

PEE WEE HARRIS WARRIOR BOLD

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

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PEE-WEE HARRIS, WARRIOR BOLD

Meet the Famous Pee-Wee

“Size doesn’t count, actions count!” says Pee-Wee Harris.

Things happen fast wherever he goes! Hair-trigger daring and determination; he is always starting something *quick!*

Super-Scout, Patrol Leader Extraordinary, Mayor-for-a-Day—he is continually daring and doing the things that every boy wants to be doing himself.

Join Pee-Wee Harris and own the world.

PEE-WEE HARRIS, WARRIOR BOLD

By Percy K. Fitzhugh

Illustrated by Bert Salg

PART I

There were to be great doings in East Village, just across the river from Bridgeboro. The young ladies of the Community league were to hold a grand lawn party. In connection with this was to be a bazaar and cake sale. There was to be an entertainment in the evening followed by dancing. The East Village troop of Girl Scouts was to participate, and be much in evidence selling birch-bark ornaments and other woodland handiwork.

Post-card pictures of the new Community House were to sell at five cents each. All this was to celebrate and help to finance the rustic bungalow, lately completed, which thenceforth would house the gaieties of East Village.

We see our hero first emerging with the throng from the Eureka Theater in Bridgeboro after having satiated himself with the sensational photoplay, "As Luck Would Have It."

In these periods of relaxation, to which Pee-Wee occasionally treated himself, he is not discovered in his customary martial regalia. To be sure he wore his Scout suit and his compass dangling around his neck. But his belt axe and frying-pan were conspicuously absent. However, his most characteristic item of adornment, his appalling frown, darkened his heroic countenance, and became even more terrible as he gazed upon a little scene which greeted the outpouring crowd as it emerged upon the sidewalk.

There was more true pathos and human interest in this little scene than in anything that had occurred in the garish screen play with its maudlin episodes and sobby subtitles. The center of interest was a shabby little old man who stood upon the curb where apparently he had taken his stand to catch the notice of the people as they came out of the theater. On a tray which was held up by a strap around his neck were displayed a number of gaudily painted little windmills and weather-vanes, evidently of his own manufacture. He also held aloft in one hand the model of a ship, his prize commodity, a marvel of skill with the jack-knife.

As Pee-Wee emerged onto the sidewalk this quaint and aged vendor was being rudely shoved away by a policeman, and not the least pathetic part of this brusquely authoritative business was the sudden disarray of the little stock. He moved along reluctantly under pressure of the official arm, holding his precious ship aloft to save it from wreckage at the hands of the law.

"G'wan, move along, git outer here!" urged the officer, accompanying his mandate with a vigorous shove. He would not even suffer the old man to pause long enough to recover a fallen windmill.

The crowd appeared sympathetic, but not greatly interested. Another shove

by the official arm and the old man's entire stock was precipitated to the sidewalk. But he was not permitted to tarry long enough to gather up his precious handiwork.

"G'wan, beat it or I'll lock yer up," threatened the cop, giving a vigorous final push which all but sent the poor old man sprawling.

This is the regulation way of dealing with peddlers, and few people take note of the needless brutality visited upon them. Perhaps it was this particular peddler's age and apparent infirmities which moved some of the emerging crowd to venture deprecatory comments; perhaps it was a certain picturesqueness about him and his quaint handiwork which caused a venturesome young woman to utter discreet protest.

But it was Pee-Wee Harris who took a double-header into the sordid little affair and staggered even the brass-buttoned autocrat with his thunderous tirade. As for the poor little old man he stared aghast at this Scout of Scouts in full action.

"You think you're so smart shoving a poor old man," Pee-Wee thundered, "that you have to go and break the law yourself on account of what it says, I can prove it, how you got a right not to let any litter be in the streets, and anyway you're the cause of it. Now you see!"



"You think you are so smart shoving a poor old man," Pee-Wee thundered

It was Pee-Wee's sprightly way to disregard punctuation in his talk, and this was particularly so in his tirades of wrath.

"Dat's enough fer you, Sonny," said the cop ominously, and giving the old man another vigorous shove, "run home ter yer mamma before yer git in

trouble now—and keep yer mouth shut.”

That was something Pee-Wee could not do. “You big—you big *coward*,” he roared. “That shows how much you don’t know about laws and all things like that how you spill stuff all over the sidewalk even you don’t know the Clean-up Orderlinance I mean Ordinance do you think I don’t know, *geeeeeeee whiz*, wasn’t I mayor for a day, how even I fined people for littering up the streets, you can ask the Clean-up Committee.”

He paused just long enough to dig up out of his pocket a circular celluloid badge twice as large as a half-dollar, the treasured souvenir of his sensational work in the great clean-up campaign. This he ostentatiously pinned once again upon his jacket. “Now you see,” he said darkly. “Now you see if I got a right to talk to you.”

The crowd was highly amused. “I got a paper too,” Pee-Wee said, “that says if I complain to a cop no matter what, he’s got to listen to me. Even I had a man arrested for leaving an old flat tire in the street—that shows. Even I was a school traffic cop myself, I was! Even I was boy mayor for one day, I was! So now you got to pick up the stuff you spilled all over the ground because I can make a complaint about you I don’t care if you’re a cop or not because I’m a special boy officer I am, and I’m the one that put rubbish barrels down in Barrel Alley and at the station and everything and I got charge of vacant lots you can ask Judge Wade if I haven’t and they got to listen to me.”

They could hardly help listening to him, and moreover all this was too true.

He had indeed been a clean-up worker in the great campaign and had used all the authority with which he had been vested.

“So now,” he concluded almost exhausted, “are you going to pick up the things or not? Because I can dodge a complaint I mean lodge one, and then you’ll see!”

Here, indeed, was David talking to Goliath.

“Talk about *spilling*,” laughed a man. “He spills words enough.”

The cop did not obey, but he compromised. He recalled, now, the sensational achievements of Scout Harris in the grand clean-up drive. This unquenchable youngster with the enormous celluloid badge might do anything—and get away with it. So the officer retreated as much as he could without sacrificing his dignity. He pushed the old man’s scattered wares together with his big boot and said, “Here take yer junk and beat it before I lock yer up.”

The little old man was quick to act; he had supposed that his precious stock was lost forever. It was pitiful to see him on his knees gathering up his broken handiwork which had been so ruthlessly and needlessly damaged. But Pee-Wee helped him while the massive blue-coat stood by to drive the old man along as soon as he had recovered his belongings. For this selling things “on

the public thoroughfares" is a heinous offense.

But here, again, the cop was to be baffled for Pee-Wee escorted the frightened old man into the lobby of the theater saying, "This is private property so you don't need to be a-scared, anyway I know the owner of this theater because the Scouts gave a show here, so you don't have to be scared any more."

"I ain't got enough money to pay a fine," the frightened old man protested, still with a weather eye on his official persecutor.

There is no place so conspicuously empty as a theater lobby when the crowd has gone and soon Pee-Wee and his old friend were quite alone in the dim, garish corridor, the ticket window closed and its curtain drawn. The cop had sauntered away after completely destroying the old man's one hope of earning enough to buy his supper. The people had gone home to their own suppers.

"Gee whiz, I guess you know all about ships, hey?" Pee-Wee asked. "And I bet you went to sea too, and I bet you were in Holland too, because you know all about windmills. Gee, you make 'em dandy. I bet you don't live in Bridgeboro, do you?"

"I live on a barge down ter the river," the old man said. "I just come up when the show was out ter get the crowd. Guess I'm done in this town; I ain't done so very good. If I sells one, it's enough; then I got money fer supper. These little ones is only fifty cents; the big ones is a dollar."

"How much is the ship?" Pee-Wee asked.

"She's five dollars," said the old man, "but I ain't never expectin' to sell her. It jus kinder draws attention. I can fix it, 'taint hurt much. I'll go down on the tide to-morrow and try Southtown. Do you know if they got police in Southtown or jus' constables?"

"You live on a barge?" Pee-Wee ejaculated, for this bit of information took precedence of every other thought. His good turn seemed likely to open the way into an enchanted realm. "A *real* barge? Can I go and see it?"

"It's a old barge I was captain of once; captain of and doin' business with," said the old man. "If you want to come down along the river you can see it; you can come on it. But yer mammy and yer daddy—I don't want ter get in no more trouble."

"Didn't I even get you *out* of trouble?" Pee-Wee demanded. "Come on, I'll help you carry your stuff and I'll go down with you. I been on lots of boats, motor-boats and everything."

"Yer a smart youngster," said the old man; "yer as bright as a coat of varnish, and ain't scared o' nuthin' or nobody, I cud see that. Thinks I, he'll make trouble—that's what I says ter myself when I heerd yer speak up, and the worse fer me, that's what I says, but yer come out all right."

"I had lots of authorities I did," Pee-Wee said, "because Scouts are kind of civic—civil. But I don't mean they're civilized. Gee whiz, nobody can say that about me. I can live on herbs, even, I can if I'm hungry. And I'm hungry a lot too."



"I had lots of authorities I did," Pee-Wee said, "because Scouts are kind of civic—civil."

"Guess me and you is like each other that a'way," said the old man. But Pee-Wee was too engrossed to catch the wistful purport of this remark.

The neighborhood of the river was familiar territory to Pee-Wee, and it was true that he had sailed its placid bosom on many a craft: motor-boat, rowboat, canoe, and raft. But never before had his adventurous foot trod on the deck of a barge.

This particular barge was the *Colbert C. Rossey* of New York, that being the very name of Pee-Wee's new acquaintance, who was its owner and captain. The barge was tied alongshore and it seemed as long as a couple of railroad cars. It was unpainted and grimy; its patched sides were as rough as bark and as black as soot. Its long interior was a gaping cavern with capacity for tons and tons of coal or any other kind of bulky merchandise. One could walk along the edge and look down into it as from the brow of a precipice.

But astern all was ship-shape and cosy. On a little area of deck stood the humble domicile of Pop Rossey, a tiny shanty with a stove-pipe sticking out of it, and even with curtains in its little windows. Against the outside of this was a bench on which one might drowse away a summer afternoon while being piloted here and there by some noisy and energetic little tug.

"Gee whiz, it's dandy," said Pee-Wee as he looked inside the little house.

Scarcely had he said the words when there arose from a seat in the corner a boy of about his own age, who had been painting windmills, of which there seemed to be a vast store in a large basket close beside him. The floor was covered with shavings, and the little table with odd parts of the quaint ornaments.

It might have been the home of Santa Claus.

Pee-Wee felt that he had entered an enchanted realm. If he had landed plunk on the magic carpet in the Arabian Nights he could hardly have been more astonished. Here was a tiny combination home and workshop. There were three bunks for sleeping, a couple of rickety chairs, a locker for provisions, and another small round table, for meals presumably, but covered now with freshly painted windmills. On a bench stood a row of miniature rowboats, each with a pair of tiny oars stuck under its seat, masterpieces of jack-knife art. There were several little lighthouses standing on counterfeit rocks painted granite color. And all these things had been whittled out, and painted in a variety of gaudy hues.

The old man sank down on an empty grocery box where, somehow, he seemed a more pathetic figure than if he had used a chair.

"Reckon 'taint no use, Sammy," said he. "I got run off the street same as up in Northvale. Maybe if I had went to the station for a license——"

"They cost money, those," said the boy.

"Taint no use anyway," said the old man resignedly. "If 'twasn't for this little feller I wouldn't have my stuff even. I come nigh on stumbled over when he shoved me, Sammy. Right in the shoulder he grabbed me, where I got the rheumatism so bad. That's what I took notice of—they all push you in that place; do you know that, Sammy? Maybe they tell 'em to do like that, huh? Right in the shoulder it is, always. I almost stumbled over and like to broke my neck. Have we got some o' them beans left, Sammy? You put on some coffee,

like a good boy. My, but they're strong, them cops," he added, turning to Pee-Wee. "You know onct I was strong and big like that; would you think it? Once I was first mate on a schooner, wasn't I, Sammy? Sammy's father could tell you if he was alive. He's my grandson, Sammy is; ain't you, Sammy?"

It went even to Pee-Wee's anything but tender heart to see this poor old man, sitting on the grocery box holding his shoulder with one hand and commenting upon his late adventure without malice, or even resentment. With age one loses the fine spirit of retaliation. The old man seemed to feel the cruel twinge on his shoulder rather than the indignity he had suffered.

"Them's fine big strapping men, them *po-licemen*," he said. "You put on the coffee, Sammy, like a good boy. And see have we got enough beans left. There's a loaf of bread there, too, Sammy. You didn't see nothin' more of the man that followed me down here yesterday—was it yesterday?"

"No, I didn't," said Sammy. "I been painting 'em all day. I ran out of the red. I caught some little fish and I'm going to cook 'em."

"They'll come handy," said the old man. "I don't know whatever we'd do without fishes. Fishes is for folks in trouble. Onct I was wrecked—that was the *Nancy*, out of Gloucester—and we was on a desert island five weeks. We'd of starved only for the fishes. That was a whaling cruise; Sammy knows all about it. Not one of them things did I sell to-day. I was reckonin' on bringin' some meat if I got a single fifty cents. If I had gone down when I was shoved like that I'd never got up again, not with my kinky leg. Onct I could shin up into rigging like a monkey. Well, what is just is, I says. We ain't having no luck with them, Sammy."

Then spoke Pee-Wee Harris, Scout. "Gee whiz, now I'm glad you got chased away like that, because now I know you and a lot of times I've been hungry and I know just what to do and I'm going up to get some eats and I'm coming back. And besides I got a dandy idea how you can sell these things and make money and nobody can stop you because its on private property, I can prove it. There's going to be a dandy big kind of a racket in East Village—that's across the river down below—and they're going to have all kinds of things to sell, ice-cream cones and everything—it's going to be a big lawn party for the new Community House. They're going to have bazaar and chicken salad and paper-weights and cakes and postcards, and I know because my sister is making a lot of things for it, fancy towels and everything, and they're going to have homemade candy and everything. So we'll go over there and sell things, hey? It starts on Thursday and it's going to be three days. Gee, I bet you can make as much as a hundred dollars. Anyway, now I'm going to get some eats, and I'm going to have supper here with you, too."

The old man and his grandson were too dumbfounded to protest in the face

of Pee-Wee's enterprise and generosity. All of Pee-Wee's propositions were made with whirlwind vehemence. Sammy accompanied him to the beautiful Harris house on Terrace Avenue and listened appalled while our hero shouted upstairs to his mother proclaiming an assault on the kitchen and ice-box in the interest of a Scout good turn. He laid under contribution two cans of spaghetti, several boxes of crackers and a grapefruit, and would have taken a strip of bacon had not the cook interfered.

"Now we're going to have a peach of a supper," he said, "and we'll fix it all up how we'll sell your things over in East Village, because all I have to do is speak to them and especially I know how to handle girls, especially grown-up ones. So a lot you should worry about cops and things like that—gee whiz, I bet we'll make a hundred dollars."

Sammy was a quiet boy, and he contemplated this diminutive promoter with consternation amounting almost to awe. He felt that with such a resourceful patron things would take a turn for the better. Pee-Wee's single-handed triumph over the cop seemed little less than a miracle. And in his own home, Sammy did not fail to note, this redoubtable little Scout was certainly something of an autocrat.

On the way back he told Pee-Wee something of his grandfather's despairing efforts to keep himself out of the poor house, "and me out of the orphan asylum," he added wistfully.

"How did you happen to come up to Bridgeboro? Gee, it's lucky you did, because now I'm going to fix everything for you and you'll make a lot of money."

From Sammy Pee-Wee learned that the old barge had, until lately, been in pretty constant requisition as a freight carrier in New York Harbor and up and down the Hudson. But for some reason or other (probably its age and



An assault on the ice-box in the interest of a Scout good turn

condition), it had ceased to be in demand. It had been the last refuge of the old man who had spent all his life on the waters, and must have furnished a prosy enough form of nautical life to one who had known adventures on a New Bedford whaler. But even on the water poor old Pop Rossey had run foul of the law.

"The inspectors they wouldn't give us a license this year," said Sammy; "not till we put two new planks in the hull. And we couldn't do that unless we put her in dry dock. That's how we happened to come up here, because the inspectors wouldn't bother us up here. Captain Stark—he owns a tugboat—and he towed us up here because we thought we could sell some things in these towns. My grandfather does dandy whittling; he used to make these things when he was a sailor. But they won't let us sell them, so we got hard luck."

"You leave it to me," said Pee-Wee, "because I'm lucky. It's mighty good you came up here because now you're going to get a lot of money. But anyway how are you going to get back again? Is that tugboat coming after you?"

"We don't care anything about going back," Sammy said. "We were thinking if we could sell some of our things, we could just live on the barge and nobody would bother us, and we could work in the towns all around here. I don't care so much, but would they let my grandfather come and see me at the Orphan's Home? Do you think these ladies will let us sell things at their show?"

"Sure they will because I'm a Scout and they'll listen to me. And no cop's got a right to go in there either. You leave it to me, and I'm going to stick to you, too. Didn't I tell you I'd get some things to eat, and didn't I do it? If I can handle my own mother, can't I handle a lot of girls? If I know how to handle cops!"

It did seem to poor old Pop Rossey that he and his grandson had found, indeed, not only a promoter but a protector and provider. They ate a sumptuous repast in the little house on the barge, during which Pee-Wee was able to make good all his claims in regards to his appetite. He lingered with them until dusk and reluctantly went away filled with plans and spaghetti.

"That might be a good thing, Sammy," commented the old man. "At carnivals and things like that people buys things. Maybe that would be good, to stick to carnivals and fairs and things like that; hey, Sammy? These here Scouts, they're wide-awake youngsters, hey? Maybe ye'd like to be one of them, Sammy?"

