up these supports would avail one nothing.

The upright gate, though slender and rather wabbly, was reinforced by iron bars and would doubtless bear the weight of our mighty hero for at least two-thirds of its length. He now proceeded to shinny up this gate and as he ascended toward its thinner end it swayed slightly like the stalk of a lily in the summer breeze.

"'Tisn't going to break, is it?" Townsend called, watching the little scout as he wriggled up. "It seems kind of unsteady."

"*Sure* it isn't," Pee-wee called.

"Watch your step," called Townsend as Pee-wee ascended to a point level with the window.

"*Oh, boy!*" shouted Pee-wee, elated and without waiting to transfer himself to the little house. "I can see the road for miles and miles and miles. There's a village or something about a mile down that way."

"Watch your step," Townsend warned, as Pee-wee reached out one leg to get a foothold on the old window ledge.

CHAPTER XV
DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION—AND WAR

Perhaps it was Pee-wee's propensity for going up in the air on all sorts of occasions that enabled him so dextrously to hand himself from the slender, upright gate to the firmer support of the window ledge. Here he sat for a few seconds dangling his feet and surveying the landscape in every direction.

"Gee whiz, it's dandy up here," he called; "I can see way, way along the track and way down the road, too; it's a pamerana."

"A which?" Townsend called.

"It's the same as a bird's-eye view."

"Do you see the village of Idner?"

"I see some sort of a village or something," Pee-wee answered; "I see a church steeple and a kind of a building that maybe is a store; I bet we can get ice cream cones there." With which preliminary report he disappeared into the tower house, presently reappearing at the window to announce additional discoveries. "There's a lot of stuff up here," he called; "there are handles to move switches with and everything. There's an old time-table—it says nineteen fourteen on it—tacked on the wall.

"There's a kind of a shelf you sit at. There's a stool here, too. There's a magazine, it's—it's—wait a minute—it's seven years old—the pages are all yellow—there's a name of an article that says maybe there might be a great war—there's a big wasps' nest up here, too."

"Well, you'd better watch out or maybe there will be a great war," laughed Townsend.

"There's a piece of bread up here, it's petrified," shouted Pee-wee; "it's all faded, kind of yellow. It's dandy up here."

"You don't see anything of a gasoline wagon on the horizon, do you, Sister Anne?" Townsend called.

"No, but there's an old five-gallon tank," Pee-wee shouted; "It's on a grocery box that says Lingate's soap is best and it's got some oil in it. There are lanterns up here, too, a couple of red ones and a white one and there's a picture of an actress out of a newspaper tacked on the wall. There's a big spider-web, too, and there's a wasp caught in it; he's dead."

It was hard to divert Pee-wee's inquisitive mind and eagle eyes from their exploration of this new discovery. And indeed, even to Townsend's imagination, these homely, deserted memorials of a former time appealed strongly. The little tower house was so much removed from the world as to

have some of the enchanting qualities of a desert island.

"I can hear oil splashing in it when I shake the can," Pee-wee shouted. "There's an old red flag up here, too, and a picture of a prizefighter; I guess it was on the wall but it fell on the floor; there was a centipede under it, I stepped on him—a great big one."

The prizefighter flat on the floor (where prizefighters so often find themselves) and the actress on the wall hinted that the former towerman had been a lover of the ring and of the stage.

"Take a squint up the road," Townsend called, "How about it?"

"I'll tell you," said Pee-wee.

"Please do," called Townsend.

"About a half a mile away, maybe three-quarters of a mile, is a village; it's right in the road. And about—wait a minute—about—about—half-way between here and there—maybe not so much as quite half-way—*there's some chewing gum up here, too*, it's hard like a rock—*there are mountains*!"

"Where is the chewing gum and where are the mountains?" Townsend called.

"Up here—there's kind of something the matter like, along the road. Throw me up my field-glass, it's rolled up in my sleeping blanket with my camera."

"Here you go—catch," called Townsend.

"Look out how you throw it," Pee-wee shouted down.

"Look out how you catch it," Townsend called.

The field-glass in its leather case went sailing accurately up through the window but for some reason unexplained, Pee-wee did not catch it. That is, he did not catch it in the sense of catching the field-glass. But he did "catch it." The entrance of the leather case through the window was followed instantaneously by such a medley of noises intermingled with frantic shouts that for a moment Townsend feared he had set fire to the universe. Knowing Pee-wee's propensity for packing unsympathetic articles together, he called: "What was in the case? Dynamite?"

The only response was such a chorus of sounds as might have issued from Bedlam.

"*You knocked down the wasps' nest!*" Pee-wee roared. "*They're all over!*"

It seemed to Townsend, as he stared, that there were a dozen Pee-wees in the little tower house. Horrible thought—for surely one Pee-wee was enough! Now a head could be momentarily seen in one window, now two frantically waving arms in another, now a leg kicking, amid the fearful sounds of combat. A few wasps sailed out into the open air, but most of them stuck to their posts.

At last, amid the frantic tumult, the voice of our young hero could be heard shouting, "*I've got an inspiration.*" And this reassuring announcement was

shortly followed by the frantic waving of a flag of fire amid which the legions of the enemy could be seen dispersing and fleeing pell-mell.

“I poured kerosene on the signal flag and waved it,” Pee-wee shouted, as the upper part of him appeared in the window all but enveloped in oil smoke. He looked not unlike the pictures one sees of spirits. “I foiled them!” he shouted.

“Did you get stung much?” Townsend called, laughing. He could not help laughing.

“I triumphed over them,” Pee-wee shouted. “I got stung in three or four places. Put some engine oil in a bottle and throw it up here, quick. That’ll take out the information.”

“You didn’t set fire to anything, did you?” Townsend asked.

“I *foiled* them!” Pee-wee shouted.

CHAPTER XVI
FIRST AID

“Watch now, and catch it,” Townsend called, as an ink bottle drained of its former contents and filled with soothing cylinder oil sailed up through the window. With this Pee-wee soothed the feverish little mountains which had risen here and there on his face and hands, and his knowledge of this makeshift medicine and his prompt application of it saved him much suffering.

When his face appeared, presently, in the window it presented a rather novel appearance. For enough ink had been left in the bottle to color the oil and our hero looked not unlike a new kind of circus clown, or perhaps a sort of human leopard.

“That shows you how scouts have to be resourceful,” Pee-wee called.

“All right, Kid,” laughed Townsend; “take a squint up the road with the glass and let’s try to find out if there’s any sign of a gas station.”

“I’ll tell you just what there is?” Pee-wee said, studying the long stretch of road with his field-glass. “Now I can see everything plain. This is a dandy glass. About a half a mile up the road—that’s just this side of the village—up there there are some cars parked and a lot of people—”

“Smash-up?” Townsend asked.

“I can’t see any, but there are men kind of going from one car to another. I guess it’s a hold-up, hey?”

“Wait a minute, I think I’ll come up there,” said Townsend. He had heard so much and Pee-wee’s accounts were so impulsive that perhaps he thought it wise to ascend himself. Perhaps he was a little curious to see the interior of that little aerial abode, the scene of one of the greatest battles in history.

At all events, he took off his coat, hung it on the woven wire spring nearby and started to shinny up the gate. But the gate which had held Scout Harris would not hold his larger companion. He had ascended perhaps six or seven feet, when it started to go down with an accompanying sound of squeaking gear wheels, disturbed after many years of slumber and accumulating rust.

“Going down, ladies’ millinery next floor,” said Townsend.

He was precipitated to the ground, the gate lying in a horizontal position above him, like a victorious wrestler, and blocking at least half of the road.

“Foiled,” he said cheerily, as he arose, brushing off his clothing with his hand.

“*Foiled?*” roared Pee-wee, in a voice of terrible accusation. “*I’m* the one that’s foiled! How am I going to get down?”

At this, Townsend saw fit to lie down on his back again and roar.

"How am I going to get down?" Pee-wee demanded in a voice of thunder.

"Wait a minute till I stop laughing," said Townsend. "The pl—pl—the plot seems to be—be—growing thicker. I can't laugh and think at the same time."

"Well then, think first," called the motley hero; "I want to come down. If it's a smash-up up the road—"

"I don't think it's a smash-up, Kid," laughed Townsend. "From what you say I think it's an inspectors' drive."

"What's that?" Pee-wee called.

"Oh, every now and then the auto inspectors have a kind of intensive campaign to round up people who drive without licenses," said Townsend, companionably. He was lying on his back on the ground, hands clasped above his head as if nothing whatever had happened, and seemed disposed to chat. Pee-wee, his face resplendent with gorgeous spots, looked down on him scornfully. "You'll get an inspiration, Kid, don't worry," said Townsend.

Pee-wee took another look through the field-glass and seemed to be of Townsend's way of thinking. "What do you mean? What do they do?" he asked.

"Oh, they hang out outside a town usually and stop everybody that comes along," said Townsend sociably, "and every one that hasn't got his license cards is invited to stay whether he wants to or not and when they get a nice little batch of them they parade them into town and they're all fined and live happily forever after. Is it hot up there?"

"Have you ever been arrested for that?" the human leopard demanded.

"No, because I can always shuffle out my little driver's license, but they stop me about six times a minute when I'm away from Bridgeboro, because I look so young and innocent. I'm under age and I've got a special under-age license, that's why. It's because I'm so smart and am such an expert driver. I always *foil* them as you would say. It must be getting on toward suppertime, I'm hungry. I think I'll get supper."

"If you think you're so smart," shouted Pee-wee, "tell me how I'm going to get down out of here. Don't you suppose *I* want to eat supper, too? *Gee whiz!*"

"Oh, I mean smart driving an automobile," said Townsend.

"You make me sick," shouted Pee-wee.

"How about the big handle up there?" Townsend asked.

"I pulled it," said Pee-wee, "and it doesn't work."

"Exasperating," said Townsend. "I think I'll fry some of those griddle-cakes; let's see, you use flour—and—"

"Don't you touch the eats as long as I'm up here," Pee-wee thundered. "Do you think I'm going to stand up here and see you eat?"

"You could look out of one of the other windows," said Townsend. "I

appreciate how you feel.”

“I feel hungry!” roared Pee-wee.

Townsend arose, sauntered over to the car and dug among the luggage. Returning to his former lolling place, he lay down on his back again and began to eat a banana.

“You throw one of those up here,” Pee-wee shouted.

Townsend took another from his pocket and sitting up threw it so it fell just short of the window.

“You did that on purpose,” roared Pee-wee.

“I’m so weak from hunger that I can’t throw,” said Townsend. “Wait till I’ve had a little nourishment and I’ll try again. Let’s talk about the relay race. No, let’s tell Ford stories. Why is a—”

“*You throw that banana up here, do you hear!*” Pee-wee fairly screamed, glaring down like a frowning judge from his high rostrum, his face decorated with vivid smudges, his scowl terrible to behold.

“Why is this Ford like a stew?” Townsend asked. “Do you give it up?”

“You give that banana up,” shouted Pee-wee. “No fooling—now! Here comes an automobile along the road; now maybe you’ll get arrested for blocking up the road with that big gate and it’ll serve you right.”

“Here you go,” laughed Townsend, throwing the banana so that it struck the round countenance of our hero. “What kind of a car is it, a roadster or a two seater?”

“It’s a roadster,” said Pee-wee, studying it with the glass. “I think it’s a Buick.”

“Inspector’s car probably,” said Townsend languidly.

“You’d better get up,” Pee-wee said.

“You’d better get down,” said Townsend.

“How am I going to do it?” Pee-wee yelled.

“Don’t ask me,” said Townsend. “You’ve got a banana peel; can’t you slip down on that?”

“You think you’re funny,” Pee-wee roared. “I’d like to know how I’m going to get down out of here.”

“So would I,” said Townsend.

“Do you think I can stay here forever? Ask that woman if she’s got a ladder?”

“Got a ladder?” Townsend called to the woman.

“Gottaderlad Idner (shrug) no spick,” said the woman.

“She says the ladder has gone back to Italy,” said Townsend. “Shall I ask the goat?”

“You make me tired,” Pee-wee yelled.

“Have you seen anything of a ladder?” Townsend asked the goat.

“You’re crazy,” Pee-wee shouted.

“He says he ate the ladder for dessert last Sunday,” said Townsend. “How near is the car?”