"You've got to get a concession to sell at places like that," said Sammy. "You've got to pay something down at the start."

"At ladies' fairs and ructions like these?"

"Maybe not, I don't know," said Sammy.

"It'll be good if he can fix it, Sammy; maybe we might get a start. He's a

clever youngster, I'm thinking. I hope them inspectors never gets up this far. It's all the home we got Sammy, this old scow. It's all that stands between me and the poor house now. Would you think it, me that was first mate in the *Nancy* whaler? You should have heard me shouting out orders in them days. In the Sandwich Islands and Australia they would never stop us selling things in the market places. Many's the whale's tooth I carved and sold for a good price. Well, them was brave old days. And here we are marooned. He's a fine youngster, that. My but he's the kind would of started a mutiny back in the sailing days."

Whether Pee-Wee would have started a mutiny or not, he unquestionably would have started something. Indeed he started something that very night. Luck usually favored him, and he was required to go over to East Village to accompany his sister home, since his father was using one car and Mrs. Harris had gone in the other to a neighboring city.

He trudged down Main Street and turned into River Place where the old bridge spanned the stream across to the ambitious village which was soon to be the scene of local festivity. East Village had no main thoroughfare and very few stores; it depended largely on its neighbor, Bridgeboro. But what it lacked in stores it made up in pride and local spirit. There was a real-estate development over there, and the idea of a community club had lately taken possession of this quiet residential place.

About the first thing to be seen when one crossed the river was the Community Club house, a sprawling, picturesque log cabin in which was a hall for entertainments, a room for dancing, a club-room and a bowling alley. East Village was all dressed up and no place to go. So the completion of the Community Club was to be gaily and profitably celebrated.

In the club-room were assembled the young ladies who were the presiding geniuses of the forthcoming bazaar. They were deeply engrossed in the manufacture of fancy articles. In a group by themselves were gathered the Girl Scouts of East Village busily engaged in making birch-bark picture frames and napkin rings. From the adjacent kitchen there emanated the delicious odor of candy in the process of manufacture.

Upon this public-spirited and industrious gathering descended the Scout of Scouts like a thunderstorm, drowning his sister's welcome, utterly ignoring her, and addressing the group.



Upon this industrious gathering descended the Scout of Scouts like a thunderstorm, addressing the group

"I got a dandy idea," he said, "how you can do a good turn and even may make some money for your bazaar, because I know an old man that makes fancy windmills to sell and little lighthouses and everything—boats too—he whittles them. They're fifty cents each and they're peachy, and I bet you never saw anything like them. Gee whiz, they're better than things you sew! And I told him we're going to have him come over here and sell them—gee, wait till you see them!"

"Can't you say *good evening*, Walter?" his sister reproved.

“Good evening and they paint them all up red and green and everything
—”

“Oh, goodness me,” chirped one of the Girl Scouts, “I saw that old man over in Bridgeboro the other day and he’s nothing but a peddler. He’s a *perfectly dreadful* old man—I saw him. You’ll be wanting to send an old-clothes man next. I never heard of such a thing!”

“Oh, I think he’s just *adorable*,” said another girl, alluding, not to the old man, but to Pee-Wee. “Go on, tell us about him.”

“So I’m going to bring him over the day it starts,” said Pee-Wee, “so then the cops can’t interfere with him, and I’m going to fix up a booth for him in the bazaar, and I’ll like to see any one chase him away then because it’s private property—those cops make me tired they’re so fresh and——”

“Listen, Walter,” said his sister, “you know we have something to say, too.”

“Oh, let him talk, I just love to listen to him,” laughed another of the Girl Scouts.

This was not the way to silence the organizer of the late Chipmunk Patrol. “That shows how much you don’t know about Scouting and doing good turns and all things like that while you make believe you’re Scouts (he addressed them all, for they were all laughing) just because you make things out of birch-bark but anyway you’re scared of snakes, even spiders, that’s how much Scouts girls are!”

“Oh, isn’t he just too excruciating!” still another Girl Scout caroled forth. “Don’t you just *love* him?” she softly inquired of her nearest neighbor.

But the sharp car of the Scout overheard her and she was lost. “That’s all you know about love and crazy things like that,” he thundered. “When somebody comes along doing a good turn like Scouts got to do, all you can do is laugh and giggle—geeeeeee whiz!”

He directed his thunder at the Girl Scouts, and having thus stifled them into a kind of undertone of sly giggling he addressed Miss Dorlin, the head of the bazaar committee, who was “grown up” and presumably capable of understanding his benevolent undertaking.

“So is it all right for me to bring him over here when the bazaar starts?” he asked. “Because I want to help him to do a lot of business because he’s poor and maybe he has to go to the poor house, maybe; and his grandson, maybe he has to go to an orphan asylum, and gee whiz, that’s no fun, even you get *starved* there with one helping because I know a feller that used to be an orphan.”

“Well, I’m sure it’s very nice and kind of you,” said Miss Dorlin putting her arm about the sturdy little Scout, “but you see this isn’t exactly the kind of an affair where they have



"That's all you know about love and crazy things like that."

isn't it?"

"And if we wanted a *circus*," chirped a Girl Scout, "all we'd have to do is to have Walter come. He's a whole circus in himself."

"Listen, girls," said Miss Dorlin with her most smilingly patronizing air, "Walter Harris is a true-blue Scout, and we mustn't laugh at him. He does want to do good turns and I think it's perfectly *splendid*. I think it's *fine* for him to *feel* as he does. Now he understands how it is—about the bazaar. And I'm sure that some day he'll do something *real big*. I just *know* that he'll surprise us *all*."

She was right about that.

"And can't I bring him over then?" said Pee-Wee.

"Oh, goodness gracious, no," said a girl who had not spoken before. "A dirty old peddler! Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"Don't you dare to bring him," said another. "Don't you let him," she added to Elsie, who was preparing to go.

"I'm afraid not," said Miss Dorlin, addressing Pee-Wee. "But you must come over yourself and buy lots and lots of ice-cream, and that will be doing a good turn to our poor little village and our wonderful new club house." She was exasperatingly patronizing. "You know we're depending on Bridgeboro

concessions as they do in carnivals. We're just making a few things to sell, it's just like a big family in a way, and, of course, we can't have people from outside coming here and selling things—peddlers. I don't mean anything against your old friend," she hastened to add, "but you see it wouldn't do. Of course we don't want the Community Club Bazaar to be like a circus or a county fair." She patted the hero gently on his curly head by way of sugar-coating her refusal and he paused, baffled. "People give lots of money to orphan asylums, and sometimes that's the best way to help people,

and all you boys with such great big appetites, so you must be sure to come. That will be helping and doing a good turn, and I think good turns are just *wonderful* and *beautiful*. And I think you're just a perfectly *splendid* little Scout." She patted him on the shoulder and what could be nicer?

He accompanied his sister home with a frowning countenance. As for Elsie, she thought that Pee-Wee's proposition to install Pop Rossey and his wares at the bazaar too ridiculous to talk about. But she had not been embarrassed by his outburst for people always found him amusing. She contented herself with saying, "Don't you *dare* to do such a thing. And you'd better keep away from peddlers."

Yet, after all, it must be said of Pee-Wee, that if he seemed highly amusing it was because his schemes were so big and he was so small. He never, indeed, performed some trifling service and called it a good turn. He never attempted anything little or paltry. He was out to save old Pop Rossey and his grandson from being separated in public institutions. It was a pretty big mouthful, and he would probably not be able to masticate it. But there was nothing small about Pee-Wee. He was bigger than the Community Bazaar, much bigger.

On reaching home he and his sister entered the attractive library where Dr. and Mrs. Harris sat reading. The hero wore his most portentous frown, and it was evident that all had not gone well with him.

"Well, how goes the hick bazaar?" the doctor playfully inquired. For East Village was somewhat of a joke in the flourishing Bridgeboro.

"It's going to be perfectly wonderful," said Elsie, "and we're hoping every one here in Bridgeboro will go. We're hoping to clear three thousand dollars."

"East Village will never come across with that figure," her father commented. "I don't see why they built a Community House at all; they haven't enough people over there. I told your cousin Alice that the other day."

Still wearing his darkest frown Pee-Wee betook himself upstairs to his private sanctum and settled down to bethink him what he would say to old Pop Rossey on the morrow. For he had unqualifiedly adopted the barge as his new headquarters and the hapless pair who occupied it as his special charges.

Meanwhile his heedless sister was beguiling her parents with an account of his precipitate assault on the bazaar committee.

"I nearly died laughing," she said. "Guess what he wants to do! He wants to bring an old peddler to the bazaar and set him to selling things; he calls it a good turn. Did you ever *hear* of such a thing? Poor Emily Dorlin could hardly keep a straight face, but she was *terribly* nice to him. Can you imagine? I wish you could have seen the Girl Scouts—they had him going full force. I don't know where in the world he ever picks up such people, he was simply a scream."

"And you turned him down?" queried the doctor amusedly.

"How can you ask such a question! Of course we did. I don't know if the man is an Italian or not—why he's just a street peddler the police chased away from somewhere. I think he lives in a hovel."

"He lives on a barge," said Mrs. Harris in her gentle way. "Walter took them some food."

"Well, I think *you'd* better *look out* who he gets *in with*," said the girl emphatically. "It's all very funny, but I should think you'd want to know who he makes companions of."

"Oh, we can't attempt to keep up with Walter in his mad career of benevolence," laughed the doctor.

"I really don't see any harm in his taking food to the unfortunate pair," said Mrs. Harris. "There really isn't anything vicious about them."

"Elsie," said her father, laying down his newspaper, "do you remember the boy who promised to join the Scouts if Walter could show him a real live wild animal? And that very night a man with a bear came to town? Beware of Walter, Elsie. The gods are on his side."

"Well, I don't suppose they object to him, they're so used to listening to thunder," said the girl. "Really, sometimes I think his voice grows louder and louder. And the way he *eats!*"

"Well," laughed the doctor. "You have your community bazaar over there in the wilds, and Walter has his old salts to foregather with. Mother and I seem to be the only sober and quiet members of the family. We'll have to take a run over to the bazaar, eh, Mother?"

"I suppose that little boy on the barge is just filthy," said Elsie.

"I understand he's hungry," said her father, "and that's what counts."

"I really don't see any harm in his taking food to them," said Mrs. Harris. "Probably they'll be gone in a day or two and then he'll be interested in something else."

"You never seem to be concerned about him," Elsie complained. "He just does whatever he pleases, and comes and goes."

"And triumphs," said the doctor. "He has a lot of *resources*, as he says, so why should we worry?"

"He wants a homemade pie for to-morrow," said the gentle Mrs. Harris. "I do hope he won't catch malaria down there."

"Nothing can catch him," said the doctor. "He goes Scout Pace, whatever that is."

PART II

Here the trails divide and if you are a girl you can follow Elsie and her giggling group in the furtherance of the grand three-day event, which was to put East Village on the map.

But if you are a boy you will follow in the manly footsteps of Pee-Wee as he trudged down across the fields to the river next morning, with a heavy load in his arms and a heavier load on his mind. To be sure, he bore an apple pie, two cans of salmon, and a package of Indian meal to palliate the sad news which he carried, in addition to his ominous scowl.



Pee-Wee trudged across the fields with a heavy load in his arms and a heavier load on his mind.

"I got a lot of things," said Pee-Wee on reaching the barge, "and I'm going

to stay here all day and we're going to have lunch and maybe even I'll stay to supper and show you how to make fritters only I haven't got any raisins but I got a lot of peanuts and maybe these will do. Gee whiz, we don't have to worry."

The little house on the barge seemed cosy enough and Pee-Wee could think of no greater joy than spending the day here and talking with the old man and his grandson as they worked. For Pop Rossey's discouraging experience had not caused him to relax in turning out his odd handiwork. He sat on a box whittling away, with fresh shavings all about him. "It's good to have a stock ready," he said, "maybe they'll go big at that ruction." By which he meant the bazaar.

"And I got a clean shirt I'm going to wear there," said Sammy. "We're going to build a counter like, and put up a sign that says THE HARBOR. Isn't that a good idea for a booth? And Grandpa says you can stand there and call the people because you've got a good loud voice."

"Girls, they don't even hear loud voices," said Pee-Wee darkly. "All they can do is talk crazy nonsense and giggle."

This seemed an unfavorable comment on the people with whom Pop Rossey was expecting to cooperate, but he was too guileless to sense the drift of Pee-Wee's talk.

"Gee whiz, I wouldn't be a sissy and bother with bazaars," the baffled promoter announced.

"Ain't we going to go there?" inquired the simple Sammy.

"No, because they haven't got sense enough," said Pee-Wee. "All they could do was make fun of me when I asked them. I'll get even with them all right, you see. A lot they care about good turns! Anyway we got some eats and I'm going to stay here; even I'll be here every day because this is Easter Vacation."

This sequel seemed a Waterloo indeed after Pee-Wee's initial triumph over the minion of the law, and poor old Pop Rossey seemed crestfallen. "I guess maybe, Sammy, we better drift downstream and in the bay some tug or other will give us a haul. Maybe if the inspectors takes the barge because it's condemned, they might leave us have this deck-house still; we might put it up in a lot somewhere, Sammy."

It touched even the stout heart of Pee-Wee to hear these hapless wanderers considering their predicament. The poor old man in his condemned barge had apparently staked all on the hope of being unmolested up this unfrequented river. Now it appeared that he could not peddle his wares in the town and could not afford to be towed down to the bay. He might drift down on the tide, but his unpiloted barge would be picked up floundering in the harbor and

probably taken away from him.

Whichever way old Pop Rossey looked he saw only the dreaded poorhouse and separation from his grandchild, his companion and the object of his gentle care. There was something pathetic, nay heroic, about his last despairing attempt to stave off the inevitable by utilizing his skill at sailor's handiwork. And here he was, marooned up a strange river, sitting in this little deck-house, his only home, amid a very ocean of shavings and surrounded by these quaint products of his jack-knife.

Perhaps he and Sammy had exaggerated the possibilities of profit at the bazaar. But if they could not earn much there, at least they did not need much, and they would be in a harbor safe from the meddlesome hands of the authorities. There was no dissembling their keen disappointment.

"Don't you care," said Pee-Wee, never daunted. "I'll get even with them. And anyway Sammy and I are going up into town and try to sell some of these things to the stores and I'll bet we'll get some money that way. You wait and see."

This seemed a good idea and that afternoon the two went up to the business section of the town, each with a windmill and a lighthouse. But they returned at evening having sold but one which Pee-Wee had succeeded in placing with YE RIVERSIDE GIFT SHOPPE for thirty-five cents.

In almost every shop window in town was an attractive card calling attention to the forthcoming "Grand Bazaar and Festival" in East Village.

"I guess we better drift downstream, hey Sammy?" said the old man that evening. "Maybe if it was Christmas time we could sell some, but we don't seem to have no luck. Wouldn't you think, now, folks would take to them things? Such crazy junk they go in for nowadays? Brass things and all such like. Well, folks is funny and most of the things one tries to do is against the law. Wouldn't you say they was kind of odd and pretty like, now?" he asked of Pee-Wee.

"They don't even know how to spell SHOP," said Pee-Wee indignantly. "Gee whiz, they don't even know you spell it with one P. And they think they're so smart using the word YE—that shows how ignorant they are."

"We'll drift down on the tide to-morrow, Sammy. And you were a good little friend to us, I'll say that," the old man added, addressing Pee-Wee.

"If you have to go to a Home I'm coming to see you," said the stout-hearted little hero. "I don't care where it is, I'm coming to see you. And I'm coming down here early to-morrow morning and I'm going to drift down with you, and I don't care where I get off, I'll come home in the train. So will you let me?"

"I guess your mammy will have something to say about that."

"Do you think I don't know how to handle mothers?" Pee-Wee thundered.
"Gee whiz, and fathers too. Didn't you see the way I even handled a cop?"

He discreetly refrained from any reference to his astonishing skill in handling bazaar committees.

Pee-Wee trudged home heavy hearted. There was a vein of the true adventurer in his sturdy make-up, he loved odd places and queer outlandish people, and he had enjoyed every minute of his acquaintance with this hapless pair.

On reaching home he found his long suffering household in the sun-parlor and lost no time in denouncing them.

"You'd better go up and wash your hands and face before supper, Walter," said Mrs. Harris. "I do wish you'd come in more promptly."

"Don't throw your hat on the couch," said Elsie; "and don't sit down on it either. Can't you see I'm laying my things there?"

"To-morrow night I won't be here at all," said Pee-Wee darkly.

"Thank goodness for that," said Elsie.

"And I'm not going to the bazaar either, and you needn't expect me to come down and get you," warned the hero.

"Where are you going to-morrow, Walter?" his father asked, not looking up from his paper.

"I'm going with Sammy and Pop Rossey on the barge," said Pee-Wee. "They're going to drift down on the tide, and down at the brickyards, he says most likely there'll be a tug going down and they'll tow us. Anyway they're going to get down to the bay somehow because tug captains do good turns even if they don't get paid for it, because they all know Pop Rossey. And you needn't say I can't go because two Boy Scouts went with the Martin Johnson expedition to wildest Africa and one Boy Scout went with Commander Byrd to the South Pole and one was going to go up with Lindbergh only he didn't because Lindbergh didn't start so he wasn't to blame and two of them were lost in the Adirondacks for five days and one fell down a cliff all by himself in the Rockies—that shows," he paused for air at the conclusion of this masterful argument. "Even I was going to go with the Martin Johnsons myself only I didn't," he added. "Even that's what the word Scout means—going places alone."

"May I ask how you expect to come back?" asked his father.

"I'm coming back by train," said Pee-Wee, "and if you say a Boy Scout can't go alone in a train that proves how much you don't know about Scouting —geeeee whiz!"

"I wish you wouldn't say *gee whiz* so much, Walter," said his mother.

"Do you know what the *head man* of the Boy Scouts said?" Pee-Wee thundered. "He said a Scout can't get lost if he has a tongue in his head——"

"Well you certainly have that," said Elsie.

"So I'm going to go down the river with them because finding is keeping and I invented them—I mean discovered them—and they're going away because girls are so mean they won't let them come in the bazaar to sell their things."

"Your idea is to be put ashore somewhere down in New York and come back by train; is that it?"

"Sure and a barge can't sink anyway even if it floated to Europe——"

"Well, I don't know as there's any particular danger in it," said the doctor, always inclined to be considerate and reasonable.

"Gee whiz, Pop Rossey, even he used to go after whales," said Pee-Wee. "Even he went around Cape Horn in a schooner. Even he got bitten by a shark."

"Well," said the doctor, "I think I'd like to meet such a fine old salt as Pop Rossey——"

"Heavens, don't let Walter bring him here," said Elsie. "He's just an old peddler, and I think it's *ridiculous*——"

"Well, I'll stroll down there with Walter in the morning," said Dr. Harris, "and meet our old friend. I don't think the adventure sounds so tremendously hazardous. But I do think I'd like to see Walter off."

"You see him that way now," said Elsie sweetly. "He's always *off*."

"You'll have to get up at six o'clock," said Pee-Wee, "because the tide starts down at about seven."

"I think I'm *scout* enough to do that," said the doctor.

"And I'm going to take some crullers too," said Pee-Wee. "And I'm going to take two cans of beans. And I'm going to take some potatoes to roast them."

"Well, don't you take any more sugar," said Elsie, "because I want lots and lots of it to make candy to-morrow night."

With customary wisdom and foresight Pee-Wee had selected his father with great care. With his terrible son Doctor Harris was always cooperative and tactful. He checked things up without appearing to do so. Pee-Wee often boasted that he had a "dandy father" and it sometimes seemed as if he believed himself to be the *inventor* of this patient and understanding guardian. The doctor seldom opposed any obstacles to Pee-Wee's tumultuous career. He witnessed the turmoil with amusement.

So the next morning the doctor strolled down across the fields with the hero who trudged manfully under a burden of commissary stores. And Pee-Wee, mighty Scout though he was, never suspected that his father had any other purpose than to gaze in awe upon a creature who had sailed around Cape

Horn and been bitten by a shark.

But whatever secret purpose lay behind the doctor's visit to Pee-Wee's latest friends and favorite retreat, he seemed fully reassured. Nay, even his kindly sympathy was aroused at sight of the poor old man and the wistful boy surrounded by their unavailing handiwork. There was, indeed, something whimsical and touching about the pair. Through their fantastic hopes of profit from these motley toys he could see only the shadow of the public institutions which they so dreaded.

"Well," said the doctor cheerily, "life's a funny thing."

"I might do yet only for my rheumatism," said Pop Rossey. "And folks, it's hard to know what they'll want now, hey? Me, I learned to do these things when we'd be becalmed hunting sperm whales. Would you believe I sold a many of 'em in Australia? Whale's teeth, I could carve you a pretty picture on 'em and get ten dollars in some ports. Well, and I could carve earrings out of shells too. Sammy's mother, such a pair I made for her. Didn't I, Sammy? I was telling this youngster all about them old whaling days. Now I tremble at one of them policemen. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad in a poorhouse, hey? Only Sammy, I don't just like to leave him. I says to him maybe he'll be fetched up good, leastways. The trouble is, mister, you got to know how to sell these. Making them, that's not so hard. Well, we got a lot of 'em, hey Sammy. They's just like the big ones in Holland."

"Well, good luck to both of you," said Doctor Harris.

"This boy is a fine youngster," said Pop.

"Well, you send him safely back," said the youngster's father.

It seemed to Doctor Harris that poor old Pop Rossey's immediate plans were somewhat hazy. He gathered that the old man was known and kindly thought of by all the tugboat men of the harbor, one or another of whom he was pretty likely to encounter in the lower reaches of the river. His only hope seemed to be, to be picked up by one of the good Samaritans and towed to shore in the city where his dilapidated old barge would be taken from him. First and last the law seemed too much for poor old Pop Rossey. That Pee-Wee, having witnessed this sequel to the old man's despairing efforts, would come safely home, his father had not the slightest doubt.

He was so touched with the pathos of the situation that he was able to see his sturdy little son somewhat in the light of a hero, though of course he chuckled at the thought of Pee-Wee being in the least way instrumental in solving the old man's problem.

"Seems to me you might have let the poor old fellow try his luck in your shindig," he said to Elsie on his return. "You're asking everybody for help; you might render a little."

"I never heard anything so perfectly ridiculous!" gasped Elsie, calling her mother to witness. "An old street peddler, and you want us to *take him up!* You're about as absurd as Walter. He wouldn't sell many of his toys there anyway."

"No, perhaps not," said her father in a tone of half interest. "But the poor old codger might have sold enough to buy a night's lodging or two in New York. Goodness knows what he's going to do. A nice boy, too, that grandson. Poor old fellow."

Meanwhile the baffled philanthropist was braving the angry waves of the Bridgeboro River, sailing away in pride and scorn from a shore which had nothing to offer in charity but giggles.

The kindly tide bore them down stream without any escort fee. The long, lumbering, clumsy barge floundered over into the marshes, then out again into the channel and proceeded now sideways, now stern foremost, and occasionally bow foremost.



The long, lumbering, clumsy barge floundered over into the marshes, then out again into the channel

There was no way to make it go, but this difficulty was compensated for by the fact that there was no way to make it stop.

The scene of their gallant progress so far was the upper river where the stream pursued a serpentine course through woodland and pleasant meadows, with bordering estates. Once past Big Kink, which was the last bend, the meandering stream pursued a fairly straight course down to the bay, running for several miles between abrupt shores.

Like most towns that grow up along rivers, Bridgeboro was long and narrow, and seemed a larger town than it was, because it stretched for such a distance along the shore. Once around Big Kink the barge was expected to proceed straight down under the bridge which connected Bridgeboro and East Village.

Big Kink occupies a place in Pee-Wee's history comparable to that of San Salvador in the history of that other renowned navigator, Christopher Columbus. It was the first place on which he set foot in his spectacular cruise. And it was here that he first encountered natives.

At Big Kink the river made an almost right-angle turn. Then, a couple of hundred feet below it made another freakish turn, and then went straight on down under the bridge like a dignified, orderly river. The "kink" was like a big S. In the first turn of this kink was a pleasant stretch of woodland along the curving shore, popular with the boys of Bridgeboro, for the bathing and fishing were good here. If one climbed a tree at this spot he could see the bridge around the corner, so to say, and would realize what a long course the river took to go a very short distance.

So slow had been the progress of the *Colbert C. Rossey* that it was midafternoon when the unwieldy barge, disdaining to make the turn with the river, floated stern foremost against the wooded shore with a resounding bump and began performing its customary maneuver of swinging around. But an ominous grating sound informed the gallant crew that its keel was on the bottom of the river. So there it stood with the tide running out, safe in the welcoming arms of Big Kink Bend, and settling more securely every minute on the gravelly bed of the stream.

"Here we are till next flood tide," said Pop Rossey. "Ain't that bad luck now? I thought the channel ran close into shore. Would you think she'd behave quite so bad, now? Well, here we are, as the feller says. We don't need no anchor, that's sure."

"It's a nice place to stay," said Sammy; "all woods-like."

"It's Kinky Grove," said Pee-Wee, "I know it. Don't I even go swimming here? It's kind of beachy, the shore is here."

"She's touched everything she seen, and then she touched bottom," said the old man.

"She bumped everything except the sky," said Sammy.

Suddenly there arose out of the woods a merry voice which startled the hero as he sat on the bench outside the deck-house.

"Look who's here," it called joyously. "Look up on that old barge! The ex-Ship-skunk! Hey kid, do you want to buy a ticket for a bazaar? They're going to have eats and everything. Hey, Warde, look where he's sitting up on that old

scow. See him?"

There was no doubt about it; it was the voice of Pee-Wee's arch enemy, that uproarious Scout, Roy Blakeley.

"Now we're going to have trouble," said Pee-Wee ominously. "That's Roy Blakeley and two other Silver Foxes, and they're the worst of the whole Troop."



"They call themselves the Silver-plated Foxes! They told a tenderfoot that you've got to be stung by a bee to win the Bee Keeping Merit Badge!"

"If there isn't P. Harris as large as life if not much smaller," Roy caroled forth in his most bantering tone. "Hey, what's that you've got underneath you, kid? Move away so we can see it. Oh it's a *barge*! Look at the barge underneath Pee-Wee! How come and if so *why*, kid?"

"Hey, Husky Harris, where did you come from?" called Warde Hollister. "We've been hunting all over for you and had dandy luck not finding you. We wanted you to take a long hike."

"Hey what have you been doing; joining the Sea Scouts, kid?" called Hunt.

"Don't get over too much to the side of that thing or it will tip over," said Warde. "What are you trying to do, anyway; push the shore out of the way?"

"Gee, what a big long barge!" said Hunt.

"Why shouldn't it be?" shouted Roy. "The two ends are so far apart—that's the reason. Hey, kid, do you want to take a chance on a Ford coupe, for the grand bazaar? We're working for the Impunity Club. It's doughnuttied by——"

"You mean *donated!*!" Pee-Wee screamed. "Why don't you talk sense in front of a feller that maybe is going to join the Scouts someday; ain't you Sammy? And besides, even I wouldn't take a chance on it—not to help those people over there that wouldn't even do a good turn and let the people that own this barge sell things at their bazaar that they cut with their jack-knives and this man used to hunt whales even——"

"He didn't get much of a whale when he found you," Warde called merrily.

"Maybe he thought you were cut out with a jack-knife," said Roy. "Come on, fellow sprouts, let's sit down; this is going to be good."

These members of the Silver Fox Patrol loved nothing better than to make a discovery of Pee-Wee's latest fad and "guy" him along these lines in order to enjoy the reverberating thunder. This was their mischievous habit, and they were never at a loss for material since Pee-Wee was always absorbed in some new and mighty scheme. His vulnerable point at present was the bazaar. And his mighty antagonism to the gentle sex was well known. For he scorned everything gentle.

So now these comrades on mirthful pleasure bent, perceiving his latest obsession, proceeded to dwell on that. Though it should be said that their services had been seductively enlisted by the enterprising maidens of Fast Village. These hilarious Scouts were indeed selling chances and admission tickets. Nay, they had even sunk so low and so far forgotten their primitive wildness that they were to superintend the raffle of a gorgeous kewpie doll. Not only that (which was bad enough) but they had erected two booths and a box office at the entrance of the grounds.

"Hey kid, we're going to have all the candy that's left over," called Warde.

"They're going to give us the lemonade tent, too," called Hunt. "We're going to put it up on Roy's lawn."

"If you happen to be passing up my way we'd be glad to see you—pass," shouted Roy. "They're going to give us all the decorations, too, when the jigamaree is over—flags and everything. Hey, Wardie, aren't they going to give us the tent? It's a dandy one."

At this moment the core of the apple which Pee-Wee had been eating flew down under terrific impetus and caught Roy plunk in his hilarious face.

"I was just struck by an idea," he said, wiping his cheek. "Let's——"

"Yes and you'll be struck by another one," Pee-Wee roared. "I got a whole basket of apples up here and I don't care how many I eat. Even two of them are rotten, so you better look out."

"Hey, kid, you should throw the core first and eat the apple afterwards," Warde called up.

"Sure," said Roy hilariously. "It's the same as a rabbit only different, he don't pile up any earth when he digs a hole because he begins at the other end; you learn that in Scouting. I'll leave it to Warde."

"I'll leave it to your crazy, laughing, hyena face," screamed Pee-Wee as he let fly an untouched apple which was all that he had claimed for it in the matter of rottenness.

"Hey, look out for Pee-Wee," Hunt shouted up to the greatly amused Sammy. "You ought to hang a red lantern on him, he's dangerous."

"Now he sees what you are! Now he sees what you are!" Pee-Wee screamed, alluding to Sammy.

Indeed, Sammy did see what they were and he liked them. Up to the time of their arrival he had supposed that the Scouts were strange, awesome beings, wearing heroic uniforms and living lives quite beyond his reach. He knew they went camping and he supposed that this cost fabulous sums of money. He knew that newspapers printed things about them. He had never dreamed that he would be brought very close to them. He only knew he was very close to an orphan asylum. And to this poor little dweller on a disused barge, who seldom set foot on land, the very name of Boy Scouts was like something magic.

Well, now he had not only seen them face to face, but they had even dared to call him to witness in their banter of the terrible Pee-Wee. He had stood in awe of Pee-Wee from the first. But they did not seem to stand in awe of him at all; far from it.

"Hey kid," called Roy, with some semblance of seriousness, "come ahead, desert the ship, then it'll float right off. You're all that's holding it down. Come on and help us sell tickets, people will buy them from you to get rid of you. Honest they're going to give us the tent afterwards. Haven't you got any civic spirit? Scouts are supposed to aid, especially lemonade. Don't be a slacker. You ought to like East Village, it's almost as small as you are."

"Sure and it can make as much noise as you can," said Warde. "You can bring that feller with you if you want to. We're going over to-night to help on the candy booth."

"Sure," said Roy, "and to-morrow we're going to dig for marshmallows in the marsh. Come ahead, be a rooster——"

"He means a booster," said Hunt.

"What do I care what I mean?" said Roy. "A Scout is never mean, he's meaningless. Come ahead, Scout Harris. The three of us are working together

and you can be with us—we'll be four of the Three Musketeers.”

“Sure, we can stand it if you can,” said Warde.

“You can go and help 'em for all I care,” shouted Pee-Wee, “and you can sell your old tickets even I wouldn't buy any of them for nothing. Even if they were free I wouldn't buy them! I'm going down to New York on this barge, gee whiz, I know how to be a Scout and stick to people that I'm loyal to even if people that are supposed to help poor people don't do it—even I got to be loyal to the last ones I started sticking up for, no matter what, even if Scouts stick up for the ones that wouldn't help, then I don't have to be loyal to them—that isn't what it means in Law Two, I can prove it.”

“Explain all that,” said Roy.

But by now this merry trio, having satisfied their mischievous desire to see Pee-Wee in action, ambled up through the woods, shoving each other this way and that by way of entertaining themselves. And Pee-Wee's concluding bit of oratory (which was a gem) was lost upon the desert air.

PART III

Pop Rossey had not solicited Pee-Wee's continuous protection and now the simple-hearted old man realized how much fun his little champion was missing by setting himself up as a scornful critic and arch foe of the merry festival which was to enliven East Village.

"Maybe you better join in with 'em," he said; "those is lively youngsters. They's your own crowd."

"The Scouts are all right," said Pee-Wee, "but those fellers and all the rest of their Patrol are laughing hyenas. Do you call it Scouting to tell a new member that to get the Taxidermy badge you have to drive a taxi? Gee whiz, do you call that citizenship, like it says?"

"I thought you had to be wild," Sammy said.

"Sure you do," said the Scouting expert. "But you have to have a lot of citizenship—you have to be kind of wild citizens."

Sammy did not quite understand that, but he knew he would like to be mixed up with these hilarious, bantering Scouts.

"If I was you I'd go with them," he said, "because you'll have a lot of fun. Grandpop and me ain't got nothing against that bazaar. If I could join with those Scouts I would, and I'd do all the things that they're doing. But I can't because I ain't got any home—I mean I ain't got one that stays in one place."

Pee-Wee's eternal feud with his Troop did not prevent him from launching forth on the glories of Scouting. "Gee, we have lots of fun," he said, "we go camping in the summer and everything."

"I'd like to be in your Troop," Sammy said, "because they make me laugh. And we won't be mad if you go with them now instead of going down to the city with us."

"Do you think I'll do that?" Pee-Wee demanded.

"I'm going home now to tell my family that I'm marooned and I can't come home to-night, and to-morrow I'm going all the way down with you. Do you think I care anything about the old bazaar? Gee whiz, now we're kind of like pals and we're going to stick. So don't start getting supper until I come back."

Sammy went and sat beside his grandfather on the rough bench outside the deck-house. The sun was getting low in the sky and shedding its crimson glow in the still woods. It seemed particularly still after the hilarious combat this simple pair had just witnessed. The old man did not raise his head, but he released one arm and put it around the boy. "I'm aground, Sammy," he said.

"You mean the barge is aground?" the boy asked.

"No me. I'm aground; the both of us is, Sammy. I can't make out to do for you no more, boy. I kep' my promise to your daddy and always did. Me and you has made out as long as the barge passed inspection." There was a moment's pause. "I like that youngster. He's good company. Wouldn't you think, now, that he owned the barge, how he flies his flag up there?"

"He thinks he's marooned; maybe he even thinks he's a captain," Sammy said. "That's one thing we got, the barge."

Still again there was a pause. Finally the old man said what he had been dreading to say since the collapse of his last hope up here in this rural community. "I'm thinking they'll arrest me when we get down in the harbor, Sammy. Up here I got pushed, but down there I'm thinking that I'll get pulled in."

The boy was scared, and the old man drew him a little closer toward him.

"We didn't steal or kill anybody," the boy said, with a tremor in his voice. He was so simple that he thought only thieves and murderers were arrested.

"No, but the old *Colbert C. Rossey* is condemned, Sammy, and that's why we can't use it no more." With his trembling old hand he fumbled in his pocket and brought out and glanced (for the hundredth time) at a creased and soiled document which was the cause of his undoing.