“It’s coming along fast and it’s a Buick roadster,” said Pee-wee.

In deference, perhaps, to the approaching vehicle, Townsend dragged himself to his feet and, yawning, ambled over to where he had hung his coat. It was not where he left it. But it was not far off.

It lay within the picturesque enclosure, one of its sleeves pulled out, part of its lining in a state comparable to shredded wheat and one of its pockets inside out. Nearby lay the tattered remnant of his leather wallet. Out of the mouth of the billy goat dangled a railroad time-table, partially consumed. He was not a discriminating goat for it was an Erie time-table.

A hasty inspection of the carnage revealed the worst and bespoke a massacre more horrible than the charge of the homeless wasps.

“What’s the matter?” Pee-wee called.

“The goat ate my wallet and eleven dollars and my driver’s license,” called Townsend.

“G—o—o—d *night*!” shouted Pee-wee.

CHAPTER XVII
GONE

Along the straight, even way sped the Buick roadster at about thirty-five miles an hour, for automobile inspectors have a partiality for violating the speed laws.

In the car were Inspector Snagg and Inspector Ketchum. They were, in fact, returning to Newburgh after assisting in quite a haul at a likely spot where highways intersected a little north of the scene of the last recorded harrowing adventures. There, each passing motorist had been held up for his driver's license upon showing which he had been suffered to go his way unmolested. The car came to a stop before the single gate which blocked the right half of the road.

"What's the matter here? Who put this gate down?" demanded Inspector Snagg. "Whose car is that there?"

"It isn't exactly a car," said Townsend quietly, "but it's mine."

"You put that gate down? What's that kid doing up there?"

"He seems to be standing there," said Townsend.

"I climbed up to reconnoiter and the gate fell down," Pee-wee shouted.

"The word *reconnoiter* was too heavy for the gate, it fell down," said Townsend.

The two inspectors were very domineering and self-sufficient. The power of asking questions peremptorily in rapid-fire fashion is quickly learned by detectives and such. An impression of brisk efficiency is thus produced.

Pee-wee and Townsend watched the inspectors push the gate up as far as they could, which was at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and there it stayed. There is no doubt at all that Townsend was apprehensive. As for Pee-wee, he looked down like a true knight from his tower, severe, fearless, frowning. The Italian woman made some concession to the tense situation by craning her neck. The goat preserved a calm and innocent demeanor.

"You kids want to look out how you play with crossing gates," Inspector Ketchum said; "you want to keep your hands off such things. You'd better come down out of there," he added, addressing Pee-wee.

"You're so smart, let's hear you tell me how?" shouted our young hero.

"What's the matter with your face?" the inspector asked.

"I made ointment and put on it on account of getting stung by wasps," said Pee-wee. "I foiled a lot of them."

"Who's driving that car?" the other inspector demanded.

“Nobody’s driving it just now,” said Townsend. “I *was* driving it.”

“Oh, you were, were you?”

“Yes, he was, was he,” shouted Pee-wee from his place of safety. “And he can make it sing, too, and say good-bye and everything, and we’re going to camp in it.”

“Is—*that*—so?” said Inspector Ketchum. “Youse kids is driving it, huh?”

“Only we’re out of gas,” Pee-wee shouted.

“You seem to have plenty of hot air,” said Inspector Snagg. “Which one of youse is drivin’? Youse must think the public highways is a slaughter-house.”

“I was driving,” said Townsend.

“Yere?” said Inspector Snagg sarcastically. “How old are you?”

“He’s seventeen and he’s a patrol leader,” Pee-wee volunteered.

“I’m seventeen,” said Townsend.

“Yere? Got a special, I suppose?”

“Oh, yes,” said Townsend, extremely apprehensive; for it was perfectly apparent that the inspector was speaking in irony and did not believe him.

“Let’s take a look,” said Inspector Snagg, holding out his hand in ironical encouragement.

“I—I—eh—”

“Oh, you haven’t got it, huh?”

“What do you want to see it for?” Pee-wee shouted. “It looks just the same as all the rest of them, they all look alike. It’s just like all the rest of them you saw up the road. What’s the use of looking at it when one’s just like another? Gee whiz, do you call that having sense?”

To this clever argument the inspectors made no reply. Probably they felt that it was unanswerable. But Inspector Snagg continued to hold out his hand to Townsend in an insolently patient and skeptical way. “Come on, Kid,” he said.

“I just lost my license card,” said Townsend; “it was eaten by that goat.”

“*Yere*, is *that so*?”

“Sure it’s so,” screamed Pee-wee, “that shows how much you know about scouts if you think they lie, because I can prove he ate it because he ate eleven dollars, too, and a time-table, you can ask that woman—so now!”

The woman seemed to sense the situation for she emerged from her torpor long enough to pour forth a torrent of gibberish which seemed to be somewhat in the nature of self-defense and an elaborate exoneration of the goat. It concluded with a glowing peroration, seemingly, to the effect that Townsend had no right to hang his coat on her woven wire spring.

“Tell her you’ll buy the goat and then you’ll have the license card,” called Pee-wee.

“How can I buy the goat when the goat’s got all my money?” Townsend

asked.

“Give her your card and tell her you’ll pay her on the way back,” shouted Pee-wee.

“The goat has my cards, too,” said Townsend.

“Well, yer ain’t got it then?” sneered Inspector Snagg.

“Sure he’s got it but it’s in the goat,” screamed Pee-wee.

“Well, you’re a couple of smart, fresh youngsters,” said Inspector Snagg, sweeping aside all argument and explanation. “Now how much gas have you got in that car?”

“Oh, a little bit,” said Townsend.

“Can’t you listen to an argument?” roared Pee-wee.

“Your pal can tell that to the judge,” called the inspector. “He can tell him the goat story. Then if the judge says it’s all right fer kids ter be racin’ along the public highways without—”

“You were coming along thirty-five miles an hour yourselves,” shouted Pee-wee; “I’m not afraid of you!”

“You stay where you are, Kid,” said Townsend in a tone of kindness mingled with disgust. “Don’t worry, I’ll be back or I’ll send somebody. Take it easy.”

He cranked his flivver and it gave Pee-wee a feeling of isolation and homesickness to hear the old engine chugging away and the car shaking and quaking in every bone and joint like a victim of palsy.

“Ride on ahead,” said Inspector Snagg as he and his companion stepped into the official car. “Some nerve, huh?” Pee-wee heard one of them say.

The flivver with its lone driver looked funny as it rattled along the road with the trim roadster behind it. Pee-wee had never had this view of it before. Being without a top or a back it had a queer look, unlike other cars. It seemed like some hapless hoodlum being taken in for throwing stones. Poor, friendly, faithful, dilapidated, ramshackle little flivver! It made Pee-wee despise all Buicks to see that official car, so smug and trim, following after.

The Ford, being topless and backless, Townsend’s form was conspicuous, sitting upright on the front seat as the little cavalcade receded. Pee-wee felt as if the Ford, like Keekie Joe of Barrel Alley, was a member of his patrol. He realized now, as he had not realized before, what a joyous institution was formed by Townsend and his flivver.

The twilight was again spreading its dusky coverlet over the country and Pee-wee felt very strange and lonesome.

CHAPTER XVIII
PEE-WEE DOESN’T WATCH HIS STEP

The sun, which had not been out many hours on that memorable day, withdrew behind the hills, the Italian woman withdrew within her domicile, the billy goat withdrew to his private suite and was soon wrapped in slumber. And night cast its shroud over the quiet countryside.

Pee-wee felt strange and very lonesome. There he was, almost exactly half-way between Bridgeboro and Temple Camp marooned in a railroad tower house. To be sure, his situation was not desperate; occasionally an auto passed along the road, the Italian woman (though apparently not deeply interested in his adventures) was somewhere within call, and, in any case, Townsend would either return or send some one. What Pee-wee could not comprehend was that a perfectly innocent person could be subjected to the indignity of arrest. Townsend had not been able to show his card, therefore he had been taken away. The reason had nothing to do with it. Pee-wee may have heard that the law is blind, but he had never known that it is deaf, dumb and blind.

There was nothing to do now but wait, so he sat on the low shelf which had evidently been a sort of desk, dangling his legs. At first he looked at the pictures in the seven-year-old magazine, but somehow he could not fix his mind on the pictures and he threw the torn, yellow-leaved periodical from him.

Moreover, it was rapidly getting too dark to read. He was not exactly nervous, but he was impatient and anxious. And this feeling increased as the darkness came on apace.

Across the track were the few deserted houses which had constituted the village or settlement. He could see them more clearly from the tower house than he had been able to from the flivver when they had first approached the spot. And now that he was not preoccupied with the distant landscape, he noticed more particularly the scene near at hand.

Across the track, and somewhat back from the road was a large wooden structure, too large for a place of residence. Pee-wee could just make it out among the trees in the gathering darkness. The thought occurred to him that this had once been a factory, the closing down of which, might easily have depopulated the neighborhood. That would account for the railroad gates at such an out-of-the-way spot. Perhaps, before the war, or even during the war, streams of workers had flowed to and from that big structure among the trees.

This supposition of Pee-wee’s was presently confirmed by a new discovery. Glancing along the track to the east he saw that a branch track

curved around behind the supposed factory. This might have been a branch of the railroad, but he thought it was more likely to be just a siding for convenience in shipping goods from the factory.

In the fast approaching darkness he could see these tracks only as two lines; he could not see the ties at all. The rails of the main line shone like silver in the night, but the rails of the siding must have been dull and rusty. From which Pee-wee supposed that they were not in continuous use.

He craned his neck far out of the window to see how far he could follow these branch tracks with his eyes. He could only see that the line curved away behind the large building, the upper part of which was visible among the trees. As he withdrew his gaze from up the track, something small and bright red between the rails closer at hand caught his eye. He might have noticed this more particularly if his mind had not been full of another matter.

As has been said of Pee-wee, whenever he did a thing he went head first. On this occasion he went back first, but with his usual headlong impulsiveness. With the one remaining match which he had he intended to examine the old time-table on the wall and try to determine whether or not the branch track was indeed a branch of the railroad.

He had been sprawled across the low shelf, his neck far out of the window and now as he withdrew into the little apartment he backed against something which yielded to the pressure of his form. He realized at once what he had done. One of the long switch levers which stuck up from the floor at an angle toward him, had been pushed over so that it slanted the other way.

Somewhere in the solemn, silent night and spent in the intervening area of wood and mountain and valley, sounded the deep, melodious whistle of a locomotive.

CHAPTER XIX
THE PANIC

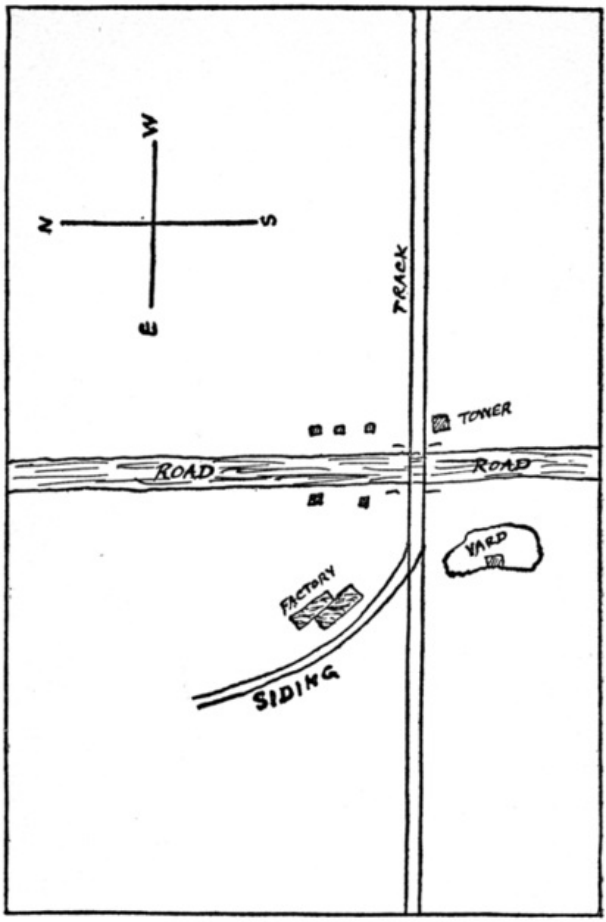
Struggling to his feet, Pee-wee for a moment thought more of a bruised back than of the tragic possibilities of his inadvertent act. His match expired too soon to enable him to glean any information from the old, faded time-table.