It was from the harbor authorities and it informed him that the "official inspection of the barge *Colbert C. Rossey* of New York and used in and about New York Harbor as an unpowered freight carrier of which he was the registered owner, had been found to be defective in two of its forward planks"—and so forth and so on. Further, that "said barge *Colbert C. Rossey* must forthwith be withdrawn from the waters of New York Harbor until such defective planking has been replaced and supplementary inspection made upon proper application filed with the Harbor Commission."

Poor old Pop Rossey was quite bewildered. He knew that those planks would last longer than he would. But he did not know what *forthwith* meant, and the whole terrible communication appalled him. So he went to Captain Van Puffer of the tug *Rumpus* (which had towed him here and there). "What does *forth-with* mean?" he asked.

"It means right away quick," said the Captain.

"I'm thinking I'm on the rocks then," said Pop Rossey.

Well, the upshot of it was that, since old Pop Rossey could not afford to go into dry dock for repairs. Captain Van Puffer, who liked him immensely, towed him up the quiet Bridgeboro River where the inspectors cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

"You see, it says *forth-with*, Sammy," said his grandfather, gazing still

bewildered at the devastating paper. "We got to go back, and they'll overhaul me. They'll lay up the barge and put me in irons, I'm thinking."

He did not really mean *in irons*, that was just his old seafaring phrase for enforced confinement. He just meant *arrested*. But he was right about it.

They would certainly lay up his old barge; and they would lay him up too. Some ship or other had sunk lately and the inspectors were on a grand rampage.

"We're going on the rocks now, Sammy," he said pitifully. "I couldn't give you nothing but a old hulk of a scow for a home, Sammy, but we ain't got that no more now. Never you mind about me. Maybe you'll be better off in one of them Homes; you'll have a lot of boys there. This is our last v'yage—pretty soon now—we're going to make our last port down yonder. Maybe we should be happy about that, hey? The sailors would always sing when we was homeward bound."

But the boy was too literal for him. "It ain't homeward bound if you ain't got any home, is it?"

"Now that's just an idea, *homeward bound*, Sammy. Some of 'em—Portegees, Dutchmen, and all, they didn't have no homes, but they was homeward bound. It's just a kind of idea. Now we got to cheer up. Here comes—look Sammy, is it him?"

It was indeed "him." He came trudging through the woods lugging a huge brief case with bulging sides.

"I got a lot of dandy pictures of camp to show you, and I got some tomatoes," he called.

On the side of the brief case which had knocked against Pee-Wee's body as he strode along, the tomatoes seemed more like stewed tomatoes. Moreover, one of the pictures showing a group of Scouts lifting a wounded comrade was made realistically appalling by scarlet spatterings and a goodly smear.

"That isn't blood," said Pee-Wee, as he pulled the contents out pell-mell; "it's tomato. Because if a Scout gets wounded they don't let him bleed, because Scouts know how to stop bleeding with a tourniquet—that's a bandage you twist around with a stick."

Sammy seemed relieved.

"And this one, that's not the sunset," said Pee-Wee; "that's only tomato. And do you see this?" He displayed a black marking crayon of about the length and thickness of a cigar. "Do you know what I use that for?"

"To mark with?" the literal Sammy ventured. "Sure, but not like you think. I make marks on rocks so I can find my way back when I go to a place. Sometimes I blaze trees. I make Indian signs with that, and if another Scout comes along he'll know which way I went."

"So he can go the other way?" the simple Sammy asked, remembering Roy Blakeley.

"Now you're getting to be like those Silver Foxes," Pee-Wee said in a kind of fateful tone. "Do you want to be crazy like those fellers?"

Sammy was too guileless to be ironical and he felt squelched.

There were photos mounted on large cards and Sammy gazed wide-eyed at the scenes with Scouts at Temple Camp. Pop Rossey was glad to see Sammy preoccupied and entertained—indeed spellbound. But he was sorry, too, because the pictures showed a life wholly unattainable by the boy who must so soon become a public charge.

"Did your father say you could stay here all night?" Sammy asked.

"He said I could if we didn't drift down to-night," said Pee-Wee. Those were evidently the best terms he had been able to secure. "He said I could drift down with you in the day time if I come home on the train the same night."

"Sammy," said the old man, "we're going to float off in an hour or two. Let's throw a rope ashore and tie it around one of them trees and we'll stay here and go down on the tide in the morning. We'll get picked up at the brickyards sure. I'm thinking if we get a tow down from there, this here Scout youngster will get a train home by afternoon. That'll be best for his daddy, huh? Then him and you can have a good time here to-night; I'll tell the both of you about how I was marooned in good earnest on a little pile of rock in the Isles of Shoals."

"And what are you going to do when you get down in the harbor?" Pee-Wee asked. "I mean after I start home? Won't I ever see you again?"

"Never you mind about that," said the old man.

"We're going to have our supper now—while we're marooned like you call it."

"But after I leave you down there, what are you going to do?" Pee-Wee persisted.

"I'm going to an Orphan Home," said Sammy with brutal simplicity.

"And grandpop, he's going to another Home. Because the barge is going to be taken away from us." Pee-Wee stood gaping. For once in his life he was absolutely silent.

That was a momentous night in the life of Pee-Wee Harris. In the gathering darkness these three sat on the bench along the side of the little square shanty on the barge. A rope stretched down from one of the weather-worn and half-rotten cleats, and was tied around a tree near the shore.

It was very quiet all about. The keel of the lumbering old barge was free now and the long black hulk began slowly to swing around with the upstream

current so that the occupants of the bench found themselves facing the river instead of the bordering woods.

And as they sat there, these three, the old man told the boys about the brave days when he was a fisherman off the Grand Banks, and a mate on the *Nancy* which braved the boisterous demon of Cape Horn and saved the castaway crew of the *Bristol Maid* on Starbuck Islet in the South Seas. He told them of the Fiji group and of the savage king who spared his life because he was afraid of the sailor's little pocket compass.

"Listen—what's that?" asked Sammy.

"I know what it is, I know what it is!" vociferated Pee-Wee. "It's a motor-boat away way up the river."

It was. The sound was so faint that it could be heard only intermittently, when the wind was favorable.

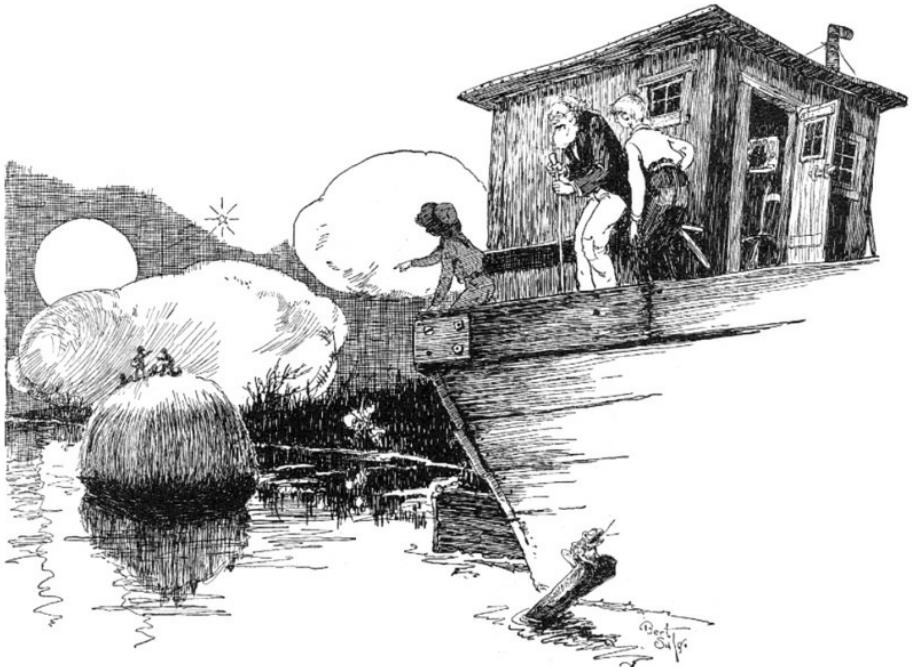
"It's coming this way," said Pee-Wee excitedly, "listen now, do you hear it again?"

The chugging was steady now, and easily heard. "Tk, tk, tk, tk, tk, tk, tk."

It was not a populous river, except down below, where the brickyards were, and the lumber company had its yards. But above the picturesque old bridge, the region was enchanting. No broad and ugly meadowland bordered the narrow stream here. It wound its circuitous way between wooded shores, and abounded in tranquil little coves and recesses dear to canoeists and fishermen. Not often a motor-boat, even of moderate size, trespassed above the old historic bridge into these peaceful and romantic scenes.

Nearer and nearer sounded the steady chugging until the practiced ear of the Scout (assisted by his practiced mouth) assured them that the approaching boat was passing Shadow Cove and rounding Necker's Neck (a favorite haunt of loitering canoeists) and coming into the comparatively straight way. And so it was, for presently, there was to be seen up the river a strange apparition.

Pee-Wee had seen things on land which belonged there. He had seen things on water which belonged there. But never before had he beheld a haystack floating down stream. It seemed as odd as a goldfish disporting with grasshoppers on the front lawn.



Never before had he beheld a haystack floating down the stream. Upon it perched several figures enjoying a hayride.

It was a golden haystack, lacking only a team of oxen to be realistic. Upon it perched several figures like vacationists enjoying a hayride on the homecoming load.

"Now what do you make of that there?" asked the old man.

"Tk, tk, tk, tk, tk, tk, tk." Somewhere under that outlandish spectacle was a gas engine, chugging away and bringing the extraordinary thing nearer and nearer. They could hear voices.

"Sammy, will you look at it," said the old man. "I seen icebergs aplenty floating along, but I *never see the likes of that*."

"Gee, it's a crazy thing," said Pee-Wee.

"Would you think that maybe them youngsters was in back of it?" the old man inquired. "Wouldn't it be like their comical doings, now?"

Pee-Wee only stared. The thing was no more than a couple of hundred feet distant now; the voices could be heard clearly. "There's a light," one of them said, evidently alluding to the faint glow given out by the smelly old lamp in the barge's deck-house. "Let's drive into the barn first." They were evidently crazy, or else humorously appreciative of the figure they were cutting.

They fell into song. It was evidently the continuation of a song which had

been originated upstream:

Oh, we dig for new potatoes,
Hurray, hurray, hurray;
We're planting oats
From motor-boats
On the river all the day.

Ok the farmer, oh the sailor,
Took another load away,
Hey, hey, Farmer Gray
On the river all the day.

The unwieldy thing verged in toward the barge, its surmounting crew singing gaily. Now Pee-Wee could see, or rather he surmised from the general appearance of things, that the outlandish load was piled on a big wide dory, though he could not see the hull by reason of the towering, overhanging cargo. Somewhere astern of this mass, and doubtless sheltered from its pressure, was the unseen navigator of the craft, his hand in control of the heavily taxed outboard motor. The all but top-heavy boat sidled up alongside the barge, and the merry company upon its comfortable summit were about level with the deck-house.

"Greetings and salutations," said a flippant young man, who was sprawled comfortably on this marine hayload. "Is this the old farm house?"

"No, it's a barge," said Pee-Wee. "Gee whiz, you better look out or that thing will tip over."

"In that case it will get wet," said the flippant young man.

"Say, mister," Pee-Wee shouted back, "what's all that load of hay for?"

"For the brick yards. You can't make bricks without straw. Did you ever hear that?"

Pee-Wee had heard that. And he knew now the explanation of that outlandish load with its somewhat dubious voyagers. They hailed from Bricktown, down where the brickyards were, and were on their way back with a load of straw from one of the upstream farms. They were a questionable, albeit jovial, set.

But Pee-Wee had no opportunity to engage in banter with them, for the young man on top called out, "Anchors away," and off went the drooping load, the while a somewhat ribald song was wafted back to the *Colbert C. Rossey*.

Ten minutes could hardly have passed when voices, thin and spent by the distance, were heard by the three occupants of the barge. Vague and without

volume as they seemed, these voices conveyed a sense of terror to the startled listeners. Modified by the intervening space, they still seemed to carry tidings of catastrophe.

Then arose a piercing cry. An area of light illumined the sky to the southeast. Because of an abrupt bend in the river this bright spot showed through the woodland, painting the trees with a brilliant glow.

"What is it?" Sammy asked, in tense excitement. "I'm thinking it's something wrong," said the old man. "Look—look off there."

The sky above the woods was lurid now. Distant, eerie voices called, and other voices answered. Suddenly the appalling screech of the Bridgeboro fire siren wakened the woodland and the silent river with its deafening clamor.

"It's by the river, it's by the river!" Pee-Wee shouted. "Because it bends around, and that's why it shows over the woods. Come on, hurry up, let's go!"

"Can I go?" Sammy asked.

"Don't you get into no harm; yes, you can go. But you come back soon, do you mind?" Pop Rossey said.

"You don't need to worry as long as he's with me," Pee-Wee managed to stammer in his frantic hurry and excitement. "Come on, come on, *hurry up!*"

The next instant they had jumped down from the barge and were running pell-mell through the woods by a path that led eventually into the road.

"If you weren't going to that orphan—if—if you were going to be a Scout—I'd—teach you Scout Pace," Pee-Wee panted. "If—if you didn't have the path to follow—come on, hurry up—if you didn't have the path to follow, you'd go around in a great big circle—do—do you know why?"

"Why?" Sammy panted.

"Because on account of your heart being on one side, if you don't know where you're going you go around because the leg on the side where your heart is, goes faster. You got to be a Scout to know that—*come on.*"

About fifteen minutes running and walking brought them to the road where traffic was halted and a great crowd assembled.

"Now you're going to—maybe—now you're going to see a lot of Scouts," said Pee-Wee, still panting from his exertion. "But don't you care, you don't need to be scared of them, because I know how to handle them." One might have supposed that he was going to introduce Sammy to a pack of wild animals.

Between two increasing crowds on either shore the old historic bridge was going up in flames. Autos were being turned back but the congestion had already become so great that some motorists could not extricate their cars from the mass. The Bridgeboro police chief had sent a couple of Scouts up the road to turn the approaching traffic. Throbbing engines were pumping away sending several streams upon the doomed structure.

Pee-Wee and Sammy, elbowing their way in through the crowd, gazed spellbound at the consuming flames. The curving structure of one of the beautiful old arches collapsed and floated away in a myriad of burning fragments, twinkling like stars as they receded up the dark river. The handrail for pedestrians fell away in a long, unbroken mass and lay slantwise against one of the granite supports, its grill-work all in flames, looking like a fireworks design. Then it broke in two and sank into the river from which it had protected thousands for more than fifty years. Stout girders of hickory burned in the river, seeming like fantastic lines of flame, until the hurrying waters rolled them over, withdrawing them from view.

"How did it ever start?" some one close to the boys asked his neighbor.

"A boat filled with blazing straw floated under it," was the answer. "See it down there?"

Pee-Wee and Sammy elbowed their way over to the water's edge south of the ruined structure where a thin column of black smoke rose like a Scout's smudge signal. There stood the dory of the merry company from the brickyards, unobscured now, with only a small mass of wet straw in its charred cockpit. As Sammy looked down at it he thought of the song that ill-fated crew had been singing as they approached his grandfather's old barge.

"Were any of them hurt?" Sammy asked a bystander.

"Nah," a young fellow volunteered. "You can't kill those brickyard guys. I heard that they jumped. They just took one of them away in the ambulance but he's only got a busted arm or something. Well, they did a good job, huh? I bet they was drunk."

There was nothing more to see and Sammy, always thoughtful and obedient, remembered that he had to get back. The fine, old, historic bridge, proudly pictured on post cards, was no more. You may still see it on the cover of Bridgeboro's Centennial booklet, with its three beautiful arches supporting it well clear of flood tides, a picturesque and sturdy relic of a by-gone time.

But it took only a match, or perchance a lighted cigarette, in the hands of a brickyard crew to scatter it in a million charred and broken fragments on the tide.

Pee-Wee was for remaining and rendering Scout service, but when Sammy, in his quiet, literal way, reminded him that a Scout's first duty is to keep his word, they started back through the woods.

"Now I'm going to show you how to find our way in the pitch dark," Pee-Wee said. The occasion seemed propitious for this, for the moon had considerably retreated behind gathering clouds, as if to leave the stage to the Scout. "I could use a compass but even I'm not going to do that," he said. "Even I'm not going to go by squirrels' nests, how they always build on the north side of a tree, because some of them are kind of crazy and don't do that."

The artless Sammy was about to ask his stalwart guide how he could hope to see squirrels' nests if he could not see the trail, but he refrained.

"I'm going to go by a peach of a Scout resource," Pee-Wee advised him. "We can follow the path for about a mile because it's good and plain. Maybe you can't see it but just the same I can; I can kinder *feel* it."

"What does it feel like?" the simple Sammy ventured.

"I can feel it by instinct," Pee-Wee said. "And anyway I can go by the stars; Scouts have to do that. We have to go northwest and if you see any lightning bugs be sure to tell me because if you let one crawl up a stick he always points his light to the east. That's what you call *lore*—it means knowing a lot."

With such collaborators as stars, squirrels, lightning bugs (to say nothing of an emergency compass) Sammy thought the dark woods would prove like a numbered thoroughfare. "Could I have some of that if I got to be a Scout —*lore*?" he asked.

"Sure; I'll give you a lot of it," said Pee-Wee.

For a while they trudged northward following the trail, which it was just about possible to make out in the darkness. They might have followed the shore of the river but for the marshland in places, and the longer distance. As Pee-Wee had warned his comrade, the northern end of the trail was not very clear, even in the moonlight. He was right about that, for as they hiked northward toward Big Kink Bend the trail seemed to cease entirely.

Here is where a squirrel, or perchance a lightning bug, might have rendered them a fraternal Scout service. As for the stars, they deserted shamelessly. Perhaps they were afraid of Pee-Wee.

"Come on, let's go this way," said Pee-Wee.