It was not till he stood in darkness that the appalling thought came to him that a good deal more than a bruised back might be involved in his stumble. If he had thought quicker he would never have lost the light from that precious match for he knew that in almost every emergency darkness is a terrible handicap.

For just a few seconds he stood, terrified, aghast, at the thought of what he had done. No doubt at the point where that branch left the main track there was a switch. Whether the track which branched off was just a siding or not, made little difference, so far as this emergency was concerned.

The switch had no doubt been set to eliminate the branch track altogether, since the deserted neighborhood and the rusty rails indicated that the branch, or whatever it was, was no longer used. Suppose, then, that Pee-wee had opened the switch. A train coming from the *west* would enter the branch, if it were not traveling too fast. In this latter case a catastrophe would occur at the spot.

If the train were traveling slowly it might make the unintended turn. But if the curving track were only a siding there would be a smash-up where the track ended. If the train were traveling from the *east*, it would be in no danger for on such a junction the switch, however set, would have no effect on trains running in that direction. A glance at the accompanying rough sketch will show this.



In all probability, as Pee-wee realized to his horror, the branch was merely a siding formerly used by the factory, but in any case he knew that a train coming from the *west* would meet disaster a few yards east of the tower house.

One consoling thought he had as he stood in the darkness, his breathing quick and nervous, his mind in a state bordering on panic. He had only to consider the peril awaiting trains from one direction, the west. Oh, if he only had a light! In his terror and panic fear, if he only had a light!

Pee-wee, whose wont it was freely to investigate everything, had always held aloof from railroad apparatus and mechanism as things almost sacred from the touch of amateurs. He had always had a kind of superstitious awe of such things, levers, revolving lights and so forth, which are seen in hiking near railroad tracks.

It is true that he went scout pace along railroad lines in the country for the ties seemed to be just fitted to the stride of his small legs. He occasionally used

a rail as a tight rope, balancing an apple on his head, a stunt which he had learned from Hervey Willetts, a blithesome young daredevil at Temple Camp. But little metal pedestals along the way he shunned.

And now he saw himself as the author of a horrible catastrophe. He tried to recall and decide from which direction the distant whistle had sounded, and to relieve his mind with the thought that perhaps it had not been along this railroad at all. But he found little consolation in these self-queries and thoughts.

Up to this time, Pee-wee was just a terror-stricken boy, horrified and in awful suspense at what he had inadvertently done. And only a few seconds had elapsed. Suddenly he found himself, as one might say, and with a little nervous laugh at his own silly imagination, he grabbed the tall lever to pull it back again. But it would not pull. His first panic had been caused by the fact that he had moved it at all. He was now in a very delirium of fear at not being able to pull it over. Whatever he had done was irrevocable. And probably fatal.

CHAPTER XX
THE SCOUT

Distracted, frenzied, Pee-wee knelt in the darkness and felt about at the base of the long lever. It seemed to enter a metal housing in the floor. More than this, his hurried examination revealed nothing.

He tried again to pull the handle over but it would not budge. He had a frightful feeling that everything he did made matters worse. He was losing his morale.

Suddenly he thought of the other lever close by the one he had moved. What was that for? The lever which had manipulated the gates was of another pattern and away from these two. What was this other one for? If he pushed it over would it undo what he had done? Were the two movements of the switch controlled by the two levers? Maybe, for there was no other switch. Yet there might be another somewhere.

Should he take a chance and push over this other lever?

Oh, if Townsend would only come. If *Townsend would only come*! He put his small hand on the other lever and took it off again. He knelt again to see if he could feel any cogwheels or anything through the grooves in which the levers moved. Oh, if he only had a light and could see. If he could *only see*!

He stood up, the perspiration standing in beads on his face, his throat throbbing from the quick, agitated breaths, almost insane with the feeling of utter powerlessness and of maddening suspense. It seemed as if he had unhinged the universe. At every innocent sound of the night he started. Oh, if Townsend would only—

Suddenly he stood stark still, struck with unspeakable fright, his hands and face icy cold, as he heard again the distant whistle of a train. Where was it? Far or near? The country was so vast and sound travels so in the night and echoes and re-echoes among hills and valleys! Where was it. Was it coming?

Trembling, he groped his way to the window closest to the tracks...

And then, *just then*, the panic-stricken boy disappeared, and in his place there was Walter Harris, scout of the first class, First Bridgeboro, New Jersey, Troop, B. S. A., looking out of the window at something which lay between the shiny rails almost directly below him. It was what he had seen before, a little red spot, only now it was smaller.

He was too agitated to shout his customary announcement that he had an inspiration, but that is what he had. He realized now, what he had not taken the trouble to think about before, that this tiny, luminous patch was a little pile of

live coals dropped by the locomotive that had passed just as the flivver had reached the tracks.

In the daylight he had not noticed it at all. In the dusk, when he had seen it before, it had been larger but less luminous. Now, in the surrounding blackness, it looked like a little red ball. Perhaps, of that little pile, only one coal was still alive. And that would soon die out. As Pee-wee looked down one edge of the red spot seemed to straighten out as the fire left it. He thought that the tiny area of red was narrowing. Even as he looked it had ceased to be round.

But whatever rapid process was going on down there, it was not as rapid as the lightning process of Pee-wee's mind now that it was aroused to action. Here was Pee-wee the scout with a vengeance. He was always thorough and self-sufficient. When he slept no one could awaken him. When he ate no one could stop him. When he talked the world was silent. And when he had an inspiration the solar system had to get from under.

He remembered that the long lever which manipulated the gates was split. He recalled that very distinctly, because he had tried ineffectually to raise the gates with it. It did not work. But he remembered that it was bound around for the whole of its length with cord which had held the split handle together. He cast another hurried glance out of the window at that little diminishing spot of red. It seemed smaller than before, hardly more than a speck now. He looked along the track for just a second listening. Then he looked down again for a reassuring glimpse of the tiny speck of fire.

It was gone.

CHAPTER XXI
SUSPENSE

No, it wasn't, he had looked in the wrong place. He was so excited . . . There it was still, a wee little red speck.

Hurry! Like lightning he groped his way to the gate lever, felt for the place where the cord binding ended, and fixed his teeth there. His scout knife had been arrested along with poor, faithful Liz, but he had his teeth. And he knew how to use them—oh, trust him for that.

In a few seconds he had loosened a strand and chewed it in half. He stood on tiptoe and pulled the end up, thus unwinding the cord mechanically and saving a few precious seconds. It came away and hung like a spiral spring. He pulled it through one hand straightening it to its full length.

Then he groped for the old magazine, here, there . . . Where in all . . . It was lying just before . . . Oh, where in . . .

He had it. Like lightning he poured kerosene on it from the old can, then tied an end of cord around it. The old periodical was dry enough for ready ignition, surely; its yellowed pages were fairly brittle.

All right. He hurried to the window. Now he could hear a far-distant rattling—never mind. Where was the red spot? Gone! No—there it was, hardly more than a spark . . . In ten more seconds . . . Suppose the cord wasn't long enough . . .

There was no time for any bull's-eye practice here. In ten seconds, fifteen at most, the tiny coal . . . No—yes—of course the cord was long enough! "I'm—I'm—I'm always—lucky," breathed Pee-wee. "I—I am—" He heard the whistle of a locomotive now—*in the east*. Pretty far away yet . . . But *hurry*!

If the stone throwers of Barrel Alley had been there that night they would have seen something which ought to have raised the blush of shame upon their dirty faces. They would have seen little Pee-wee Harris of Terrace Avenue, Bridgeboro (where the rich sissies lived), throw a magazine. They would have seen its drift and action so nicely calculated that it alighted plunk upon a little burning ember obscuring it from view. One shot, that was enough. The little master marksman leaned far out of the window, dangling his cord, waiting.

Waiting . . .

There was no cover on that old magazine. But on the soaked and faded page which did duty as a cover was the smiling countenance of Posy Brazen, the famous movie star. That enchanting visage fell face down and presently a

radiant spot appeared upon her cheek which would have delighted her. But suddenly it burst into flame and Posy Brazen went up in a blaze of glory.

Quickly, like a dextrous angler, Pee-wee hauled up the magazine before the spreading flame had touched the cord. He had ready in the other hand an iron bar perhaps a yard in length which had leaned upright against the window jam and had probably been used for propping up the departed sash. He laid the burning magazine open over this bar holding it well clear of the house. Then he allowed himself a breathing spell of just a second.

This flaming torch would do well enough for a makeshift signal, only it would not last long. Pee-wee had but one hand disengaged, but the feeling of infinite relief which came over him enabled him to do calmly what was still to be done. It was not an easy matter. With the light which his projecting torch shed in the little enclosure he was able with one hand to remove the oil receptacle from one of the red lanterns. It was much rusted but he managed it and was glad to find that the dried out wick was intact.

The hardest part was filling the little container, which he stood on the floor under the faucet of the old oil tank, and replacing it in the lantern. But these things were camparatively easy; anything was easy now that he had his flaming signal flying, and his suspense was over.

Yet still this sturdy little hero had a vague feeling that he would be blamed, condemned, and perhaps punished. He still felt that he was trifling with things too important for his young hands—good little scout that he was. He was doing his best, and a very glorious best it was, but he had unhinged the universe and he was still fearful and apprehensive of what would happen to *him*. From which you will see that he was not one of those self-sufficient super boys that one reads about.

PEE-WEE HELD THE BURNING MAGAZINE WELL
CLEAR OF THE HOUSE.

The work of lighting the red lantern with his flaming torch was not easy but it was not so difficult, though he burned his fingers. This done he cast the magazine from the iron bar well clear of the little tower house. Then he tied the red lantern to the end of the bar and tried to devise a way of lodging the bar so that it would remain in its horizontal position, projecting from the window. This, with all his ingenuity, he could not do so he leaned out of the window holding the rod with his tired, nimble, little hands.

“Anyway, gee whiz, that was a dandy inspiration,” he panted in a feeling of exquisite relief. “It shows I got a lot of resources, you bet.”

He meant *resource* but what’s the difference?

CHAPTER XXII
PEE-WEE LAYS DOWN THE LAW TO THE JUDGE

Down out of the mountains came the night express, thundering along, fifty-seven minutes late. It awakened the echoes from the surrounding hills and scattered the little creatures of the bordering woods like a mighty, conquering autocrat. Indomitable, heedless it went its way.

Its weary passengers gazed listlessly out of the windows into the darkness; some of them slept. It skirted Shelving Mountain, startling that wooded giant with its call, and the answer came distant and faint as if the mountain were almost asleep.

Along the straight, even stretch westward it picked up to sixty-three miles and telegraphed its clamorous clanking and rattling along the sensitive rails miles and miles ahead. Such an uproar in the quiet night!

Suddenly Justice Dopett of the New Jersey Supreme Court got a bunk in the head and he sat up rubbing his learned dome sympathetically with his aged hand. The lady sitting just in front of him had likewise been aroused out of her slumber by the sudden jolt as the cars shunted prior to the quick stop.

“What’s the matter?” everyone asked, rather apprehensively.

No one seemed to know.

“Anything wrong?” two or three asked a brake-man who hurried through the train.

“Guess not,” he grumbled.

There is something very disturbing about a train stopping suddenly. And this is the more so because it is so difficult to get information from the powers in control. They hurry back and forth in a mysterious manner possible of the gravest interpretation and no one is the wiser.

On this occasion, however, the passengers in the first car were fortunate in receiving their information directly from headquarters. It seemed to be poured down on them from above in buckets full. It streamed in through the open windows on the breeze. Nothing was withheld.

“I stopped the train because on account of not knowing if the switch was open,” Pee-wee shouted. “I shinnied up the gate and it went down and it wouldn’t come up again and I didn’t have any supper yet. I bumped against the handle and moved it, that’s why I stopped the train and a goat ate my chum’s driver’s license so he got arrested but anyway he’s coming back. I heard the train whistling and, gee whiz, I hurried and I didn’t have any supper yet.”

There was quite a little furore. The conductor seemed to think that Pee-wee

was much to be blamed; he spoke severely about small boys meddling with railroad property, and so on and so on. The men passengers took a different view. They agreed with Pee-wee and thought he was a hero, which was just what he thought himself. The women passengers were staggered at the idea of his not having had any supper.

Some of the people stood about on the ground while others gazed from car platforms and windows while the hero (who was certainly the centre of attraction) was assisted down from his aerial prison by means of a stout rope which had been hastily brought out of the baggage car.

This Pee-wee fastened to the cross-beam in the tower house and dangling it thence down and out through the window was able to make a truly scoutish descent, locking each foot in a turn of the rope as he lowered himself.

“Don’t hold on to it,” he shouted, “because the end of it has to be loose, that’s the way you can come down from a house when it’s on fire.”

“Well, sir,” said a stern voice among the curious, flattering throng; “so this is Doctor Harris’ boy, eh? Well, now, what are you doing here?”

Upon realizing the staggering fact that he was being addressed by Justice Dopett of Grantly Square, Bridgeboro, Pee-wee nearly collapsed. And naturally enough, for Justice Dopett was not only the friend and neighbor of John Temple, founder of Temple Camp, but a scout councilman as well and a very devoted friend and patron of the local organization. He was Bridgeboro’s most distinguished citizen (with the exception of Pee-wee himself) and he was known far and wide.

“Well, sir,” he said, surprised and amused. “What *are* you doing *here*? Such a small boy to stop such a big train.” At which the curious throng laughed.

“I could stop a bigger one than that,” said Pee-wee. “If you have resources you can stop them.” At which the throng laughed still more.

“Anyway, I’m glad I met you because you’re a judge,” Pee-wee vociferated, “and you know all about those things, so is a feller—has he got a right to drive a car if a goat eats his license? He can’t help it, can he? Gee whiz, that’s not fair, is it? Townsend Ripley, you know him, he got arrested from here because a goat across the road ate his license and eleven dollars too, so he can’t even pay a fine. Gee whiz, that isn’t fair, is it? Maybe they won’t let him come back even, so do you call that fair?”

Justice Dopett, who had resolved many puzzling questions, seemed to regard this one as a poser.

“I bet it’s a teckinality, hey?” said Pee-wee. “Yes, it’s a technicality,” said the judge, amid much laughter. “I think the best thing for you boys to do is to —”

“I know what you’re going to say,” Pee-wee vociferated, “and we’re not

going to go home no matter what, because we're not quitters, because you know all about scouts, you made a speech and said so, and we're going to drive to Temple Camp anyway, no matter what, because we started. No siree, I don't care about teckinalities or anything, we're going to drive to Temple Camp and I'm going to stay here till Townsend gets back and if they keep him there, I'll get a habis corpse because he couldn't help it if the goat ate his license, could he?"

"What was it, a Ford car?" an amused travelling man asked.

"He didn't eat the car, he only ate the license," said Pee-wee.

"Oh," said the man.

"And I didn't have any supper either," said Pee-wee.

CHAPTER XXIII
WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS

What Justice Dopett might have tried to persuade Pee-wee to do if there had been more time, one cannot predict. Apparently he did not relish the idea of leaving the little hero from his home town alone at the spot. But there was Townsend to be considered. The situation seemed unusual.

And moreover, though the law's delays are well known, the engineer of an express train is not usually in favor of dilatory tactics. At first the justice seemed disposed to stop over himself but he revised this friendly inclination and wrote a note "to whom it might concern" on an official letter-head which he had in his wallet.

That note is still a treasured possession of the new Alligator Patrol. Like the Declaration of Independence it is shown to the curious at the Bridgeboro Scout Headquarters, and tenderfoot scouts contemplate it with reverence and awe.

It stated that Townsend Ripley and Walter Harris were personally known to the writer, that they were scouts, and that to the certain knowledge of the writer the elder of the two boys had qualified and received a New Jersey license to drive an automobile. It stated further that this license card had been "unavoidably lost en route" (that was the phrase Pee-wee liked best) and that another had not yet been issued.

The writer requested that his personal certification of Townsend Ripley's authority and competency to drive a car be accepted till the hoys reached their destination. It was signed with the imposing official signature of Justice Dopett, of the State Supreme Court and if it had been the Emancipation Proclamation of Lincoln, Pee-wee could not have guarded it more fearfully.

During all this excitement a couple of trainmen had gone ahead and examined the old switch. They found it set as it had been for seven years past, securely fixed and powerless to beguile a train to catastrophe. Its deadly fangs had been pulled; a little iron wedge locked it securely and no amount of pulling could have changed it. The lever against which Pee-wee had stumbled had long been disconnected.

But they did not bother to tell Pee-wee this; they were in too great a hurry to get away. All they told him was that he had better keep away from railroad property. So the owner of the sturdy little brown arm that held the red lantern out and of the keen, anxious eyes that watched the dying ember down below, never knew that his splendid exploit had been quite superfluous.

He had stopped a train of eleven cars and two baggage cars (he counted them as the train moved away) and he had done it because he “had resources” and that was all he thought about. As he stood in the road, a tiny figure in the vast darkness waiting for the train to move away, the passengers waved cheerily to him and the funny travelling man called down out of the smoking room of the Pullman for him not to worry about the license disagreeing with the goat for it was only a license for a small car.

“You bet your life he won’t get this,” called Pee-wee, clutching the judge’s letter. “Gee whiz, you bet your life he won’t get this.”

CHAPTER XXIV
PEE-WEE FIXES IT

As the train moved past him, Pee-wee was conscious of a feeling of loneliness; it was so bright and cheery inside the cars. Now that his spirit was no longer supported by the emergency, and his suspense was gone, the deserted houses and the woods oppressed him.

Moreover, now that he had time to think of other things, he was haunted with misgivings about Townsend. Suppose they should hold him in jail. That great oracle, Justice Dopett, had not said that they would *not* do so. Suppose they should.

Pee-wee wondered what he should do if Townsend did not return in an hour—two hours. Neither of them had any money, Pee-wee realized that. The goat had elected himself treasurer. Well, he would wait a little while, maybe an hour, and then he would start walking to the nearest town where he supposed his friend would be held as a hostage.

“Gee whiz, one thing anyway, I always treated animals good,” he complained aloud.

He left the woods and the deserted houses to infer that the goat had been a thankless creature. He was hungry now, too, and there seemed no prospect of supper. He might search in the darkness for moss which he knew to be a scout “resource” for baffling the demon of starvation. But he did not feel like eating moss. He wanted some fried bacon. It seemed as if fate had been very unkind to him. The billy goat had the driver’s license and all the money and Liz had all the food . . .

The last car moved slowly by, a child sucking a stick of candy glanced curiously out at the diminutive cause of all the trouble and then—

Then, directly across the tracks two bright lights stared at him in the unobstructed highway; two lights looking cross-eyed.

“What’s the matter with that train? Has it got the sleeping sickness?” Townsend asked. “What are *you* doing down on the ground?”

“Townsend!” said Pee-wee.

“That’s me, help me lift the ladder off the car; what’s new?”

“A lot of adventures are new; I stumbled against the big handle that moves the switch and—and—you know I told you there was a magazine up there? Well, when I knew I must have—where did you put the bananas?—When I knew I must have moved the switch on that side track up there where there’s a factory that isn’t one any more that you didn’t see, I didn’t have any matches

—*listen*—I didn't have any matches—"

"Well, I guess we'll have to go home," said Townsend, "so we won't need any matches."

"What do you mean *go home*?" roared Pee-wee.

"Oh, they tell me I'd better not try running my car without a license. I got off this time, I suppose, because I didn't have any money and they didn't like to send me to jail; maybe the jail's full or something. They made me feel like a pickpocket; justice of the peace said he'd heard fish stories before but never heard a goat story—"

"He thinks he's smart," Pee-wee shouted.

"I've heard lots of goat stories. He thinks he's smart! I—"

"Well, I'll tell you how it is, Kid," said Townsend with an air of resignation. "You see—"

"I don't care what you say, I'm not going to go home," shouted Pee-wee. "If they send me to jail I'll keep on eating so they can't afford to keep me."

"I dare say that's why they *didn't* keep me," said Townsend; "because there's no money in it. But don't you see, Kid, that with no license card and with me looking so young they're going to stop me and haul me in at every plaguy town we pass through. If I looked old enough to have a license, probably no one would stop me and I'd take a chance. But we're going to be stopped in Kingston, we're going to be stopped in Saugerties, we're going to be stopped in Catskill, we're going to have no end of trouble. The hardest thing to make people believe is the truth, sometimes—Kid," Townsend added wistfully.

During the dismal rehearsal of their probable adventures, Pee-wee, looking darkly significant, had restrained himself with difficulty. Indeed it was only by the happy inspiration of using the banana as a gag that he was able to control his voice at all. He now exploded like a stick of dynamite.

"The truth is something or other and will—will what do you call it—I can prove—"

"Yes, I've heard that," said Townsend; "the truth is mighty and will prevail. But goat stories don't go."

"*That*—"

"I know, Kid, but I got a good calling down in court. I was told I'd better cut out the goat story and get back out of the state of New York before I get locked up. I'm not going to tell a string of lies all the way to camp, I'm not built that way. I'd rather be knocked down than be talked to the way that little hay-seed justice of the peace—"

"If you'll keep still a minute," screamed Pee-wee, "I'll tell you something to knock you down, *so there*. *Read that letter!* Then see what you think—you're so scared!"

Stooping in front of one of the cross-eyed headlights, Townsend read the momentous document. “Where in goodness’ name did you get this?” he asked.

“I got it on account of having resources,” Pee-wee shouted; “only you won’t give me a chance to tell you.”

“Go ahead, Kid,” Townsend said, almost too astonished to speak.

In the greatest excitement, Pee-wee told of all that had happened during his companion’s absence. He talked vociferously, continuously,—coming up occasionally for air.

“So *now* what do you say?” he concluded with an air of scathing accusation.

“I say we find a good place to eat supper and then turn in for the night, Kid,” said Townsend; “I’m tired out. Then we can make a fresh start for Catskill in the morning. This has been a terrible day, we’ll count it out.”

“*We will not*,” roared Pee-wee. “A day with a lot of dandy adventures like this? Gee whiz, I’ll count to-morrow out if you want to, but not to-day.”

“Well, there’s one good thing left about to-day,” said Townsend.

“What’s that?”

“Supper.”

“You said it,” said Pee-wee.

CHAPTER XXV
HE GOES TO CONQUER

They found a good camping place a little farther along, parked Lizzie at the side of the road, and ate their late supper with a relish. (Fried bacon, toast, marmalade, and rice cakes with *exasperated* milk on them, to use Pee-wee's own word.)

Pee-wee said that he always liked supper after adventures, but that he also liked it before adventures. There was only one thing about supper that he did not like and that was that after he had eaten it he wasn't hungry any more.

Inspired by the hot meal and the spirit of their little camp-fire, he enlarged on his adventure of the evening and listened to Townsend's less harrowing narrative of his own arraignment for "driving a motor vehicle without a license" and so forth and so forth and so forth. He had been dismissed with a reprimand and told not to be caught again in the State of New York without his card.

"Don't you care," said Pee-wee, wrestling with a queer specimen of culinary architecture which might have been a club sandwich struck by a cyclone; "if they stop us now we won't care, because we've got the letter and anyway I've got an idea, I just thought of it. If you could kind of be disguised as a grown-up person, sort of, with a regular coat on or something like that, probably they wouldn't stop us unless we ran into another offensive drive—"

"Intensive," said Townsend.

"So wouldn't that be a good idea?"

"It would be a good idea, Kid, only I haven't got any disguise. And we haven't got any gasoline either, if anybody should ask you. I doubt if we can make the village I just came from; we're up against it. It beats anything how it holds out. I'd start out to-night again only I'm afraid we'd get stuck in the road and I don't want to get stuck in the road at night. There's a gas station in a barn about a mile up the road; there's a big boarding-house there, but I hate like the dickens to—"

"Scouts can't ask favors," Pee-wee shouted. "They're supposed to have resources and—"

"Well, my resources are just a dime at present," said Townsend.

"Listen," shouted Pee-wee, "I've got an inspiration. It's a dandy idea. All we need is ten cents and a big boarding-house!"