Sammy followed him dutifully, properly respectful of Pee-Wee's "lore." But in about five minutes the hero paused, evidently baffled by the dense night. This woodland, scene of merry picnic parties by day, on a dark night, was a little scary. Moreover, the dutiful Sammy was in a hurry to return soon, as he had promised.

"We want to find out what way is north, don't we?" he ventured.

"Are you scared?" Pee-Wee asked him as they paused in the darkness.

"No, I'm not scared, but I want to get back," said Sammy.

"Now I'm going to show you," said Pee-Wee darkly.

Reaching around to a rear pocket he looked alarmingly as if he was going to draw a pistol on his victim. What he did bring forth was something flat and oval.

"Do you know what that is?" Pee-Wee demanded.

"Is—is it a wallet?" Sammy hazarded, peering through the darkness.

"No, it's not a wallet," said Pee-Wee loftily. "It's a turtle."

Sammy wondered whether this instrument of Scouting had reposed in Pee-Wee's back pocket since they had first started out. He had no recollection of Pee-Wee picking it up. He wondered whether Pee-Wee carried it as a man carries his pocket-book. He was not without a shy sense of humor, and a whimsical thought flashed through his mind. But he did not dare to trifle with the wonders of scouting lore by asking the hero if the object contained a commutation ticket and a driver's license.

"Is it alive?" he asked.

"Do you think it would be any good if it was dead?" scorned Pee-Wee.

Sammy could not conjecture what good the live turtle was. It did not seem to participate at all in their problem, being of a coy and secretive habit with its head, legs and tail drawn in as completely as the blades and can-opener and button hook in a Scout jack-knife.

"I bet you didn't know that a turtle always goes toward the water," Pee-Wee announced, triumphantly. "It doesn't make any difference how you start him, he always goes straight to the nearest water."

Pee-Wee set the turtle on a flat rock, where he remained stalled for about ten minutes while the lost wayfarers waited expectantly.

"Do you think he'll start soon?" Sammy asked. "Because, don't you know we said we'd be back soon?"

"We have to wait till he makes up his mind," said Pee-Wee.

It seemed likely that this turtle would never make a misstep in all his life, so leisurely was he about making up his mind. Once his head slowly emerged. Pee-Wee focused an expiring flashlight upon the emerging point and waited in suspense.



"Will he surely go toward the river when he does start?" Sammy made bold to ask.

"Sure he will, because it's a law of nature," said Pee-Wee. "Now he's going to start."

But the turtle was not to be beguiled into ill-considered action. It is true that one forward leg emerged about an eighth of an inch, but apparently this rash act was regretted for the infinitesimal point

Pee-Wee focused his flashlight upon the emerging point and waited in suspense

disappeared.

"Are you sure the river is north?" Sammy asked.

"It's northwest," the

Scout informed him.

"Why don't you use your compass?"

Pee-Wee was moved to inspect his pocket compass. But the compass was not moved to do anything. "Sometimes it sticks," he said.

"Listen," said Sammy; "can you hear a bell away far off?"

"That's a fire engine going home, I guess," said Pee-Wee.

Sammy tried to determine what this might mean in reference to their own destination. That was a sensible thing to do, and Sammy had the makings of a Scout.

But the balky compass, and the faint distant ringing were rendered superfluous by the "law of nature." Slowly, so slowly that a snail would be a speed demon by comparison, the head of the wary turtle protruded, more, a little more, and then upward as if proclaiming that he was at last ready to guide these pilgrims to the flowing river. A chapter might be devoted to the emergence of one foot. It was followed by another one. Then the tail moved out like the opening blade of a jack-knife.

"Shh, watch his other two legs," whispered Pee-Wee.

"How are we going to see him when he goes?" the sensible Sammy asked, thinking of the flickering flashlight.

"Shh! Maybe we could fix a lightning bug on his back," whispered Pee-Wee.

This novel suggestion gave Sammy a real idea. "Maybe is this what you call a resource?" he asked timidly. "Let's scratch two or three matches on his back, and then we can see those scratches, on account, of their being sulphur. Because the sand-paper we scratch matches on in the deck house, you can see it in the dark. So maybe we could do that?"

"Sure we could, sure we could," enthused Pee-Wee in a joyous whisper. "And that shows how prepared Scouts always are, because I've got some matches. And you're a Scout, too, for thinking of that, geeee whiz! You bet I'm sorry you've got to go to that——"

"Let's try it," Sammy purposely interrupted.

They scratched several matches criss-cross on the turtle's hard shell and set him down again. Sure enough, these criss-cross markings shone a kind of flat yellow in the darkness.

"It works, it works!" shouted Pee-Wee.

In the course of time this branded guide was again all set to move. And he did move. Suddenly, as if seized by an inspiration, away he waddled off the

rock plunk onto the ground, paused a moment, then altering his direction went on, away into the darkness, with the mystic markings glimmering on his lumbering back.

"Come on, let's follow him," shouted the excited Pee-Wee.

And so they did as he made a bee-line course through the black woods. They could not see him at all, only that weird glimmering hieroglyphic moving along. But it must be confessed that this hidden guide seemed to know what he was about. Once or twice he paused as if to check up on his direction, then waddled on straight about his business. It was slow work following him, but that was nothing against the alternative of being lost.

At last something occurred which enabled them to abandon their luminous guide. Directly ahead, in the course the turtle was following, a faint light was to be seen.

"What did I tell you! What did I tell you!" shouted the elated Pee-Wee. "It's the barge! It's the light in the cabin! What did I tell you! Didn't I tell you they always go toward the water?"

"We don't need to follow him now, because even we can see it. Come on, we'll get there ahead of him."

This was more than agreeable to Sammy, ever mindful of his grandfather's parting injunction.

The last they saw of the turtle (or rather his mystic illumination) was when they looked back and saw him moving along, an uncanny thing in the darkness, following in their trail.

But something was wrong, either with Pee-Wee or the "law of nature." Soon other lights twinkled ahead of the two hikers, and after they had gone a little distance the woods thinned out and shortly they were crossing open fields. Then they came to Connelly's Alley with its scattered houses, and so into Town House Row.

"I know where I am now," said Pee-Wee. That was something at least.

"Where's the barge?" asked Sammy.

"It's down at the river," said Pee-Wee. "Gee *williger!* I'm never going to trust a turtle again."

"Ain't we going to go to the barge?" Sammy asked, a little troubled.

"Can I help it if streets are here?" retorted Pee-Wee.

It all happened so suddenly! They were in the woods, then presto, they were on Main Street. There was the Pastime Movie Theatre; there was Gus's Service Station. And there was Bennett's Fresh Confectionery.

"Now I know how to get back to the barge from here," said Pee-Wee triumphantly. "Because it's the same way I went from my house to-day—now I know."

"Do you think the turtle is coming up here?" Sammy asked innocently.

"I should worry where he goes," said the hero indignantly. "He's crazy, gee whiz, that's all I say. Anyway, you needn't be afraid, we won't get lost. Now you're in civilization."

Sammy was not afraid, but he was a little dazzled by Bridgeboro's modest white light district. He had, in fact, seldom been off the old barge. Moreover, these sudden changes staggered him. He was glad to follow Pee-Wee, but he was worried about his grandfather. He had started following a turtle to the promised land (water), and here he was, puzzled by his comrade's air of triumph. But everything was a triumph with Pee-Wee.

"Come on, let's go over and get a couple of ice-cream cones, and then we'll go straight to the barge," Pee-Wee said, reassuringly.

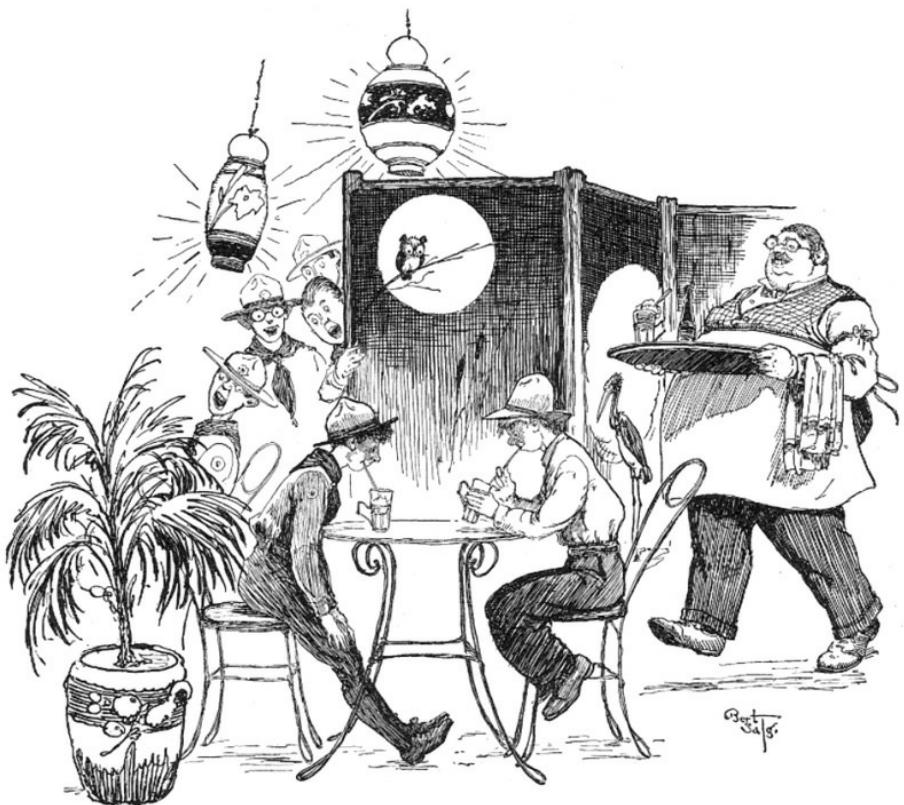
Sammy lingered a little behind as Pee-Wee led the way over to Bennett's. For he was timorous about this gay night life. And he felt the kaleidoscopic effects of following Pee-Wee. He wondered where it would end.

Bennett's was overran with Scouts. They were lined up at the soda fountain and gathered around the little wire tables. Sammy was awed by this spectacle of bantering conviviality. What if they should call to him and draw him, pell-mell, into the limelight? He followed Pee-Wee in timidly.

As for Pee-Wee he knew how to handle this bunch. It was evident that they were pausing on their way home from the fire for raspberry sundaes, banana splits, and other gooey concoctions.

"Look who's here," called Connie Bennett, leader of the Elks.

"Oh, it's the head animal cracker!" said Roy, waving a spoon at the new arrivals. "Look, it's Pee-Wee!"



"Oh, look who's here. It's the head animal cracker!"

"Wait till I get out my magnifying glass," said Grove Bronson of the Ravens.

"Move that soda glass out of the way so I can see him," said Vie Norris of the Elks. "Hey, Pee-Wee, who's your boy friend?"

"He lives on a barge that's ten times as big as all of you put together," Pee-Wee shouted.

"Fancy that," said Will Dawson of the Silver Foxes.

"Hey, kid," Roy shouted gaily, "did you hear the latest news? The bridge didn't burn down; I'll leave it to Mr. Bennett."

"There you go, *leaving* things again," Pee-Wee shouted.

"We're not going to leave a thing." Roy shot back; "not even the plates. Honest, kid; the bridge didn't burn down."

"It did too burn down," Pee-Wee was seduced into proclaiming.

"It burned *up*," said Roy. "No sooner said than stung. Hey, boy," he called to Sammy, "you never saw Pee-Wee and me engaged in mortal comeback. Sit

down, you're just as welcome here as you are in the street."

"Don't you mind them," said Pee-Wee as he and Sammy sat down at one of the little round tables. Sammy was laughing silently.

"You've got to mind me," Roy called to him. "I'm a Patrol Leader—you have to mind your leader, it's in the foot-book."

"He means the Handbook," said Pee-Wee; "he's crazy."

"Hey, boy from the barge," the irrepressible Roy exclaimed. "As a Scout isn't Pee-Wee a good midget? He's the Ford of Scouting. What's he been doing, showing you the town?"

"I'm showing him a lot of fools," thundered Pee-Wee, a trickle of chocolate meandering down his stubby chin. "And he's got sense enough not to pay any attention to the way you talk because I told him all you could do is try to kid fellers along that want to be Scouts and really learn how to do it, tracking and everything, all you can do is be an instruction—I mean an obstructioner."

"He's going mad. I'm afraid we'll have to shoot him," said Warde.

"Well," said Mr. Bennett, in a general comment to all the group, "how are the folks going to get over to the grand bazaar now? It's going to hurt that affair. I'm afraid. Most all the money's here in Bridgeboro as the fellow says."

"You can search me, I haven't got it," said Dorry Benton.

"It serves them right and I'm good and glad." Pee-Wee shouted. "Now they got their just reward, those girls. Even I don't feel sorry for my sister, I don't."

"I do," said Warde. "I always did."

"I feel sorry for all your family," said Roy, "including all your descendants."

"I feel sorry for anybody that's a lunatic," shouted Pee-Wee. "He doesn't even know he's a lunatic," he confided to the laughing Sammy.

"I'm the one that told you," said Roy, "and you better look out how you go around telling the truth about my Patrol. You'll be very glad that you regretted it some day. We're more to be pitied than scolded. It's my private opinion that it was you set fire to the bridge with your flashlight."

"And talking about those girls in front of their backs, too," said Warde. "And you call yourself a boy sprout."

"You and your ticket booths and your lemonade stands and your tickets and everything," scorned Pee-Wee. "Now you see what you got! There'll be about so many as two people there, you see. Gee whiz, while I'm *marooned*, and while I'm finding my way in the—the forest, and all that, picking out trails and everything and almost lost—didn't we, Sammy? All you can do is to be mixed up in—in like Sunday School fairs. *That shows!*"

"United we stand, divided we sprawl," caroled Roy.

"I heard you say it fifteen billion times!" roared Pee-Wee. "Sprawl, that's all you can do, while I'm teaching a feller all about Scouting."

"Hey, Sammy," Roy called, never daunted, "did he teach you how to begin by being a gentlefoot? First you're a gentlefoot, then you're a delicatefoot, then you're a tenderfoot, and then you get to be a second-hand Scout. And then a first-hand Scout, and then a left-hand Scout. Deny it if you dare!"

It was good to hear Sammy laugh. He seemed greatly to enjoy this mortal comeback, as Roy called it. He was not disloyal to Pee-Wee, whose guest and pupil he was, but he did like these hilarious Scouts.

"Can you stand on one leg?" Pee-Wee suddenly asked him.

"No, I can't," said Sammy.

"That means you have to eat another one," said his munificent host. "Standing on one leg means eating only one."

"Can you stand with both feet on the ground?" queried Roy. "Otherwise you can't join the Boy Scouts of Ameriground."

How Sammy gathered the courage to ask a question of this arch demon of fun, he never knew. But he did timorously hazard a modest query. "Do you have to live in one place to be one?" he asked. "Do you have to have a really truly home?" There was something about this question which caused Ben Maxwell, a tall boy, to swing around and look at him. "I—I mean about Troops," Sammy stammered, not quite clear as to his meaning.

"Any answers that you want to ask, I'll give you the questions to them," said Roy gaily. "A Patrol consists of one member or less."

"Don't you listen to him, he's crazy," said Pee-Wee. "Even he's that way on purpose."

"Look at Pee-Wee's Patrol," said Wig Weigand; "it hasn't got any members at all."

"Right the first time," said Roy. "A Troop consists of not more than a lot of Patrols and not less than none. You have to have a dollar in the bank, the bank of a river will do, because Scouting is about the outdoors. Then you——"

"Will you shut up!" Pee-Wee fairly screamed.

"I'm telling him about Scouting," said Roy. "A Scoutmaster——"

"Don't you believe him, there's no such thing," warned Pee-Wee.

"——is the head of the Troop," said Roy. "A commissioner-at-large is a large commissioner."

"About the size of Pee-Wee," said Warde.

"If you take a hike you must be sure to put it back again," said Roy. "Hey, Sammy, did he show you his Alpine guide? Peppy Pete, did he show him to you?"

"If you shut up as much as he does it would be good for you," shouted Pee-Wee.

Sammy thought they were alluding to Pee-Wee's faithless turtle, but he said nothing.

As he and Pee-Wee went out the tall boy, Ben Maxwell, strolled up. And these three walked a little distance together.

"Some goofy bunch, huh?" Ben said pleasantly.

"I don't mind it, I like them," said Sammy.

"They're all good Scouts," said Ben.

"They're good idiotic idiots," said Pee-Wee.

"That Roy, now, he's got a lot of Merit Badges," Ben said. He was anxious that this strange boy should not get a false impression about Scouts.

"I like 'em because they're so comical," said Sammy.

"Do you want to join?" Ben asked.

"I—I can't," Sammy said.

"Why, what's the trouble?" Ben asked kindly.

"I don't live round here," Sammy said. "And anyway I got to go to an orphan home."

"His grandfather that owns a barge has got to go to the poor house," Pee-Wee added with blundering frankness.

"Oh, that's hard lines," said Ben feelingly. Then perceiving that Sammy was disinclined to say more about this matter he added, "But maybe you can join somewhere else sometime. You know they have Scouts all over."

"But I'd like to join these fellers, they're so comical," Sammy said. "I forgot all about that, while I was listening to them."

"What? Oh, yes, I know," said Ben, understanding.

Pee-Wee was striding ahead with Skinny McCord, whom he honored with his company because Skinny (himself a modest boy) was not given to unholy levity. Ben could hear that tremendous voice denouncing the fair maidens of East Village and saying how they, and they alone, were sending this poor old man and his grandson to public institutions.

"I wish we could have sold things there, but they wouldn't let us," said Sammy.