"Do you make gasoline by mixing those together?" Townsend asked. "Take one large boarding-house, stir thoroughly, and add ten—"

“*You’re crazy*—listen! There are lots of women at boarding-houses, aren’t there? They’ve all got scissors and things to be sharpened. Last year when I was at Snailsdale Manor Farm a man came around sharpening knives and scissors and things, ten cents each. He made a lot of money. Listen, Townsend, you stop laughing and listen—wait till I finish eating this rice cake and I’ll tell you—you—you—maybe even we don’t need ten cents. Have you got any emery cloth—for spark-plugs and things?”

“I guess I could scare up a couple of sheets.”

“Then all we have to do—*listen*—all we have to do is—have you got rims that come off? Sure you have. All we have to do is jack up the back wheels and take the tire and the rim off one of them and tack emery cloth all the way round; it’ll last to sharpen about twenty pairs of scissors and things. Gee whiz, it’s better to have resources than go asking favors, isn’t it? We’ll make a great hit, *you see*! You be the one to sharpen the things and I’ll be the one to shout, hey?”

The proposal to turn one of the rear wheels of his flivver into a grindstone at first struck Townsend as preposterous but on reflecting he saw no reason why this could not be done. Emery cloth, tacked on the edge of a wheel would not last long, but it would last a little while, and if business was good they could probably get some more emery cloth at the village where the big boarding-house was. The element of comedy which their outlandish device would have would in itself be something of a drawing card. The world likes to see people (especially boys) original and industrious. It always pays its tribute to ingenuity.

“It’ll be a kind of a show, too,” Pee-wee said.

And, indeed, so it proved. Pee-wee knew his public. He had enlivened the tedium of summer boarding-houses before, but this proved his master stroke. It was “just what they wanted,” to quote the advertisements.

Early in the morning they set forth, the gasoline so low in the tank that Townsend, wriggle and jounce as he would, could not arouse an answering splash from the depths below him. “There’s just about enough to take a grease spot out with,” he said cheerily. In the promising sunshine of Pee-wee’s presence he seemed to have regained his wonted spirit.

“You leave them to me,” Pee-wee said; “you let me do the talking, see?” Townsend agreed to this since there was no way of preventing it. “Right after breakfast they always come out on the porch and sew and do things like that; some of them take constitutions but most of them sew. That’s the time to catch them.”

“Constitutionals, Kid.”

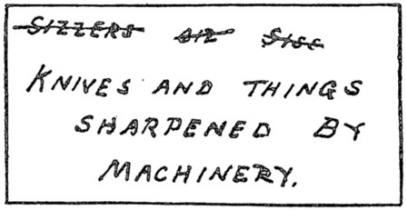
“What’s the difference?”

At the tactical hour of 9:30 A. M. a dilapidated, topless flivver might have

been seen and heard moving up the winding private road to Brookside Villa. It made no attempt to steal upon the summer boarders unaware, but rattled and squeaked, and proclaimed its coming to the world.

Townsend, hatless as usual and wearing his gray flannel shirt, sat upright at the wheel with a humorous complacency which added a piquant touch to his hobo vehicle. Pee-wee was resplendent in his full scout regalia, merit badges and all.

Under the spell of his new enterprise, he had subjected his kit to another upheaval in order to procure his best scout suit. Also he had taken up one of the floor boards of the poor Ford and with a piece of black chalk used for making scout signs, had printed on it in glaring letters:



KNIVES AND THINGS SHARPENED
BY MACHINERY.

He had, on second thought (or, to be more exact, on fourth thought) decided, for sufficient reasons, to omit the word scissors and include it under the general heading of *things*. This sign he hung like a banner on his scout staff and bore aloft like some doughty crusader of old as he sat beside Townsend in the flivver.

But the people sitting on the lawn and porches of the big old-fashioned house knew not what was going on in the heart of our redoubtable young hero as they saw the festive caravan approach and, giving a spasmodic medley of squeaks and rattles, stop before the main porch.

“Suppose we haven’t got gas enough to grind one scissors,” Pee-wee whispered.

“It will only take four or five revolutions of the wheel to do that,” said Townsend. “Half a pint of gas ought to earn us the price of four or five gallons.”

“Leave them to me,” said Pee-wee darkly.

CHAPTER XXVI
BUSINESS IS PLEASURE

With an air of profound seriousness and businesslike briskness, Townsend jacked up the rear of the flivver, removed the tire and rim, and proceeded to tack strips of emery cloth continuously around the wooden edge of the wheel. Two or three curious children watched him but most of the boarders were too preoccupied watching and listening to Pee-wee to note these preparations.

Our hero planted his flaunting banner between the car and the spacious veranda and stood beneath it as if he were taking possession of the whole place in the name of the Boy Scouts of America. His voice assailed the porch and reached the neighboring lawn and penetrated to the rooms which overlooked it. Here and there, blinds were thrown open revealing the faces of astonished sojourners at the quiet resort.

PEE-WEE PLANTED HIS BANNER IN FRONT OF THE VERANDA.

From one window an agitated old lady hurled a suitcase evidently under the impression that the place was on fire. It landed on Pee-wee's head which only seemed to push his voice out more forcibly through his mouth.

"Scissors and knives sharpened, ten cents! Scissors and knives sharpened by Townsend Ripley and his shivers slizzer—I mean scissors grinding flivver! Have your knives and scissors and corn-cutters and everything sharpened by the Boy Scouts! Don't patronize professional flivver sharpeners—I mean scissors sharpeners—they are profiteers. Here you are, bring out anything that's dull—"

"I'm having a perfectly *beastly dull* time," a girl interrupted him. "Can you sharpen that?" Indeed he was already sharpening that, for the guests were all

laughing.

“Sure I can sharpen that!” Pee-wee shouted, “Bring it out! Only ten cents!”

“I’m reading a pretty dull novel,” said a lady. “We can sharpen everything,” Pee-wee shouted. “We don’t care what it is. After the sharpening is over we give a special side show exhibition that sharpens dull times and everything—don’t fail to wait and see Scout Ripley and his talking Ford—it dances, it sings, it, it lays down—”

“I wouldn’t be surprised,” laughed a man.

But no amount of laughing could drown Pee-wee out. “Have your knives and scissors and pencils and everything sharpened by the Ford that got arrested because a goat ate the auto license! See the letter wrote—written—by Judge Dopett of the highest court that proves our essentials—”

“Credentials,” whispered Townsend.

“I mean credentials,” shouted Pee-wee. “Be able to tell your great grandparents—”

“Children,” whispered Townsend.

“Be able to tell your great grandchildren that you had your scissors sharpened on the famous talking Ford that had its license eaten by a goat! Here you are! Only ten cents. Three for a quarter.” He added as an afterthought.

Dull times must indeed have prevailed at Brookside Villa, for not a knife or scissors was withheld. The raised wheel at which Townsend kneeled whizzed around, sharpening knife after knife and scissors after scissors until there was not a particle of emery left in the emery cloth nor a drop of gasoline in the tank. Still a little pile of familiar domestic implements, which had partaken of the general dullness of the place, lay on the running board of the car awaiting the touch of the whizzing emery. And there was no dullness of any kind at Brookside Villa any more.

Best of all, there was nearly three dollars in the little drinking cup which stood on a stump near the flivver.

It would be hard to determine whether the boarders were better pleased at having the dullness taken out of their knives and scissors or out of their lives, for a while at least. Alas, neither form of dullness would be long in abeyance. The emery treatment would not last long, the entertainment was but the thing of an hour.

But if a laugh isn’t worth ten cents with a sharpened scissors thrown in as a premium, why then a scout might as well beg and be done with it. When you consider the overhead expenses, you can’t make people laugh and sharpen scissors for less than ten cents—it can’t be done.

CHAPTER XXVII
TOWNSEND AND HIS FLIVVER

“I think boy scouts are wonderful,” said a lady boarder.

“Sure they are,” Pee-wee agreed. “They can’t take anything for a service; they can’t take any money unless they earn it. They’re supposed to almost starve and then think up a way not to, kind of. See?”

He sat on the edge of the porch waiting for Townsend to transform the grindstone back into a wheel. “They have to depend on themselves,” he added. “You can’t starve them because they can eat roots. Of course that isn’t saying they won’t eat pie.”

“I understand,” said a man.

“They eat most everything,” Pee-wee said.

“Oh, how terrible,” said a girl.

“You don’t call that terrible, do you?” said Pee-wee. “They can imitate any kind of an animal.”

“Can they imitate a calliope?” the girl asked.

“Is it an animal?” demanded Pee-wee.

“No, it’s a thing that makes a noise by steam; it’s about fifty noises at once.”

“If I heard it I could imitate it,” Pee-wee said.

“I think you do imitate one very well,” laughed the girl.

Pee-wee took this as a compliment. “How many different noises can you make?” he asked.

“I can only make one noise when you’re around,” said the girl, “and that is to laugh.”

“That means you can imitate a hyena,” said Pee-wee, “because they laugh; girls and hyenas are all the time laughing; they laugh for not any reason.”

“Oh, thank you,” said the girl.

“Jackasses too,” said Pee-wee.

“Oh, thank you, *so much*.”

“Well,” said a lonely looking man whose penknife had undergone treatment, “I wish you fellows were going to stay here. But if you have to go, why my car is in the barn and I can drain a little gas out of it to accommodate you. You could—you could buy it, you know,” he added.

He evidently had a pretty correct estimate of scout principles. But on learning that there was a supply station only a few yards north of the Brookside Villa grounds, our heroes decided to escort the car that far by hand.

Their departure was therefore even more impressive than their arrival, Townsend pushing the car while Pee-wee steered it along the private way and out into the high road.

With their tank replenished by a five-gallon supply, they were ready for the last stage of their momentous journey.

"We ought to make Kingston in an hour," said Townsend. "What d'you say, Liz? We ought to hit Saugerties about noontime—"

"You should never hit anybody under your size," said Pee-wee; "Saugerties is a small place."

"Well, then *you* can hit it," said Townsend. "Then Kingston, then Catskill; and we ought to be at camp by about two. That's allowing for two blow-outs, three short circuits, a puncture and fourteen hold-ups by the upstate cops. I'll throw in a leaky radiator just to be on the safe side."

"Of course if we should have any *unexpected* troubles it would take us longer. I'm just figuring on the regular every-day program." Then, as they rattled along, he sang one verse of a song which had nine million verses, all of which he knew. He had a way of making the flivver accompany him with certain noises and tooting the horn twice as a sort of orchestral finale:

"When the rear end starts a-bumping,
And the engine starts a-thumping,
And the top falls down and hits you in the neck;

When the water starts a-hissing,
And three cylinders are missing,
Will you love me when my flivver is a wreck?"

"Gee whiz, I don't see how the top can fall down and hit me," said Pee-wee. "Do you call that logic?"

"Once it had a fine top, Kid," said Townsend. "A top that could fall down—easily—every ten minutes. A real top. It can't fall down any more, Kid," he added sadly. "It would if it could; you shouldn't make fun of it."

"How can I make fun of it when it isn't there?" Pee-wee shouted.

"That's just it," said Townsend; "you talk behind its back when it isn't here to fall down on you. Do you call that chivalrous?"

"You're crazy," said Pee-wee.

Townsend, sitting up straight in his funny, complacent way as if he were driving a golden chariot, sang:

"When the front wheels are a-wriggling,
And the busted hood is jiggling,
And the rusty springs they jounce you all about;

When the squeaking never ceases,
And the windshield is in pieces,
Will you love me when my Lizzie's down and out?"

"You bet your life I will," said Pee-wee. "Gee whiz, after this whenever I think of you, I'll think of this Ford; you're kind of like partners."

"In adversity?" said Townsend. "And you won't be ashamed of us when we get to Temple Camp? I wonder what they'll think of us there. I'm kind of anxious to see the place, I've heard so much of it from you."

"Gee whiz, I'll always stick up for you and your flivver," said Pee-wee.

Townsend stuck his feet up where the lower pane of the windshield had once been and hummed as he caressed the steering-wheel fondly.

"When both the brakes are braking,
And the rattling doors are shaking,
And you sit upon the bare springs in the seat;

Will you love me like you uster,
When she's crowing like a rooster,
And the oilcloth cushions look like shredded wheat?"