Ben cogitated for a few moments. Then he said with a note of real kindness in his voice, "You mustn't take Pee-Wee too seriously. He thinks you shouldn't take these fellows seriously, but I think you shouldn't take *him* so very seriously. Selling things at the bazaar wouldn't have done much good. You know Pee-Wee talks big. He really can't do anything to help you. He's all right, but he has too many schemes. We're working for the bazaar and that's what he ought to be doing. The best thing for you to do is just go where they send you and maybe some day things will be better; see? Do you know I have a hunch they may have Scout Troops in orphan homes—why not?"

"But I want to join these fellers, they're so comical," Sammy said. "They

make me laugh a lot. I have to laugh at Pee-Wee too, only he doesn't know it."

"Well, good luck to you anyway, Sammy," Ben said as they parted at the corner. "And if you want to be an honest to goodness Scout, you can start right now facing whatever you have to face. That's the main thing about it." That was good advice, but not very comforting.

PART IV

Pee-Wee and Sammy now set forth on their belated journey to the barge. To Sammy that half-hour or so in Bennett's had all the joyous festivity of Christmas. "Was he telling you that I can't do things?" Pee-Wee demanded.

"No, he wasn't. He said I should do what I have to do. I ain't mad at anybody, not those girls or anybody. Only now I'm kind of sorry I ever saw those fellers; I'm sorry I ever came up here."

"Don't you care," Pee-Wee said, "you saw a dandy fire. And you got lost in the woods, didn't you? Now you see how Scouts do."

Their journey from this point took them through familiar fields, though the darkness was intense. However, Pee-Wee did not require any assistance from Nature's wild life to guide him. It was late and Sammy was anxious to get back to the barge.

"Don't you worry because I know the way," said Pee-Wee. "I surely absolutely positively know the way from Bennett's."

"It's good and dark," said Sammy.

It was indeed. When they reached the belt of wood which bordered the shore, they could scarcely see hand before face as the saying is.

"You leave it to me," said Pee-Wee reassuringly, "because now I haven't got any turtle to bother me. Now we have to go east. Do you know how I know we're facing east?"

Sammy hadn't the slightest idea.

"Because I can smell smoke over that way," he said, indicating, "so I knew that's where the bridge was. If I could only see a bat hanging on a tree I'd be positively sure because bats always hang on the south side of a tree on account of keeping out of the wind only they're not much good because they never stay home at night, they go flying around, and in the daytime I don't need anything to guide me. They'd be good at night if they were there," he concluded sagely.

"How will we know when we get to the river?" the doubtful Sammy asked.

"We'll bunk into it," said Pee-Wee; "then we'll know positively sure."

This seemed reasonable and they trudged on. And soon luck, ever more faithful to Pee-Wee than the fickle denizens of the forest, smiled upon him (or splashed upon him), for in a few minutes, plunk went his foot into what seemed to be a puddle. So firm and dominant was his martial tread that the water was spattered on Sammy also.

"Now I know, now I know!" said Pee-Wee, highly elated. "That's what I was hunting for! Now I know where I am. Now we got to hunt for the brook.

Jiminies, I know that brook, I caught pollywogs in it, and it goes to the river."

Groping around, they soon found the brook. And what was more, they found something definite; or rather Sammy did. And this trifling discovery was destined to be the herald of something very striking in our hero's career.

This brook was normally nothing but a meandering trickle, and sometimes it was not even that. But in the springtime when the tide in the river ran high, it broadened into a majestic stream two or three feet wide. When the tide flowed out there was usually no brook at all, nothing but a muddy depression through the woods. Sometimes, when the river was at flood, the swollen brook made transient puddles in its neighborhood.

Now as Pee-Wee pointed his expiring flashlight upon the brook, the sickly and uncertain light fell upon a bit of wood on which were printed what was evidently the end of a sentence—ER HOUR. But Sammy was the first to notice it and pick it up. It was, perhaps, eight or ten inches long.

"Now I know we're on the right track," said Sammy. "I know this brook goes to the river. And I know what time it is, too."

It was the only thing that Sammy had claimed to know, since first meeting Pee-Wee. For indeed. Pee-Wee had done all the *knowing*. But this diffident boy, brought up on an old barge in the harbor waters, knew at least one thing. He knew about the tides. And he knew that they could be trusted. Squirrels and bats and turtles might prove fickle. Even the-twinkling stars (so often cited for their constancy) might hide behind clouds. But the tides, ebbing and flowing, may always be trusted. In darkness or light, 'neath cloud or sunshine, they move upon their appointed schedule and are ever visible to the eye. Sammy knew about the tides.

"How do you know what time it is?" Pee-Wee demanded.

"Because that piece of wood was standing still in the water," Sammy said.

"You're crazy!" shouted Pee-Wee.

"It's just flood tide," said Sammy; "it's eleven o'clock. If the tide was coming in, the piece of wood would of been floating up. If it was going out, it would of been floating down. It's just exactly flood."

"I'm going to look at my watch," vociferated Pee-Wee, directing his uncertain flashlight upon it.

"That don't count," said Sammy simply.

"Anyway my watch is stopped," said the Scout, administering a vigorous shake to it. "I was so busy I didn't wind it up."

"You don't have to wind the tides up," said Sammy, innocently. "It was eleven o'clock when we started floating down this morning. It was ebb at five o'clock. Now it's flood again—six hours. When we get to the barge you'll see it will be standing way up high, like."

"But anyway," said Pee-Wee, "I bet you didn't know this brook goes to the

river—not till I told you.”

“Yes, I do,” said Sammy, “because this piece of wood comes from the bridge that burned down. Do you see where it says ER HOUR? It came from a sign that said you can only drive over it as fast as maybe fifteen miles an hour.”

To the redoubtable little Scout this seemed almost like magic. And to come from the modest bashful, homeless boy who had laughed so diffidently at the troop’s hilarious nonsense! Who had followed him, Pee-Wee, so joyfully and dutifully! Poor little Sammy, who was going to an orphan asylum.

No proof was needed, for, oh, how well Pee-Wee knew that old sign. But he did not know (how could he) that it had come like a good angel to this poor waif.

Motorists are forbidden to cross this
bridge at a speed exceeding
15 miles per hour

“Let’s take it with us, hey?” exclaimed Pee-Wee. “Let’s take it with us as a souvenir, hey?”

“Yes, but what I’m thinking about is that it’s eleven o’clock,” said Sammy, rather anxiously.

“Don’t you care, now I’ll guide you to the barge,” Pee-Wee boasted.

Sammy had no doubt now that the brook flowed into the river. But following the brook was not an easy matter in the dense night. Sometimes they strayed quite a distance away from the brook. Once they were beguiled by a sort of branch which petered out in an overflow marsh, and had some difficulty and lost a little time in getting back. Pee-Wee’s flashlight strove heroically with the situation, blinking like a sleepy child upon the meandering water, and sometimes declining to cooperate at all.

“I got a dandy idea,” he shouted. “Now we’re as good as there. All we got to do is find a pine tree. Then even we won’t have to get our feet wet any more.”

“Do we have to climb up it?” Sammy asked, rather anxiously. For he feared that perhaps after all his resourceful comrade intended to seduce some bat or squirrel into doing them a Scout good turn.

“We got to get some resin and then I’ll make a torch,” said Pee-Wee. “Up in Temple Camp we used those when we were in the woods hunting for a little girl that was lost. Gee-ee whiz, girls they can never find their way—especially in wildernesses.”

They found a pine tree and Sammy waited in respectful patience while Pee-Wee gathered some of the oozy substance from its trunk and smeared it on a stick. It made a brave show when lighted, shaming the tottering flashlight with its ruddy glare. Pitiful shadows played among the trees in the area of its glow; the brook flowed clear to view.

Pee-Wee, always dramatic, was somewhat startled by the sequel of his inspiration. "Did you see a man kinder sneaking behind one of those trees?" he whispered.



"Did you see a man kinder sneaking behind one of those trees?" whispered Pee-Wee

light about to ascertain the cause of the unexpected assault. Just then Sammy beheld a long, thin, black thing like a snake in the air about as high as Pee-Wee's head. One end of it was bright with a brightness that died away.

For just a second or two Sammy paused, aghast. And then he knew. A few yards ahead he was conscious of something black stirring in the darkness. It seemed as if a part of that dense night was moving. Frantically he sprang ahead, catching hold of that loose end which was smouldering and emitting sparks. He clung to it, moving with it. Then suddenly, uttering a sort of

"It's another tree right close to it," said Sammy.

"We got to be careful," said Pee-Wee ominously.

"Do we have to be any more careful in the light than in the dark?" asked the guileless Sammy.

They got along quickly now, in a moving area of light.

They were nearer the river than they thought; very near. But now something startling happened. And for a moment Sammy shuddered with the fear that Pee-Wee might have been right about sinister prowlers. For suddenly, before his very eyes, Pee-Wee threw his head back, staggered and fell. Still clinging to the torch he regained his feet and seemed to be poking the

contemptuous little cry, he let go and went sprawling on the ground.

"There goes the barge," he said; "you burned the rope in half."

And now Pee-Wee realized what he had done. The tide, beginning to ebb, had carried the barge around so that its free bow faced downstream. It had pulled the rope taut, and against this Pee-Wee had stumbled. For a few seconds the torch had been in contact with this tarry, hempen line. In that impenetrable darkness they had not realized that they were so near the river, for the great bulk of the barge had obscured it. The big black hull had seemed only a part of the night. Now, even as they watched, the smouldering rope end slipped away and the great mass of black hull stood several yards from the shore.

Pee-Wee knew also what Sammy had impulsively set out to do. "Why didn't you keep hold of it?" he asked. "You could have got on the barge that way. Gee whiz, I could have done it."

"Would you of done it?" Sammy asked.

"Su-ure—why didn't you?"

"Just because I all of a sudden decided not to," Sammy said. "Like what that Roy says *United we stand, divided we sprawl*. So isn't that being a Scout?" he asked almost plaintively. "Not going away and leaving a pal? I wouldn't climb on it unless you could climb on it too. Because you stuck to us, didn't you?"

For a moment Pee-Wee was silent. Quietly the great black mass which was the barge moved slowly off, a block of darkness amid the slightly different shade of encompassing night. Its outline was not clear-cut; it was like a shadow moving in a shadow. For the torch which lay upon the ground now was all but burned away.

But the voice of Pee-Wee Harris triumphed over the darkness. "Now I know you're going to be a Scout," he thunderously exclaimed. "Even when you found the piece of wood I knew it, but now I *double* know it. You're sure positively going to be a Scout. Even if you do have to go to an orphan asylum, you're a Scout—*gee-ee whiz!*"

And there they stood in the darkness by the river brushing the dirt and burrs from their clothing. United they stood. And the funny part of it was they had both "sprawled."

What troubled Sammy was that no light had shown on the barge. Usually at night the little smelly oil lamp burned in the cabin. Now he shouted, hoping that his grandfather would hear. But there was no answer from the big drifting hull. The river was wide at this point by reason of Big Kink Bend, and soon the barge was in the middle of the stream, and scarcely discernible for the darkness.

"Don't you care," said Pee-Wee. "Come on, let's follow the river down.

Pretty soon it gets narrow and I bet the barge will bump against the shore."

This seemed their only hope, and they plodded along the marshy border of the stream, here and there sinking knee deep in the oozy ground. Now and then they strained their eyes trying to glimpse the barge and once or twice thought that they could make it out, an area of darkness in the less solid darkness of the night. But they knew that it must drift downstream and they followed along shore trusting that where the river narrowed it would swing round within reach. At least they now had the river to guide them, though their progress was difficult for the overflowing flood tide had left the shore saturated.

They had not gone far when the clanking sound of rowlocks could be heard out on the river and both boys paused, astonished. Now they could hear oars dipping and voices speaking low but clear, as is the case with voices heard across the water.

"It'll be easier pulling downstream," said one voice; "we'll have the tide with us."

"I ain't mindin' a little pull," said another voice, "if we only get the stuff. Oars don't leave no footprints, dat's dead sure."



"I ain't mindin' a little pull if we only get de stuff. Oars don't leave no footprints, dat's dead sure"

"Leave it ter me," said the other. "Didn't I tell yer de tip wuz straight? I ain't no gump ter be pullin' all de way up here on a phony steer."

"Yere, but kin we git back here all right? It'll be easy pullin' down on de tide all right, but look at dem woods. Gee, me headlights can't see nartin."

"Leave it ter me," said the other.

"Yere, and maybe he pays off temorer 'n mebbe he don't."

"Didn't I tell yer he was ter de bank? Didn't I git de straight dope off 'er Kid McCorrie?"

Pee-Wee was about to whisper a warning to keep silent, but he did not even dare to do that. And so these two stood stark still where they were, not daring to stir. The sound of the clanking rowlocks continued until the boat was close in to shore.

"Pull her up here," said one of the voices.

"D'yer know de way up?"

"Sure I do, come on, give 'er a yank."

The sound of oars being laid in the boat, and then the sound of the keel scraping on stones, seemed but a dozen feet ahead of the boys, who stood speechless, trembling. Sammy could feel his heart thumping in his breast; he almost feared to breathe. It seemed to him that these rough strangers must see him.

"She all right?" a rough voice queried.

"Sure; come ahead."

Pee-Wee hardly dared turn his head to try to follow with his eyes the movement of the two dark forms up into the woods. He felt as if the merest bending of his neck would mean discovery. He was afraid of every breath he drew. The crunching of twigs underfoot sounded farther and farther away. Then one of the voices spoke and Pee-Wee knew by the sound of it that the two figures were some distance from the shore.

"*Don't move, don't speak,*" he whispered; "they might come back. *Shhh!*"

"Did you hear what they were saying?" Sammy whispered.

"Shhhut-up," Pee-Wee breathed; "wait a minute."

Motionless and silent they waited. There was not the faintest sound now; no voices or telltale crunchings underfoot.

Pee-Wee craned his neck and looked up through the woods as if to make doubly sure that the strangers were out of hearing.

"Did you hear what they said?" he asked in his darkest tone. "They came from down the river somewheres, and they're going to rob somebody; I bet they're going to rob somebody up in Bridgeboro. Gee, I bet we better follow them, hey?"

Sammy had expected that. He had feared that more than he had feared the supposed robbers. For he had learned one thing about Pee-Wee, and that was that one purpose and destination was as good as another for him.

"No, we better not follow them," said Sammy, with the first approach to firmness that he had shown. "We got to get to the barge if we can." He was truly anxious now, for the absence of any light on the barge troubled him.

"That shows how much you don't now about Scouting," thundered the dreadful Pee-Wee. "How you got to help the civil—civilized—I mean civic authorities detecting crime and you got to give 'em clues I can prove it how you got to supervene criminals—gee whiz, you got to be good citizens. Even if you're Scouts you're supposed to know *more* about crimes than other people."

"I'm going to follow the river down," said Sammy quietly. "That way maybe we'll get a chance to get on the barge. I'm tired of going around in the woods now."

"You mean you're tired of *nature*?" Pee-Wee fairly gasped.

"I ain't tired of nature, but I'm tired of tramping around."

"Maybe if they *murder* somebody, then you'll be to blame," the hero warned. "You heard what they said about a bank and paying off and getting a tip and everything. If a Scout doesn't do his duty he can be asked to hand over his badge."

"I haven't got any badge," said Sammy wistfully. "And I'm going to follow along the river."

Too dumbfounded to speak, Pee-Wee followed sullenly after his friend, who was leader now, in resolution if not in "civic" spirit. Presently they came to the boat drawn half way up on the shore. They looked cautiously up into the woods before pausing even to inspect it.

"Now I'll bet we'll be assesories," said Pee-Wee, in a dark tone of warning. "Because if you know about a crime that somebody's going to commit and you don't tell it's just the same as if you're partners with him—that's what they call accessibility before the fact. So now maybe we'll get in trouble if we don't trail them."

It was no use; Sammy seemed wholly without "civic" spirit. "I'm going to follow down the river," he repeated.

"I got an idea," Pee-Wee suddenly announced; "I got an inspiration. We can take the boat and row to the barge and get to it that way, and then when the robbers come back they'll be foiled."

But Sammy would have nothing to do with the boat. "Come on," he said, "before the barge drifts too far."

Pee-Wee paused aghast. "Now I know you want to help robbers and bandits and murderers—now I know!" he said, in his most portentously accusing manner. "Even if somebody gets killed you're helping them."

These were harsh words to utter to the innocent Sammy, but he kept his poise—and his resolution.

"I don't care, it isn't our boat anyway," he said.

"We got a right to command it," said Pee-Wee. "All right," he concluded darkly. "Now maybe we're helping to steal maybe thousands of dollars."

Still Sammy plodded along through the soaked ground bordering the river, stepping now on some exposed root, now on a rock, and often in the miry ground. And Pee-Wee followed, sullen and reluctant.

"I bet we don't get on the barge anyway," he said. But he was wrong about that.

The resolute Sammy plodded on, heedless of the appeal of Scouting and citizenship. Evidently he had no desire to be a sleuth. After a while they reached the bend where the river narrowed. And here, sure enough, the great clumsy barge had again involved itself with the near shore. Suddenly its dark bulk rose before them, a faint outline of black in the less dense blackness. It must have turned completely around for its big blunt nose was poked into a little recess where a tree overspread its bow.

"Come on, quick," said Sammy, with a kind of desperate resolution, "because it won't stay here long." He knew the habits of the *Colbert C. Rossey*.

"Do you want me to show you how to climb a tree?" Pee-Wee demanded sulkily.

Sammy, having reached the barge, had no objections to further demonstrations by his resourceful friend, and he tactfully allowed the baffled sleuth to shinny up first and let himself down onto the narrow strip of deck which was all the foot room that there was forward. It was, indeed, no more than a narrow boardwalk, surmounting the hull and running along on either side with the vast chasm of the freight carrying hold, gaping between. There was no rail and in the darkness one must proceed cautiously along this narrow footway.