CHAPTER XXVIII
ADVENTURES WITH A FLIVVER—CONTINUED

Townsend would never sing any of these verses when Pee-wee wanted him to. Pee-wee's appetite for them soon became voracious. It was usually when something went wrong (which was about every ten minutes) that Townsend would edify his small companion with a new verse while making some small repair or adjustment. At such trying moments his affection for the car seemed to pass all bounds. His plaintive query would then take wings and his loving soul burst into song, greatly to Pee-wee's amusement.

The flivver ran true to form to a point a mile or two south of Kingston, keeping up a series of weird noises which Townsend called the *Orphans of the Storm* chorus, the uncanny sounds being caused by the flivver's recent exposure to the rain. He then predicted new squeaks which would soon join in the chorus and they did.

They were stopped once by a rural official who was on a hay wagon, with a vast load of hay as a pedestal for his dignity. Townsend, for the fun of the thing, kept tooting his horn for the hay load to get out of the way (a thing manifestly impossible), upon its failure to do which he drove up close behind it to give Pee-wee a demonstration of how the Ford could eat hay by drawing it in through the radiator openings.

The flivver's mouth was about full of this luscious refreshment, the hay streaming out of it, when the driver emerged over the mountainous load and demanded to know, "Who told you you cud drive a car anyways, I'd liketerknow."

"No one had to tell us," said Townsend; "we always knew it."

Upon which, presto, a strand of green suspender was drawn aside, like a boudoir curtain, revealing a coy and modest official badge on the gingham shirt. Upon which, presto, out came Justice Dopett's letter, which drove the constable back into the fastness of his hay load again. Townsend quietly got out and pulled the hay out of the radiator openings, and that was the end of the incident.

It proved, however, but the suggestive prelude to a series of troubles. Indeed, the nearer they approached to Kingston the farther away it seemed. They had a puncture, then a blow-out, then a detour. And scarcely had they regained the main road in the neighborhood of the New Paltz and Highland Turnpike, when something happened which was beyond Townsend's ministrative powers; the Ford went wrong in a new and wholly original place.

“That’s one thing I like about her,” he said, as he closed the hood after a fruitless inspection. “When anything goes wrong that I can’t fix, it always happens near a garage. This seems to be the fan belt.”

“Gee whiz, I should think you could fix that,” said Pee-wee, peering down through the glassless windshield; “fan belts are simple.”

“They’re simple, Kid,” said Townsend; “and that’s where they’re deceiving. You trust them and then they disappear. This one was as simple as a little lamb, but it’s gone. I can’t fix a belt when it’s gone. Do you want to trot back along the road and see if you see it anywhere? If you find it tell it to come back—all is forgiven.”

Pee-wee went scout pace back along the road for a hundred yards or so but there was no sign of the elusive fan belt. He picked up a dead snake which had been run over and was so covered with dust that at first glimpse he thought it might be the truant belt. He brought it back with him on the supposition that it might possibly do.

“Couldn’t you use my scout belt either?” he asked.

“Your scout belt has important duties to perform, Kid. No, we’ll have to go to the garage, much as I hate to do it. Now you begin to appreciate this flivver. Where would you find another car—Cadillac, Pierce, I don’t care what—that would break down almost in front of a garage? Look at that garage not a hundred yards ahead of us! Some car, hey? Can you beat her?”

Pee-wee could not see the logic of this, though indeed he had learned to love Townsend’s Ford. It did seem to have a kind of mulish intelligence.

It must have been approaching noontime when Townsend, proudly complacent, steered his hobo of a car majestically into the little country garage which was but a few yards ahead of them, and tooted the horn.

It may be added that the one thing about Townsend’s Ford which *always* worked was the horn. Perhaps this was because it was not a Ford horn at all. It was a Winton horn which he had adopted and it had a melodious, commanding voice full of aristocratic richness. Gasoline boys, and mechanics, storekeepers even, rushed pell-mell when they heard it as if they expected to find the president of the United States waiting without.

“What kind of a horn have you got connected with that car?” the astonished proprietor of the little garage inquired as he made his appearance from a yard in the rear.

“You mean what kind of a car have I got connected with this horn,” said Townsend. “I’ve been using this car on this horn for a couple of years; I suppose I’ll have to get a new car put on it soon. Have you got any fan belts?”

“Your belt bust? Gosh, she’s steamin’ain’t she?”

“It left the party,” said Townsend.

“It’s a quitter,” said Pee-wee.

“Guess I can rig you up somethin’,” said the man. “Are you in any hurry?”

“Tell him *no*,” Pee-wee whispered. He was by now so thoroughly in the spirit of travelling that he began to dread reaching their destination. He wanted to extend their journey, or the time of it, and be alone with Townsend for another whole day. With all his ingenuity he had not thought of any way of fixing this. But now the companionable flivver seemed disposed to fix it for him.

From their last camping place they had averaged about three miles an hour. It was altogether characteristic of Pee-wee that he had forgotten all about his famous relay race and his unknown pal. Townsend was his pal and he was having the time of his life and that was enough for him.

CHAPTER XXIX
“RESOURCES”

The garage man said he would put a new fan belt on as soon as he finished work on another car. That, he said, would be about five o’clock. The belt would cost seventy cents and the labor of adapting it to the Ford would be fifty cents. They make you flat prices in the country and do things cheap.

Out of the two dollars and sixty cents which the travellers had earned they had spent a dollar and thirty-five cents for five gallons of gas. This left them a dollar and twenty-five cents. The repair would cost them one dollar and twenty cents which would leave them just exactly one nickel. They would be in no predicament, however, since they had gas enough to carry them to camp and food enough to carry them to the North Pole. Their poverty was on the goat’s conscience, if he had any.

Before leaving the garage they selected a light lunch out of their inexhaustible store, in procuring which Pee-wee strewed the floor and seat of the car with packages and canned goods.

“Never mind them now, we’ll pick them up later,” he said, as he selected a couple of bananas, a package with a few cookies in it, and several cakes of chocolate. “We won’t bother to cook any lunch, hey, because we’ll take a hike?”

“Yes, and cook when we get back.”

Thus hastily equipped with a “walking lunch” they sallied forth and, after rambling about the neighboring village, decided to hike down to the Hudson which their map showed to be about two miles distant.

“Let’s hire a boat and go for a row, hey?” said Pee-wee, munching his lunch as he trudged along at Townsend’s side.

“What, with five cents?” laughed Townsend. “What’s the use hiring one? Let’s buy one? We’ve got resources.”

“You think you’re smart, don’t you?” Pee-wee said. “Resources mean kind of in your brain, sort of. Like if I was starving in the woods—*hunters*, they can’t starve. They can eat herbs,—even bark off trees, they can. Gee whiz, you’re a patrol leader and you don’t know about those things. In the handbook it says how you don’t have to starve—*ever*—because there was a famous guide and he got lost and all his food was eaten by a—”

“A goat—”

“A bear.”

“His license and everything?”

“And he couldn’t find his way,” Pee-wee panted, eating a banana and trying to keep up with Townsend, “and he saw the bear sneaking off and then he knew which was the north, because mostly bears go south like in the night when they’re after food and so he was sneaking north—”

“He must have swallowed the man’s compass,” said Townsend. “That’s why he turned to the north.”

“And do you—*you’re crazy*—do you know what that man did? He ate wintergreen and sassafras and so he didn’t starve. He dug up roots, that’s what he did, and chewed them and some men that started for the North Pole ate leather, even. So you can’t starve—scouts can’t. Because nature is your slave, see?”

“What could be nicer?” said Townsend.

“And besides that,” said Pee-wee, working his mouth and legs to their full capacity, “you can’t famish because, do you know why? The stars—the big dipper—”

“Sure, I suppose you could drink out of that,” said Townsend.

“That shows how crazy you are!” roared Pee-wee. “You’re crazier than Roy Blakeley and he’s crazier than a whole insane asylum. The stars guide you, don’t you know that much? Do you know any stars?”

“Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin,” said Townsend thoughtfully; “let’s see, Mary Pickford—”

To do justice to his towering contempt, Pee-wee hurriedly swallowed a cookie he was eating and drew a long breath. “You’re a scout and head of our patrol and you don’t know the stars. Did you ever hear of Orion?”

“O’Brien?”

“No, Orion.”

“Eugene O’Rion, sure; he plays—”

“*Orion, it’s a consolation!*” roared Pee-wee.

“Never met him,” said Townsend.

“Gee whiz, if you were my unknown pal up at Memorial Cabin, I’d teach you some things this summer, I would. Suppose you got lost in the night away, way far away from home or—or—Bennett’s Confectionery or any place. What would you do? You’d sit down and get scared, I bet, and you’d get more scared when you got hungry. All the while right around you there might be lots and lots and lots of cones—pi—”

“Ice cream cones?” asked Townsend.

“*No*, pine cones, but you can eat the resin out of them. And besides, do you know when you keep going around and around and around in a circle?”

“When I’m on a merry-go-round?” ventured Townsend.

“No, when you’re lost. That’s why you always get back to the same place, see? So the way to do is to stay where you are and don’t get scared and send

up a smoke signal only if the stars are out then you're all right. If you haven't got any matches you just—"

"Strike a resource on the sole of your shoe and get a light that way," said Townsend. "Only it's better to follow the consolations. Look, Kid, there's the river."

CHAPTER XXX
A SURPRISE

The lordly Hudson looked inviting after their two days and a half on land. It seemed to call and beckon the way-worn travellers to its glinting expanse. Cars might go wrong, engines lie down, gates refuse to work, but the quiet river hurried on, on, on, between its fair green hills forever. Seeing it as they did then, it seemed removed from all the commonplace and sordid troubles of the road. It was so quiet. The few boats upon it made no noise. It had a solemn dignity that the grandest high-road knows not.

"Looks nice, hey, Kid?"

"Sure, and I bet you'll like Black Lake, too; it's all kind of dark all around it and you can see the stars in it."

"I wish half of them were in it," laughed Townsend. "Posy Brazen and—"

"They're inserted in it," said Pee-wee.

"You mean inverted in it," Townsend said. "Well, we'll be there to-morrow if all goes well. As long as we can't get Liz till five o'clock we'll camp to-night, what do you say?"

"I say yop," said Pee-wee.

"Yop it is then," said Townsend. "Say it with yops."

"Maybe we'll have another dandy delay too, hey?" said Pee-wee.

"Very likely," said Townsend. "I wouldn't care to knock Liz, though she seems to be knocking herself."

"Is it a—a—loose bearing?" Pee-wee asked hopefully.

"I can't promise you that," said Townsend; "but she's knocking. I hope it'll be a five-cent repair, if any. Otherwise we'll have to use a couple of dozen resources."

They found a little cottage down by the river, occupied by an old woman who hobbled out with a cane to look at them. She was smoking a pipe and looked very funny. She talked with such an Irish brogue that they could hardly understand her but they made out from what she said that an old punt which was drawn up on the shore belonged to no one in particular.

It had belonged to "Meemon" they gathered, and they supposed that Meemon was her departed husband. She seemed perfectly willing that they should use it and watched them with curious intentness as Townsend rowed out with the pair of old broken oars which had been leaning against a tree nearby. Then she hobbled into the house again, puffing furiously. It seemed as if she were glad for the slight diversion.

They rowed all the way across the river, in sight of the great Poughkeepsie bridge. At the Poughkeepsie wharf, a big Hudson River boat was admitting passengers and the boys rowed about near it while the passengers waved to them, and one man threw an apple which Pee-wee caught. Girls, too, from the security of the mammoth decks, called to the tiny craft below, and giggled and chatted with Townsend as he rested on his oars. He might have looked rather attractive from up there; at all events, the usual pleasantries were exchanged.

"Come on down."

"No, you come up."

"No, you come down."

"No, you come up."

"Catch this?"

Pee-wee missed a piece of candy.

"You can't throw," he shouted.

"You can't catch," called a girl. "Doesn't he look little down there?" she said to her companions.

Sound travels plainly over water and Pee-wee heard them. "It's on account of the distance," he shouted.

"If we come down will you take us for a row?" (giggling).

"Positively," said Townsend (more giggling).

And so on, and so on. They flopped lazily around on the river until mid-afternoon, when Townsend realized to his surprise that the ebbing tide had carried them far down-stream. It was aided and abetted now by a freshening breeze against which it was almost hopeless to struggle. Rowing against wind and tide is a thankless task.

Townsend could have made shore easily enough, but it is the scout way to leave a thing where one finds it. He did the only thing he could do striving against such odds, which was to keep close in shore where the current was less strong, and pull the boat along by clutching the overhanging foliage where there was any. It was slow work, but of such a nature that Pee-wee could assist.

At last, by dint of rowing and pulling, they reached the spot where they had embarked. The Irish woman was not in evidence but the smoke was curling up out of the chimney of her little house, which reminded the returning voyagers that it was getting on toward suppertime, unless indeed, the smoke was from her trusty pipe.

"It's six o'clock if anybody should ask you," said Townsend, looking at his watch.

"And we've got more than two miles to walk," said Pee-wee.

"Well, the sooner we get about it, the sooner it's done," said Townsend. "The water makes you hungry, doesn't it?"

"You said it," said Pee-wee. "The land makes you hungry, but not so much

as the water. Gee whiz, I got all sunburned.”

“Look at my arms,” said Townsend. “I’m good and tired, I know that.”

“I’m going to make rice cakes, you like those,” said Pee-wee. “We’ll find a good place in the woods to camp, hey? And I’ll fry some bacon too, hey?”

“Go as far as you like,” said Townsend; “I’ll eat anything. I could eat a bale of hay.”

“We’ll make an omelet with some egg powder too,” said Pee-wee encouraged. “We’ll have a banquet, hey? Because maybe this’ll be our last supper alone together. *Maybe I’ll make hunter’s stew too!*” he shouted in sudden inspiration.

“It will sure be our last supper together if you do that,” said Townsend.

But he would probably have eaten even that weird specialty of Pee-wee’s without complaint, so hungry was he. As for Pee-wee, he could have eaten the Ford with a relish.

They trudged wearily back to the village and past it toward the little garage beyond. The two miles seemed to have stretched out to an appalling length like the neck of Alice in Wonderland. They were ready to drop with each step they made. All their recent bodily exertion on the river seemed to take effect in their weary limbs and they stumbled along, dog-tired and silent.

“Don’t you care,” said Pee-wee; “we’ll start a fire and lie down and have supper—gee whiz, I can eat lying down as well as sitting up, can’t you?”

“I could eat standing on my head,” said Townsend.

“Not soup,” said Pee-wee.

“Well, rice cakes and bacon,” said Townsend.

“*Yum, yum, m, m, m, m, m!*” said Pee-wee.

As they approached the little garage it had a strange, uninviting look; it looked different. There was not that suggestion of open hospitality which it had shown when Lizzie rolled majestically in and awoke the dim echoes of the interior with her rich, modulated voice. In plain fact the garage was closed, its two big doors linked together by a huge, cold-hearted padlock. And no sign of human life was there anywhere about the place.

CHAPTER XXXI
TOWNSEND'S MIDDLE NAME

For a full half minute neither spoke and there was no sound but the heartless clanking of the padlock as Townsend shook it. There was no deception there—it was locked *tight*.

"Let's walk around it," said Townsend.

They reconnoitered about the little wooden building almost too dumbfounded to speak. Townsend glanced in through a side window.

"Look in there," he said.

"Is he in there—*dead*?" Pee-wee asked in his dramatic whisper.

"No, we're out here dead," said Townsend.

Pee-wee stood on tiptoe and beheld a frightful sight. There was Lizzie, apparently repaired and ready for departure. Upon the rear seat reposed a greasy bundle—*bacon*. Cans of beans and salmon and spaghetti lay close by. The bag of rice nestled close to the bottle of molasses, as it should have done, since they always joined forces to create the luscious rice cake. The wire sticker with which Pee-wee stabbed his rice cakes to the heart, now stuck up out of some cavern in the threadbare upholstery and pointed at Pee-wee, as if in mockery.

"Dead?" moaned Townsend. "In another hour *I'll* be dead."

"Do you see the raisins?" Pee-wee asked. "Over there in the corner? I was going to mix them up in—"

"Have a heart, Kid."

"I can see the end of a banana too. Do you see the toaster? What are we going to do? It makes me hungrier, doesn't it you?"

"Come away," said Townsend; "don't look." But Pee-wee's departing gaze still lingered. "I see the egg powder," he said; "right next to the fruit crackers, do you see it?"

Townsend stopped his ears, withdrew and sat down on the grass. Famished as he was, he could not repress a laugh.

"How about some sassafras and birch bark, Kid?" he said. "Scouts can't starve."

"I can see the two ears of corn on the floor," said Pee-wee, still standing on tiptoe. "I was going to roast them."

"How about some nice herbs? Browned in the pan?" Townsend asked.

"I wasn't talking about scouts except when they're lost," said Pee-wee. "That shows how much sense you have. *Are we in the North Woods?* Answer

me that—are we in the North Woods? Scouts have to have resources, don't they?"

"Yes, but ours are all locked in there," said Townsend.

"We have to find out where the man lives," said Pee-wee; "he lives in the village; I'm going to find him."

"All right, I'll leave everything to you, Kid, because you have charge of the eats. If you don't find him, anything you want to cook will be all right—some nice boiled grass or fried roots—anything."

Pee-wee gave one more wistful look into the garage, then departed in search of its owner. He returned with the cheerful tidings that the man lived seven miles away in Tiddyville and that he always closed up at six o'clock. He had further ascertained that the man had no telephone.

"I suppose he thought we live somewhere around here and that we'll call to-morrow," said Townsend. "Guess he thought we wouldn't be back to-night anyway. Well, we've got a dollar and a quarter on hand, and a dollar twenty goes to our absent friend. That leaves a nickel—"

"There aren't any stores anyway," said Pee-wee, disgruntled.

"Well, then," said Townsend, spinning the quarter into the air, "what are we going to do? Beg at a farm? Or spend this man's money buying something of a farmer? Or are we going to be scouts? Not hot air scouts but real, honest-to-goodness scouts. You said I wasn't much on scouting; said you'd teach me some things if I was only your unknown pal. Well, how about it?" he asked, still spinning the quarter in the air. "Are we going to stand here grouching and looking in that window like a couple of hoodlums rubbering in a bakery shop window? Or are we going to be scouts? What do you say? Shall we beat it into the woods and get supper? How about you?"

"*I've got an inspiration!*" shouted Pee-wee. "We don't have to eat bark. I know real mushrooms when I see them and there are lots and lots and lots and lots of them only you've got to know them!"

"Now you're shouting," said Townsend. "You were only talking a little while ago."

"When was I only talking?" Pee-wee demanded.

"On the way to the river."

"I was shouting then," he said.

"Well, then you're screaming now. Did I ever tell you my middle name, Kid? It's mushrooms."

CHAPTER XXXII
THREE'S A COMPANY

That was the night of the mushroom feast, gathered by a scout who knew where to find them and how to distinguish them and how to cook them and how to eat them—oh, very much so. And so you see that scouts need not starve, though they seem to be always half starved at that.

The next morning Lizzie with her new belt rejoined them and they had no further adventures till they reached camp, except that they were stopped by the authorities in both Saugerties and Kingston. In both these places, however, Pee-wee assisted by Justice Dopett managed to pilot Townsend and his flivver clear of official rocks and reefs. In Catskill they struck another official rock but they were out of the enemy's country then and in the hallowed neighborhood of the camp.

"Go ahead with you and get your card and don't bring that pile of junk down into the village again," said the bluff village constable. "There's a dump between here and Leeds fer such trash."

"Lizzie, did you hear what he said?" said Townsend.

"Squeeeeeak," said Lizzie.

It now became increasingly evident that they were in territory which Pee-wee had long since conquered and subdued, and as they approached, and passed familiar landmarks he let his voice out in a series of informatory screams.

"Oh, we're getting there, we're getting there, *we're getting there*!" he shouted. "There's the barn that Hervey Willetts rolled off the top of—hello, Mr. Berry!"

"Hello, yourself," called farmer Berry from his field.

"Gee whiz, they all know me," said Pee-wee proudly. "Lots of times we walk to Catskill." Going through the little village of Leeds it was like a triumphal procession, Pee-wee waving his hand and shouting to this storekeeper and that, his excitement continually increasing.

"Oh, we're getting there, we're *getting there*!" he yelled. "You go straight up this next road till you come to a smell kind of like a stable only there isn't any stable and then you keep going—I'll show you—oh, we're coming nearer!"

They reached the smell and verged a little to the west. "Keep on this road till you come to a turtle," said Pee-wee excitedly. "Maybe he isn't there now but anyway—I'll show you—you can't drive right down to camp on account

of the woods—”

“Why can’t I?” Townsend asked.

“Because you can’t on account of the woods.”

“Let’s see the woods,” said Townsend.

“We’re coming to them, we’re coming to them,” said Pee-wee. “I’ll show you.”

There had been many uproarious arrivals at Temple Camp but never such a one as that. And Scout Harris nearly fell out of the car, he shouted so. For Townsend paid not the slightest heed to the woods when he reached it.

The way to reach Temple Camp is to go along the road till you reach an old bench covered with carved initials. Here is where they wait for the bus and the mail wagon. Right near that rustic bench is a beaten path (Jeb’s Trail, they call it) which goes down through the sparse woods to the lakeside where the camp is. No four-wheeled vehicle had ever dreamed of going down there. Wheelbarrows had made the trip, but never a wagon, much less an auto. These went on a few hundred feet and were parked at the Archer farm.

“Don’t turn in there, don’t turn in there!” shouted Pee-wee. “It’s all woods.”

“I thought we were going to camp,” said Townsend.

“You’ll bump into trees and everything,” warned Pee-wee, amazed at the direction Townsend was taking, “and the last part is steep and you’ll run right into the lake, that’s what you’ll do—Townsend.”

“Giddap, Liz,” said Townsend. “I’m not going to bust up the party.”

Before Pee-wee realized what his friend was doing the flivver had left the road and was going licketysplit down through the woods, wriggling in and out among the trees, squeaking, creaking, rattling, grinding, moaning, bouncing, jouncing, halting, plunging, staggering, skidding, with Townsend sitting on the seat in proud and unruffled complacency. He looked as funny as a circus. Down it went, over the brook with a terrific bounce, around the main pavilion, grazing the cooking shack and uttering a prolonged squeak as Townsend jammed on the brakes to bring it to a dead stop just in front of the springboard, where it seemed on the point of taking a graceful loop-the-loop into the lake.

“Whoooa, Liz,” said Townsend, as scouts, yes, and scoutmasters, came running from every direction. “Here we are at last, the three of us.”

Thus Temple Camp saw Townsend Ripley and his flivver for the first time.

CHAPTER XXXIII
THE SOLEMN VOW

In less than an hour after the arrival of the trio the whole camp was singing, "*Will you love me when my flivver is a wreck?*" But Pee-wee paused not to participate in the honors paid to Townsend and Liz. He deserted the old love for the new and betook himself to Memorial Cabin.

He found the scene quiet and restful after his strenuous journey. The birds sang in the trees which enclosed the rustic cabin, squirrels, darted from limb to limb and hurried up and down the trunks, and the sun sent his playful rays down through the leafy branches. No sign was there of Pee-wee's unknown guest.

Having inspected his lonely domicile he returned to the turmoil of the camp proper and entered the sacred precincts of the cooking shack where he announced his arrival in camp to Chocolate Drop, the cook.

"I'm here," said Pee-wee; "I'm back again."

"I sees you is," said Chocolate Drop, smiling all over. "You dun gwan to lib on de hill?" he asked.

"I want eats and things for two scouts for three weeks," Pee-wee announced. "I'm going to do all the cooking and everything like on a—a frontiers. Maybe I won't be seen down here in camp at all even."

This news, which might have been received with approbation by Ray Blakeley and others, was regarded with consternation by Chocolate Drop. However, he graciously supplied Pee-wee with commissary stores in accordance with our hero's request and for several days Pee-wee was so busy with enthusiastic preparations for the reception of his unknown guest that he was not seen in the main body of the camp. In the seclusion of his retreat and the pre-occupation of hospitable preparations he lived in sublime ignorance of the volcanic eruption which was presently to engulf him.

For in planning his famous relay race Pee-wee had neglected to take into consideration an important element of the scout nature. Relay races are all right when there is nothing too seductive at the ends of them. In the case of a relay race ending at a delightful summer camp the danger of it becoming cumulative is very great.