But Sammy was accustomed to this and here he took the lead, even running along the starboard side as sure of himself as a cat on a back fence. Pee-Wee followed more carefully and was glad to reach the little area of deck where were the living quarters of this long and cavernous back yard.

"Grandpop!" Sammy called, entering the little house. "Grandpop, where are you?"

"I'm here, Sammy, I guess I was asleep," said the old man, bestirring himself in the darkness. "And the lamp burned out, huh? I'm thinkin' I must of been sleeping a couple of hours, Sammy. Well and did the two of ye see what it was all about? I heard shoutin' and bells a ringin' and everything. Huh, I must of fell asleep."

Sammy groped in the dilapidated locker for an oilcan with which he refilled the lamp and set it burning. The dim light disclosed the old man rising from his rickety chair, rubbing his eyes. Beside him were two old barrels which he had filled with the specimens of his handiwork that had stood all

about. The place looked strange without the former array of these quaint and colorful toys; it no longer seemed like the workshop of Santa Claus.

"I was clearin' 'em all up," Pop said, "'n gettin' ready. My, but what a lot of them we made. I was thinkin', Sammy, I liked the red ones best."

"Hey, Pop, the bridge burned down," said Pee-Wee. "Oh, boy, you ought to have seen it! It was set fire to by those people with the hay."

"Burned all down!" said the old man, showing only that mild surprise, so characteristic of the aged. "The big bridge down yonder? Well, now, that's too bad—I kept one out for you to bring home for a keepsake," he added, handing Pee-Wee a gorgeous windmill of red and green. "That was going to be two dollars, that was. You can put it up on your clothes post, huh?"

"Listen Grandpop," said Sammy, "the barge is drifting. Pee-Wee burned the rope in half up above, where we were going to get on. That's one thing that made us so late. She's got her bow in the shore. Hurry up, let's get some rope out, so we can fasten her. He had a torch. I'll tell you about it after."

The old man seemed bewildered. He stood there leaning against one of the loaded barrels that represented the failure of his last despairing efforts. He neither moved nor offered a suggestion. He seemed confused by the two startling items of news.

"The bridge, huh?" he said.

"Yes, but the barge is drifting," said Sammy excitedly. He seemed to take the lead from Pee-Wee now.

"Maybe you would like to take one of 'em to the orphan's home, too, Sammy," Pop said. "Maybe they would leave you nail it up outside for a reminder, huh?" He started fumbling in a barrel.

It was pitiful, how he seemed to take the view that he had closed up all his affairs. Neither the old bridge nor the drifting barge interested him now. They belonged to an outside world that he was leaving.

Poor, tired, harassed old man! While the noble, old, historic bridge was burning and crowds rushing and bells ringing and sirens shocking the air with their unearthly din, he had piled all his little whittled masterpieces into two barrels and made ready to render up his old barge to the constituted authorities.

But the boy was keen in what the poor old man, in his blurred consciousness, could not see as an emergency. Frantically he hauled out more rope (it seemed to be the one thing of which they had plenty) and he and Pee-Wee dragged this along the narrow footway to the bow.

"You throw it off and I'll get down and tie it," said Sammy.

But it was all too late. The unwieldy and unruly *Colbert C. Rossey* had already backed away from the shore; between it and the bank was eight or ten feet of black water.

"Do you want me to jump it?" asked Pee-Wee. "I can swim."

"No, don't try it," Sammy said; "it's too late."

And so again the outlandish barge went backing out and moved slowly around and proceeded sideways downstream. Slowly it swung around, proceeding stern foremost, then made another lazy sweep and drifted along almost imperceptibly, the starboard side facing down the river.

The progress of the old *Colbert C. Rossey* in that upper river might be likened to a hippopotamus trying to get through a sewer. In the bend below Big Kink the long hulk became hopelessly involved. Here the hurrying tide ran around a corner. The *Colbert C. Rossey* in trying to negotiate this turn went gaily bumping into the east shore, bow first. The bow thereupon became a sort of pivot on which the whole great hull was carried around, just scraping the Bridgeboro shore, and in a few minutes the majestic barge retreated with a kind of huge curtsy from the east shore and backed away downstream.

But it could not keep a straight-on course. Soon the stern made a resounding assault upon the Bridgeboro shore, ramming the bank and knocking a defenseless tree slantwise; and that tree, half uprooted, may be seen leaning tipsy fashion over the stream even to this very day. Retreating again after this crashing invasion of Bridgeboro's quiet frontier, the lumbering hull performed a slow pirouette and insinuated its blunt nose into the east shore at the edge of the lawn surrounding the new Community House.

"We're against the shore," said Pee-Wee scrambling to his feet. Sammy was not disposed to question this startling announcement.

"Look out you don't get swept off," he warned.

Poking its nose still more firmly into the bordering masonry of the Community House lawn, the mighty barge swept slowly around at its stern end, crushing and uprooting the clustering foliage of Bridgeboro's quiet waterfront and actually wiping the chubby face of the hatless Scout with a thick and tangled mass of wild rose vine, scratching his frowning countenance and tearing his stocking.

"Look out!" said Sammy, ejecting a thorned twig with a couple of leaves from his mouth, and warding off a sweeping attack made by a projecting limb.

But the worst was over. The stern of the *Colbert C. Rossey* stuck fast in the shore it had scraped and wounded; it could not continue its sweeping turn, for the modest Bridgeboro River was too narrow to let it swing. If the stubby bow held fast, there was no hope for the further movement of the embowered stern. I say embowered, for there it was held in a loving caress of nature's clustering growths. Below, it had scraped the shore as far as it could and was now held fast. Above, the little deck shanty was now transformed into a summer house half-hidden in a profusion of wild rosevine, and sheltered overhead by the spreading branches of a bordering tree. The sordid little shelter seemed

changed by magic into a romantic retreat close to nature's heart.

Old Pop Rossey came out and surveyed this situation as well as he could in the dark. "I think she's jammed fast, Sammy," said he, without any show of alarm. "This ain't no place for her, I told Captain Van Puffer that. She ain't got no elbow room when you leave her to herself, that's a fact. I'm thinkin' she'll swing free when the tide turns. That'll be—when will that be, Sammy? Would ye think I'd be crotchety in my figgers, now? Me I always knowed the tides

"It'll be ebb at five o'clock," said Sammy; "it was flood at eleven. It's about a third out now; it'll be nine o'clock in the morning when it's this high again. We sure won't get off before that."

"Do ye mind how he knows the tides?" said the old man to Pee-Wee, proud to exhibit Sammy's accomplishment to this apparent master of everything. "Now ain't he a smart boy, Sammy? I bet now he'll be the head leader in that Orphan Home; hey?"

"Come on," said Sammy, anxious to turn this line of talk, "let's see how the bow is. I think we're jammed good."

"Well now, we got lots of trouble this last v'yage, hey, Sammy?"

The two boys moved carefully along the footway on the starboard ridge of the hull. Downstream, not more than a quarter of a mile it seemed, there were lights; evidently some lingered yet at the scene of the fire.

"I guess it's to prevent people from trying to cross in the dark," Sammy said. "Can you smell the smoke even now?"

They could not see much at the bow by reason of the intense darkness. But they made out that the spreading bow of the barge had struck into the masonry, wedging open a place for itself. Returning along the narrow board path they could see little glints of red light in the river showing where fragments of drifting wood, which still retained a little smouldering fire, were floating. Several of these sparks went out as they watched them. Down the river a red light swung back and forth in a semicircle: the warning lantern of a watchman stationed at the broken highway. On the opposite shore was a steady red spark. There were voices and occasionally the honk of an auto horn.

With the excitement subsided and the crowds gone, and only the floating remnants and distant signs left, the catastrophe stood out in bold relief even to these boys. Even Pee-Wee's imagination was caught by the thought that where the fine, old, historic bridge had stood there was now nothing.

They returned to the deck-house and cooked a later supper, for they were hungry after their hike and various adventures. Their musty little shelter seemed more like some camping shack than the prosy deck-house of a barge.

Being at the end of the long hull it was almost hidden in the dense foliage which overgrew the shore. A leaf-laden branch even protruded in through the open window; in a fork of this almost hidden by clustering leaves, was a robin's nest. It seemed, indeed, as if some kindly fairy of Scouting had wedged the old barge between these luxurious and fragrant banks, and cast this green mantle of the woodland over the poor abode of Sammy, so as to afford him a glimpse of camp life and beguile him with a vision of some rustic cabin in the wilderness.

Never, in all the sordid career of this ugly barge had it been caressed by foliage. It had bumped into ferry-boats, and lain at unsightly piers, and at anchor down the bay while grimy laborers shoveled its contents of earth and rock into the water. It had waited at dusty yards for cargoes of cement. Temporary pyramids of bricks had risen out of its gaping hold, to be delivered at the foot of this or that street in the seething metropolis. A free lance barge of the harbor it had been, a sort of marine hobo in New York's crowded and unlovely waters. And so it had brought a scant living to its tottering old owner. Back and forth, here and there, it had been towed by every sturdy little tug in the great bay.

And now here it was, a condemned old derelict, fugitive from the harbor's stringent law, wedged fast between the fair banks of this winding uncommercial stream, far away from the dirt and turmoil of the harbor's traffic. Its stuffy little shanty was entwined in Nature's loving arms. And through the open windows where gray cement dust had blown, or the black smoke of some escorting tug had penetrated, only the scent of leaves and flowers entered now, a scent made heavy and pungent by the night's moisture. And did not this seem a miracle, that the empty nest of a robin should suddenly be here in this dim little hovel on the deck of that floating outcast?

For a minute the boy who had never known any life on shore, much less in the solemn woods, gazed at this marvel which seemed to be the very symbol of Scouting. And he watched intently while Pee-Wee, the Scout of Scouts, pulled a strip of bark from an intruding branch and showed him how notes are written upon this rough stationery in the mystic realm of Scouting.

On this momentous night something aroused Pee-Wee out of that grateful repose which usually kept him silent for about eight hours out of each twenty-four. This was nothing less than a gruff voice even more terrible than his own, and very much more profane. For the angry expletive which he heard was not, *gee whiz*.

He sat up rubbing his eyes, and would have thought that this gruff and heedless voice was only the figment of a dream, save that it was presently followed by a bumping sound and another oath, very real. He sat motionless,

aghast, listening.

"Wot d'yer know about dat?" demanded someone in gruff and angry tones.
"It's de whole eart' I guess. What de——"

Pee-Wee's bunk was just inside the open window of the deck-house, and as the barge stood, this window opened to the north, or up the river. The sounds and voices seemed to come from somewhere below him.

"Wot does it feel like?" a villainous voice asked.

Pee-Wee now heard the sound of oars and of a boat, as he supposed, knocking against the upstream side of the barge. He arose and tiptoed over to Sammy's bunk, for he did not quite dare to draw the old man into an uncertain midnight adventure.

"Come on, get up," he whispered; "something's the matter."

When Sammy was able to adjust his waking senses to this new demand of his friend he sleepily arose and hastily throwing on an old coat of his grandfather's followed Pee-Wee out of the deck-house. It must have been shortly before dawn for the boys could see how low the water stood under the side of the barge which towered like a high wall above the ebbing water.

Pee-Wee had an old raincoat belonging to Sammy, and the two made a weird enough looking pair kneeling at the edge and peering down at the black water. About midway of the length of the barge they could just make out a black object which they rightly assumed to be a boat. Its occupants talked in whispers now.

"I bet it's those two fellers who went up through the woods," Pee-Wee breathed almost inaudibly. "I bet they killed somebody, hey?" It was his custom always to take the most tragic view of everything. "Now they're stuck and they can't get back down the river, hey?"

Whoever they were, and whatever their sinister errand. Pee-Wee had guessed right about their predicament. This sudden obstruction in their return downstream, had astonished and frightened them. They must, indeed, have been greatly dismayed to bump against this tremendous barrier in the darkness, where there had been an open way before. The most terrific oaths had not sufficed to budge it. The river was blocked and their escape cut off. Nor could they row to either shore now, for the ebbing tide had narrowed the stream to the width of only a few yards, leaving exposed flats on either side. Their position, if they were criminals, was truly alarming.

"Shh," warned Pee-Wee in his most ominous whisper. "Don't make any noise."

"Would you dare to go closer so maybe we can see?" Sammy asked.

"How?" Pee-Wee whispered.

"I'd like to hear what they're saying," Sammy said. "Shall we sneak along the footway and come back on the other side?"

Even Pee-Wee hesitated at such a bizarre adventure.

"They couldn't see us," whispered Sammy. "They wouldn't know unless we made a noise. And you said a Scout could even sneak up on a bird."

Alas, Pee-Wee had said that. The logical Sammy felt assured that a thug was less alert than a bird.

"I didn't say I could sneak up on a bird that's a murderer," said Pee-Wee.

Yet, in his heart, he wanted to do this. And, in truth, it seemed not fraught with peril, if all went well. The great hull was evidently resting on the bottom now. The water was low and narrowed to half its flood-tide width. In passing along the footway, they would be far above these baffled strangers. With dark coats and in bare feet, they would be neither seen nor heard. The night was still black. To be sure, they could not hope to see much themselves. But since voices ascend, they might hear talk of murder and robbery.

"Come on, let's do it," whispered Pee-Wee; "maybe, if they should see us they'll think we're ghosts. We'll kind of glide silent, hey? When we get to the middle, right above them, we'll listen."

"Yes, but don't let's stop," said Sammy.

Ever so stealthily they moved along the narrow way which was of the width of two boards. Sammy went first, and as he approached the middle he paused for just the fraction of a moment trying to overhear the mutterings below him. The boat knocked intermittently against the side of the barge, under the impetus of the outgoing water. They were evidently discussing their unexpected plight down there. Once a board creaked under Pee-Wee's cautious foot and both boys paused fearfully. But nothing happened and they stole silently along.

Then, suddenly, just as Sammy was directly above the boat, something appalling happened, he tripped on the long black coat he was wearing and Pee-Wee, in shuddering dismay, beheld him, a black shadow, a few feet ahead of him, sway and regain his balance only to bend outward over the black river.

Why Sammy did not avail himself of his arms to steady himself, Pee-Wee did not know. But his own triumphant experiences on lofty limbs and back fences and railroad tracks told him that here was Sammy's best safeguard from a plunge. In his terror and dismay he saw only his staggering friend.

"Throw up your hands," he called, loud enough so that the woods echoed back from the Community House on the east, shore. "*Throw up your hands quick!*" he said.



"Throw up your hands! Quick!" screamed Pee-Wee

CONCLUSION

Instantly something happened. There was a quick sound below, a muffled oath, a hoarse warning, then a splash. "Keep your head down," a voice said.

The next thing that the startled Pee-Wee was conscious of was a shadowy form rising out of dark water and floundering forward, presumably through the bordering mud, where it was merged in the heavy darkness. The other fleeing figure he did not see at all, but he heard the crackle of branches somewhere, and sensed rather than heard the flight of something into the woods. Sammy stood well balanced on the narrow footway, glancing about in utter dismay.

"Did you have a pistol?" he asked.

"Why do you want to know?" asked Pee-Wee.

"Because you told them to throw up their hands, and they escaped," said Sammy. "One of them jumped out of the boat and swam. There's nobody down there now."

"I was talking to you," said the amazed Pee-Wee, "but anyway it counts just as much if they heard it and got scared; I get the credit for telling them to throw up their hands just the same because I'm the one that said it. And anyway it serves them right."

It must be confessed that never before had an authoritative command from Pee-Wee met with such instant response. No sooner had the sinister pair below heard that appalling order than they made a precipitate exit from their blockaded craft, nor paused to consider the difficulties of getting to shore. They plunged frantically into the stream, keeping below water as much as possible, and managed under cover of the darkness, to plod through the muddy flats to the solid shore.

Thence they proceeded pell-mell in different directions panic stricken and haunted by apprehensions of a pistol shot. And so far as is known they believe to this day that it was some waiting sleuth above (concealed on the strength of a tip) who surprised them with the stern command to throw up their hands. But history knows that it was the terrible voice of Pee-Wee Harris which struck terror to their guilty souls and sent them off in quaking flight.

"And I'm the one that circum—circum—baffled them," said Pee-Wee, scooping up the glory in large shovelfuls, "because I'm the one that made the barge stick here, I can prove it, because I'm the one that burned the rope in half with my torch and then the barge floated down here, so I'm the one that circumstanced—I mean vented them. So now you see what Scouting is."

Sammy was astonished at this reasoning, but not annoyed. He had come to believe that there is

no rest for the wicked nor peace for the weary, day or night.

"Now we have to get down and see the boat," Pee-Wee said; "so we'll get that ladder, hey?"

He had not overlooked the hooked ladder when he had first cast a delighted eye over the barge, and they now hauled this out and hung it over the side above the boat which was bobbing against the hull below.

In these matters Sammy was quite as ready and alert as Pee-Wee. He was accustomed to doing such work on a barge as a boy could do.

"It's good the tide is low and running out," he said, "or the boat would float away. Now you see, it's better than if we'd of followed them."

"Anyway I scared 'em," said Pee-Wee.

There was nothing in the boat, but just outside it on a muddy mount which bespoke the last ripples of the ebbing water, was a metal box. This they took up to the deck-house, and examined it by the light of the lamp. Printed in gilt letters on its cover were the words,

SKINNER'S GARAGE petty cash

But the box contained much more than petty cash. For Skinner's Garage was a large establishment, and a couple of dozen little envelopes in the box showed it to contain the payroll. These were sealed, and the boys did not open them. If they had done so they would have found that the sum they had rescued was in the neighborhood of seven hundred dollars.