Having completed his preparations for the reception of his unknown guest, Pee-wee was seated one evening on the doorstep of Memorial Cabin communing with nature and eating a luscious tomato. The rays of dying sunlight painted the hills across the lake a vivid crimson and the truant streams

from his luscious refreshment painted his scout suit an equally vivid hue. It seemed almost as if the sun were actually setting in his face in a very riot of colorful glory. Intuition, bolstered by a series of elaborate deductions, had convinced the lonely tenant of the cabin that the time of fulfillment was at hand, that his solitary guest would shortly appear. So strong was this conviction upon Pee-wee that he had, by the exercise of tremendous will power, refrained from partaking of his lonely, self-cooked meal, in consideration of the imminent arrival of his mysterious companion. “I’m going to wait till eleven o’clock,” he said, referring to his hospitable period of fasting, “because anyway he ought to be here to-night, that’s the way I figure it.”

Pee-wee was always quite himself when playing a part, and so far as he was concerned, there was no living soul in all the country roundabout—no one but his solitary companion, the last runner to receive his much handled credential, hastening silently, like some stealthy Indian emissary, toward his sequestered retreat. Cheerful voices could be heard down at camp, but Pee-wee heeded them not. The inviting dinner horn sounded and re-echoed from the hill’s across the darkening lake and for a moment it tempted him with its suggestions of waffles and honey. But he put these thoughts out of his mind with the redoubled resolution that, he, the lonely host of Memorial Cabin, the hospitable hermit and all that sort of thing, would not mingle with his kind, but remain in magnificent and romantic isolation in his lair. He had boasted, indeed, with such flaunting boasts as only he could utter, that neither he nor his unknown friend would partake of a single meal in camp during the visitor’s stay but would live like pioneers “on hunters’ stew that we make ourselves and things like that.”

“I bet the two of you will be down for dinner the second day,” Roy Blakeley had predicted.

“That shows how much you know about primitive life,” our hero had thundered.

“It shows how much I know about your hunters’ stew,” Roy had said. “I bet the two of you will be down for dinner after one grub on the hill.”

“If the stranger is able to walk,” Warde Hollister had said.

“Oh that’s understood,” Roy had agreed.

Our hero had contemplated these scoffers with characteristic scorn. “That shows,” he had begun, then coming up for air proceeded in tones of thunder, “that shows that you’re all parlor scouts—”

“What do you call yourself—a kitchen scout?” Roy had laughed.

“It shows how much you know about resolution and, and, and—solemn vows—and pioneer life and surmounting obstacles by your own initials, I mean initiatives and things like that, I bet you—I bet you—we don’t come

down to one single meal while he's here. I bet you we don't even come down to find out what time it is, I bet you we don't. I bet we tell time by the sun. Even salt, I haven't got any but I know how to get it from rocks. I'm not going to even ask for it. Even matches we're not going to ask for. I bet we don't come near Temple Camp" (he called it Temple Camp as if by that formal designation to put it far away) "for *anything*. Absolutely, positively—and definitely—we won't come down for eats or anything. So you needn't expect to see us."

"Thank goodness for that," Roy had said.

CHAPTER XXXIV
END OF THE RELAY RACE

As the sun slowly sank behind the hills Pee-wee finished his tomato and even as the deeper twilight erased the crimson glow from the wooded hilltops, he wiped the vivid red from his round face and smacked his lips and sent his tongue on a sort of clean-up tour about the exterior of his mouth.

Then he crept out under a neighboring pine tree, and gathering a few stray twigs, proceeded to amplify the little pyramid of kindling which he had built under a tempting looking black pot which stood on two miniature walls of brick.

He lifted the tin cover from this pot and gazed fondly, proudly, within at his handiwork, a hunters' stew, ready for boiling. With a rough wooden spoon he stirred it revealing tempting bits of carrot, pearly shavings of onion, and substantial pieces of meat. There was stew enough there for two, on a two helping basis, and it would keep till the morrow in case his elaborate calculations of the movements of the relay racers proved inaccurate. He replaced the cover on the pot, gave a look of defiance down at camp, and resumed his seat upon the doorstep.

There is something very captivating in making calculations and then waiting for their nice fulfillment. In starting his famous relay race from Westwood, New Jersey, Pee-wee had included Spring Valley, Haverstraw, Fort Montgomery, Newburgh, Plattekill, New Paltz, Kingston, Saugerties, and Catskill, as the relay points. All of these places were large enough to have scouts and he had Alton Beech's assurance that there would be no difficulty in passing the letter to some willing messenger in each of the towns named. Each messenger would be able to do his allotted errand and return to his home without a long absence.

Allowing for lunches, sodas, ice creams, parental objections with attendant pleas, etc., Pee-wee had determined that some time between seven o'clock and midnight on that very night the final messenger should arrive. He was waiting for him with a welcome—the best kind of a welcome, a hunters' stew.

And having thus regaled him he intended to instruct him in the stern requirements of pioneer life. He intended to inform him of his romantic vow to shun the tame conveniences and facilities of camp and to depend on their own resources. He would show him how these things were done. He would surprise him with that interesting item of scoutcraft that they could live without current and continuous aid from the civilized world. During the last day or two

Temple Camp had degenerated into something hardly better than a crowded city, and Pee-wee scorned it.

The most authentic account of this singular climax to Pee-wee's adventures that summer is that he was dozing on the doorstep of the cabin at about eleven P. M. having heroically refrained from eating up to that hour. At least that was the testimony of Alton Beech his Westwood acquaintance.

Upon being awakened by the sound of merry voices our hero, rubbing his eyes, was aware of two distinct groups of scouts standing in the moonlight. It is said that the moon was laughing, but perhaps that is an exaggeration. In the foreground stood Alton Beech, and there is no doubt at all that *he* was laughing. To Pee-wee's drowsy eyes this joyous apparition seemed to be surrounded by a throng of strange scouts, containing not one familiar face. In the background the whole of Temple Camp seemed to be crowding in mirthful expectation.

"Wh—what—are—who—you—what are *you* doing here?" Pee-wee stammered, addressing the first messenger of the now momentous enterprise. "W—a—a—you doing here—Beech—are you Beech?"

"Here we are," said Alton Beech cheerily, as Pee-wee, approaching a state of full wakefulness sat and stared. "You see the trouble was that your letter—well it was too good. The relay race instead of going in relays, it just piled up, no one would turn back, so here we all are—except two. Fort Montgomery and Haverstraw are missing. It was the cabin and the two helpings of dessert that did it. Don't blame us, you wrote the letter. I flunked in Spring Valley and 'phoned home that I was going the limit. Spring Valley went as far as Newburgh with me and refused to go home. New Paltz said he was going straight through. Don't blame me, it was your letter. You started a pile-up race, not a relay race, Scout Harris. So here we are and *gee-williger* but we're hungry. Have you got supper ready?"

"Oh absolutely, positively," said Roy Blakeley stepping forward, "just let's see that letter a minute will you?"

Roy took the famous document from Alton Beech and in the light of his flashlight read aloud the words which had brought this catastrophe down upon our hero's head:

> To Walter Harris if they don't know who you mean ask for Pee-wee Temple Camp Leeds Ulster County N. Y. This letter is brought by relays and each scout that gets it takes it to another scout only he has to be sure to go north toward Temple Camp everybody up that way knows where that is and knows me two. Whoever brings it to me and delivers it into my hand stays at Temple Camp for the rest of the summer and his meals free absolootly positivly and they always

give to helpings sometimes and bunks in Mamoriel Cabin with me *posativiy sure*.

P.S.—This is true. and I mean it.

Walter Harris,
Alligator Patrol.

"That's absolutely good," Roy said. "It says whoever brings it. It doesn't say *one* must bring it, it doesn't say how many. You're all welcome to Memorial Cabin. Greetings and salutations. A scout never turns back. Have you got supper ready, kid?"

"You're crazy!" Pee-wee shouted. "Do you think I can cook for eight scouts? Do you—"

"Resources, resources," said Warde Hollister.

"A scout can do anything," said Westy Martin.

"He never breaks his vow," said Doc Carson.

"He doesn't depend on civilization," said Dorry Benton.

"Oh positively not," said Roy; "he depends on his own initials. Just make yourselves at home and he'll have supper ready in a couple of jiffies. You fellows came to the right place, you can all have forty-eleven helpings of resources. He knows that a scout never turns back. Some night after supper drop down to camp and see us."

"Come down and watch us eat," said another Temple Camper.

"I'm afraid they can't do that," laughed another; "they're supposed to be leading the primitive life up here."

"Do you think we're going to starve?" Pee-wee thundered. "Do you think because a scout that plans a thing and then says what he'd do if that thing happens like he planned only it doesn't—do you suppose they have to starve on account of a lot of lunatics like you, especially Roy Blakeley? That shows how much you know about logic! Do you say that eight is the same as two?"

It shall never be written that Temple Camp was lacking in hospitality, and there was no intention of allowing Pee-wee to attempt the entertainment of this human avalanche. Nor, indeed, had the avalanche any intention of imposing on our hero, for each member of the invading host had come supplied with funds. For a pick-up troop they were a pretty fine lot of fellows. It was Tom Slade, the young assistant, who stepped into the breach in this most critical and apparently portentous moment in the life of P. Harris.

"Look here, kid," he said. "You've got to take this whole crowd or none at all. This is the net results of your relay race. Take it or leave it. You forgot that a scout never turns back; in scouting relay races are a myth. They just *ain't.* A scout that starts always wants to see the finish. All that stuff in the scout handbook is nonsense. No scout ever handed a letter about eats and things to

another scout and then went home—*never*. You're all off on scouting, kid.

"Now look here, kid, this is Alton Beech's crowd and you're not going to break up the party. We've got a vacant cabin for these fellows and they're going to bunk in it and eat down in camp. See? So you just start your little fire and forget about this bunch and your unknown chum will come along pretty soon, I'll take care of that."

"What do you mean?" Pee-wee demanded.

"You'll see," said Tom. "Start your fire and get ready. I've got the right idea on this unknown pal business better than you have. You're way off the track, kid. You start your little fire and leave the rest to me. Come on, Beech, come on the rest of you fellows, you must be hungry."

It was not long after this that our lonely hero, somewhat squelched by recent happenings, heard an outlandish but strangely familiar noise and soon was aware of two lights poking their way up through the woods. Ah, that beloved, familiar, medley! That fond chorus of squeaks and rattles and unmuffled chugging. Those beams of light bisecting each other from Lizzie's cross-eyed headlights. Up the hill she came, in and out among the trees, and over obstacles of fallen trunks, puffing, clanking, rattling, buzzing, pausing, swerving, but triumphing over every challenging obstruction. Lizzie!

"That you, kid?" called Townsend cheerily.

"Look out for the woodpile," Pee-wee said, his heart dancing with surprise and joy.

"Let the woodpile worry," said Townsend. "Got supper ready?"

"It's—it's just beginning to steam," said Pee-wee; "look out you don't run over it. It's going to be dandy, Townsend, it's all nice and thick, with lots of carrots; I made it, Townsend."

"Whooaa, Liz," said Townsend as the beloved companion of their long journey came to a full stop and appeared to shake itself like a dog emerging from the water. "Say 'I'm hungry,' Liz." The Ford emitted three uncanny syllables which sounded not unlike those plaintive words. "That Slade fellow seems to be the big boss around here, doesn't he?" said Townsend stepping down. "Well, here I am, or here *we* are, I should say. It seems you can't lose me, kid. First I was going to walk up and then I said, no, Liz belongs in this outfit. Can you accommodate the two of us, kid? Slade bet me I couldn't make it. Why it's like the Lincoln Highway, kid. Did you hear Liz laughing?"

For almost the first time in the history of his loquacious career Pee-wee Harris could not speak. Liz was looking at him with one bent up cross eye and in its light Townsend Ripley, his unknown guest indeed, saw that the eyes of his travelling companion were glistening.

"Can't lose us, kid," said Townsend.

But Pee-wee said nothing, and in the glare of that funny headlight all

askew Townsend could see that the eyes of his young friend glistened more and more.

That is the funny part of it, that Pee-wee Harris did not speak.

THE END

[The end of *Pee-wee Harris F. O. B. Bridgeboro* by Percy Keese Fitzhugh]