It seemed that wonders would never cease where Pee-Wee was concerned,



The sinister pair made a precipitate exit from their craft

and Sammy gazed upon these little brown containers with awe. He was almost afraid to go to bed again with this receptacle of fabulous wealth in their possession.

"I'm going to call up Mr. Skinner in the morning and tell him," said Pee-Wee. "Gee whiz, it's good I shouted, hey?"

"It's good I nearly tumbled over," said Sammy.

"I'm the one that shouted *hands up*," said Pee-Wee.

"I'm the one that made you," said Sammy.

"Now you see what happens when you stick to me," said Pee-Wee.

Indeed things happened so thick and fast as soon as they were up in the morning that the Skinner payroll was all but forgotten. Poor old Pop Rossey, utterly unable to comprehend the moving panorama of events, stood by bewildered and watched with aged and blinking eyes the motley comedy, which began on that bright spring morning as a sort of afterpiece to the fiery drama of the night before.

As Pee-Wee emerged on deck, still rubbing his sleepy eyes, he hardly knew, himself, whether the incident of the baffled and fugitive thieves was true or only a heroic dream? Had he really called "*Throw your hands up*"? Had he really recovered the stolen payroll of Skinner's Garage?

As his chubby countenance puckered into his well-known frown while he cogitated upon these marvels, a strange sight met his view. Evidently the thieves had stolen the old historic bridge also. For on gazing down the river Pee-Wee did not see it. Then, suddenly he remembered its dramatic end. How strange the river down below looked without that picturesque old span.

But what astonished Pee-Wee and gave him a divine inspiration was something close at hand. He was indeed standing upon a makeshift bridge on which the former deck-house of the barge *Colbert C. Rossey* was like a little toll-gate or tender's booth at one end. And there, in the broad daylight at the other end, was the Community House of East Village, flauntingly bedecked with streamers and festoons of electric bulbs, ready for the great event. The adjacent lawn was brave with booths and paper lanterns. A rope rail enclosed the whole grounds with only one break where a pretty little box office awaited the surging throngs.

Vain, thrice vain, preparations! For who, of all Bridgeboro's expected merrymakers and spenders, could visit this enchanted scene except by courtesy of the redoubtable Scout who now trod the quarter-deck of his majestic craft, master of the situation?

"I got a dandy idea! I got a dandy idea!" he shouted.

The simple Sammy wondered what adventure or demonstration of Scouting was pending now. Poor old Pop Rossey seemed bewildered and

willing to let this little human dynamo command.

"Will they make trouble for us?" the old man ventured to ask. "I'm wonderin' how we're going to get out of this. We're jammed in at both ends. Now wouldn't ye say that was queer? Ye know, Sammy, this old barge is kinder pesky."

"We're the ones that are going to make trouble!" Pee-Wee shouted. "Now we're going to show them. We don't want to get out of this—*gee whiz*, we want to stay in it. Now they'll see. Now it's going to cost everybody twenty-five cents."

This sudden flare-up of the commercial spirit on the part of this redoubtable champion of the primitive life quite staggered Sammy. As for poor old Pop Rossey, he could only gaze, blinking his aged eyes, at the tumultuous activities which were set in motion on his own barge.

At all events he was relieved of all responsibility. Pee-Wee would "handle" the girls, the police, everybody. He could be likened to a merry-go-round gone utterly mad. The poor old man's one fear seemed to be that in some way he would again run foul of the law.

"We ain't got no right to block up the river," he said anxiously.

But Pee-Wee, who had been boy mayor for a day in Bridgeboro, reassured him in the matter of these technicalities. "Gee whiz, they can't tell you to move on when you *can't* move on, can they? Let 'em go bother with parked autos, gee—eee whiz! Anyway, nobody ever comes up here but fellers and girls in canoes and, anyway, I know them all. If Charlie Halstead comes up with Westy Martin's sister they can turn around and go back again, anyway, all they want to do is read poetry, they make me sick. Let 'em turn around and go back again."

It seemed altogether likely that this is what they would have to do if they paddled up the river, for sentimental purposes. And the police would be equally helpless. For the barge was there because it was there. You cannot argue with a grounded barge, nor shove it and order it to move on. It even looked as if the incoming tide would not be able to budge it. The gods had done a good job, for one of those old planks down by the keel (which had been the subject of official phraseology) had sprung a leak, and Pee-Wee had the vast cavernous hold about one-third full of water as an ally. Yet even at flood the footways and the deck would be above water. Assuredly the gods had treated Pee-Wee better than had the fair maidens of East Village.

"Especially my sister," he said, "and I'm glad of it. Now they got to come on private property to come across." Indeed, it looked as if they would have to "come across" but in a different sense than Pee-Wee had intended.

In the deck-house he almost tore open the brief case, in which had occurred

the bloody clash between the pictures and the tomatoes, while Sammy watched him apprehensively. For he feared, as his grandfather did, the imminent hostilities between Pee-Wee and the maidens of the bazaar. He was almost panic-stricken at the blustering high-handedness of his friend.

"Now they'll see," said Pee-Wee darkly. "Come on, now you got to help me."

Pouring his whole collection of large cards out onto the table he proceeded to decorate the backs of them with proclamations of a highly dictatorial character, done in flaring crayon and liberally besprinkled with exclamation marks. Sammy could only follow him, carrying his share of these menacing posters out onto the deck and handing them one by one to the irrepressible Scout who proceeded to fasten them on trees, on the outside of the deck-house, on the back of the rough bench, and, indeed, wherever one could be displayed.

The poor old *Colbert C. Rossey* seemed gay with new life. Condemned though it was, it spoke defiance. Lying lowly and logy in this its final bed, it warned, it threatened, and coyly invited the baffled guests of the bazaar to partake of its transient hospitality—for a price. The old barge was going out in a blaze of glory.

The first arrivals at this astonishing scene were Roy Blakeley and El Sawyer, who having inspected the site of the old bridge had hiked up through the woods to ascertain the meaning of the long black thing which they had seen a little distance upstream.

At the site of the old structure they had found nothing but a few people gazing at the spot where the bridge had stood. Three stumpy pedestals of granite masonry were all that remained of the old historic landmark. The destruction had been complete; there seemed to be no débris at all. In the exposed flats were a few charred fragments which would float away on the incoming tide. The fine old three-arch bridge was a thing of the past.

"Hey kid, what's the idea?" called Roy. "Are you stopping for the red light? Give her the gas."

It was no time for airy nonsense, with Pee-Wee standing there on the roof of the deck-house.

"Look at the signs, will you," said El Sawyer. "Yes and you better read what they say, too," thundered Pee-Wee, "and you better keep off of here because it's private property absolutely positively no trespassing. And you needn't start a lot of crazy talk about united we stand because I'm united all by myself, and if you want to do a good turn like Scouts are supposed to do to be good citizens you can go up to town and go to Skinner's Garage and tell Mr. Skinner I've got his payroll that I got from the *bandits* (he gave the word tremendous emphasis) and he better come down here and get it, cause I got

important business and I can't go away. And you can telephone my father and tell him I'm not going down the river to New York because maybe I'll be here three or four days—and you can tell my sister she thinks she's so smart, and you can tell my mother to send some sausages, and if you bring the sausages maybe I'll let you come on."

"That'll be glad news for the Harris family," said El. "Couldn't you make it three or four weeks? Do a good turn yourself."

But this was ghastly mirth under the circumstances.

"Hey kid," called Roy. "Honest, we came down here to tell you Skinner's was robbed last night and——"

"I know it, I know it, I got the payroll," screamed Pee-Wee. "You tell him to come down here. I circum—baffled the *thugs*! You tell him to come down here on account of I have important business."

For a moment these two morning visitors paused, and they offered no more bantering repartee. For the robbery of Skinner's Garage had caused a minor sensation, even after the major disaster of the fire. These boys had not expected to hear the sequel of it from Pee-Wee. Nor did they, save what they might deduce from his thundering announcement.

"What's he talking about?" El asked in an undertone.

But Pee-Wee overheard him. "I know what I'm talking about and it's more than you can say," he shouted; "you and all your Patrol, especially the Ravens too. I shouted PUT YOUR HANDS UP, and it doesn't count who I shouted it at, and I got the box and I can prove it. So you needn't stand there talking and saying 'no sooner said than stung' because it was the BANDITS that got stung!"

It seemed to this merry pair that more could be accomplished by imparting this astonishing news to Mr. Skinner than by "kidding" Pee-Wee. For one thing Pee-Wee talked too loud and fast to permit the usual banter. Mr. Skinner, at all events, would listen. So they betook themselves away after their brief and inglorious skirmish.

And Sammy, who had stood by laughing, approached the hero with a diffident suggestion. It was a thought born of his knowledge of the ever constant tides, the one thing about the great outdoors which he seemed to know thoroughly. He had early learned to figure on the tides. At the stone quarry on Staten Island, at the cement yards in East River, at the dumping ground down the bay, he had figured the ebb and flow. He knew how much water the old *Colbert C. Rossey* needed to get away from Calahan's Dock. Yet he approached the mighty Scout modestly, as became a poor little boy who was going to an orphan asylum.

"Listen," he said, "the tide is coming in. It's flowing strong now."

"I should worry about it," said Pee-Wee disdainfully. "Because anyway the

barge won't move; it's grounded like your Pop says. Gee whiz, he knows."

"Yes, but all the pieces of boards and sticks and everything from the bridge; won't they drift up against the barge. There's lots of 'em downstream only we don't see them now. They'll all be floating up here soon. We can even pick them up at high water. Nobody else can get them."

"Who wants them?" scorned Pee-Wee.

"Could we—maybe could we make windmills and things, maybe even little bridges from the same wood that comes from the old bridge? You said they have pictures of the bridge on postcards. Maybe those would be good souvenirs, hey?"

Pee-Wee was too dumbfounded to speak; he only stared. Then he uttered the longest "*Oh boy*" that he had ever uttered. It took him full half a minute to get it clear of his mouth. "Now we got a fortune," he concluded. "Now even we can't get enough of them. We'll have real things made from the old historic bridge. *Oh, boy!*"

Together they hurried along the footway on the downstream side and kneeled on the narrow boards, looking down at the incoming water. Behind them the gaping hold was about half full of water, but old Pop Rossey had hung his ladder here in case of accident.

"Don't lean back," said Sammy.

The tide was flowing in, slowly rolling its way over the flanking flats, like a coverlet. It rippled up these muddy beaches, and made the river wider under the eyes of these two watchers. They watched a bit of rock slowly disappear, showing less and less until only a pinhead of shiny black remained. Then it was gone.

Many times had that hapless pair, old Pop Rossey and his grandson, waited for the tide, which waits for no man. Many times had it left them stranded in the sordid haunts of their dirty old barge. But never had it done them a better turn than now. For, upon its rippling broadening surface, it carried back upstream a myriad of fragments of the old historic bridge; fragments small and large, which it had borne southward on its eager, hurrying journey and picked up on its way back up this quiet winding stream. And it laid them against the high, blackened hull of the old *Colbert C. Rossey* as if to say, "*Here, these are for you, to make such use of as you can. They come front the old historic bridge at Bridgeboro.*"

In the merry rippling of the incoming water these fragments knocked against the blackened hull, as if one ruin were speaking to another.

"By noontime we can reach them with our hands," said Sammy.

But even at this astounding news old Pop Rossey did not lose his aged poise.

He sat himself down to sharpen his two knives on a whetstone, and meanwhile Pee-Wee and Sammy emerged on deck to find a merry company on the shore below. It was a miscellaneous assemblage, hardly less interested (and much more curious) than the throng which had watched the old bridge go up in flames.

"Don't say anything to them," Pee-Wee whispered. "The first thing you know somebody'll come out in a boat and gather up a lot of wood; we don't want any what d'you call it, competition."

Mr. Skinner was there, and Doctor Harris with his daughter Elsie; also Bridgeboro's martial police chief with one of his men; also about ten Boy Scouts. Roy and El Sawyer had certainly aroused curiosity over Pee-Wee's latest triumph.

Chief McNabber scrutinized the end of the barge, poked his head around here and there, and even kicked the stalwart hull in a kind of exploring way with his foot. He seemed on the point of giving it a ticket.

Pee-Wee, from his lofty throne, anticipated him. "If you think you can move it go ahead and do it," said he. "Maybe you think it's a peddler," he added, with delicate irony.



"If you think you can move it, go ahead and do it. Maybe you think it's a peddler," shouted Pee-Wee

Doctor Harris seemed lost in unholy mirth as he gazed upon a poster which was fastened to the stern.

PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING
Keep off without my permission
And you won't get it.

On another one a highly realistic human hand done in black crayon pointed to the opposite shore with the accompanying words, THIS WAY TO THE BAZAAR TEN CENTS. Another sign warned the lawless that "Trespassers will be strictly persecuted under penalty of the law." On another card was the garish reminder, "The only way unless you swim."

"Did you ever see such a thing?" said Elsie to her hilarious father. "How on earth are people going to walk along on that? Oh, I think it's just awful and the bazaar opens to-morrow."

"Nobody's asking you to walk across," said Pee-Wee; "you can fly across in an airplane if you want to. Or you can go down to Southvale and cross over there. A lot I should worry about you because you wouldn't let a poor old man sell things in your bazaar, so now you see how I'm always lucky, and Mr. Skinner can come up here because I got his box that the men stole. Even I'm going to have more money than that pretty soon. Hey, Mister Skinner, you can come up on private property if you want to—you needn't be scared."

The approach to this makeshift bridge had not yet been made easy by a slanting board, and everyone except Elsie scrambled up. Pee-Wee subsided into a kind of passive submission to this invasion, partly because the bazaar was not yet open, but mostly because he wished the multitude to witness his restoration of the Skinner cash box to its rightful owner. The police snooped about as if hunting for something they could object to. Old Pop Rossey was greatly frightened by their presence.

Meanwhile two men, carrying between them a wicker basket as big as a trunk, came trudging through the woods. They had left a business car down on the road near the site of the old bridge. On this car was printed.

SWEETSER THE CATERER

The hamper borne by these stalwart pallbearers was only one of several to be fetched later containing a variety of toothsome delights for which Sweetser was famous.

"Hey, can we get across with this thing?" one of them asked.

Here was a test case. Doctor Harris and his group waited, smiling. Even the

Scouts were silent. Mr. Skinner's face beamed with a mischievous grin; but then he had his precious payroll. Poor old Pop Rossey stood among them seeming very old and bent and shabby beside these merry gentlemen.

"Of course you can," said Elsie, standing on the shore. "But you'll have to be *dreadfully* careful. You'll have to walk along on one of those narrow passages."

"That's all right, Miss," said one of the men.

Just then a female voice arose in the familiar *yoo-hoo* from the opposite shore. And Elsie gave an answering *yoo-hoo*.

"Oh, it's Emily Dorlin," she caroled gaily.

"Let them bring it over," called Emily.

"They're coming," her community colleague called back.

But like the soldiers on the Marne they did not pass. For Pee-Wee Harris, flanked by the trembling Sammy, stood in their path directly under one of his warning signs. And the sturdy arm which Emily Dorlin had grasped so tenderly was raised in heroic menace. "And I'm sure that some day he'll do something really big," she had said. "I just know that he'll surprise us all."

"You can't go across without paying ten cents," Pee-Wee thundered. "And it's a collection for somebody else," he added.

"I never heard anything so perfectly ridiculous," said Elsie.

Just then the altercation was interrupted by a boarding party from the forward end of the barge. How they had scaled the tall hull Pee-Wee did not know, but they came tripping aft, a whole group of excited maidens headed by the executive and public spirit, Emily Dorlin. One of them wore a kitchen apron; she had evidently been expressing her community spirit in the new kitchen. Another carried a large wooden spoon which, perchance, she had forgotten to lay aside in her excitement. Still another (mistress of Milady's Booth) bore an embroidery hoop, with a gaudy pennant of silken stuff still dangling from it.

Of course Pee-Wee was not to be disconcerted by any such war-like implements as these, and he contemplated the onrush of this storming party with lofty scorn.

"Isn't this just *providential!*!" chirped Miss Dorlin, "to have this old scow. Let them bring the hamper right up."

"They have to pay ten cents," shouted Pee-Wee; "this is private property and nobody can go over to the bazaar without paying their toll—even, even the President of the United States can't. I said I was going to stick up for Pop Rossey and so I am, and anybody that pushes him or shoves him on private property (he gave a side glance at the policeman) had better look out what he's doing, and girls too when all they can do is laugh and giggle when I want to do

a good turn—now *they'll see!* Now they'll see with their old community bazaar!"

"Papa, will you make him let these men go across?" Elsie pleaded in high exasperation. "They've got things for the bazaar. They can't leave them here."

"They can if they want to and we'll eat 'em," Pee-Wee roared.

"Papa, will you *please* help them lift the hamper up?" the girl begged, her patience all but exhausted.

"It's private property, Elsie," said Doctor Harris. "I don't see what I can do; I don't own this barge, you know."

He was laughing so hard that he found it impossible to say more. As for Mr. Skinner, he sat on the old bench outside the deck-house, holding his precious tin box on his lap like a baby, and swayed back and forth in a perfect paroxysm of mirth.

"Now they'll see. Now they'll see," roared Pee-Wee.

Roy Blakeley did not make any pretense of sitting down to laugh in comfort. He lay flat on the deck screaming, "Let me die in peace! Pee-Wee's going to wrap up East Village and send it home! Please excuse me while I faint about six times!"

The rest of them were not much better. Even the men from Sweetser's laughed. "What are we going to do?" one of them asked.

"Pay the ten cents and charge it up to the bazaar," gasped Mr. Skinner, of Skinner's Garage. "What—what—what—else—*can* you do?"

"It's really *preposterous*, Doctor Harris," chirped Emily Dorlin, genius of the Community Bazaar. "The loss of the bridge is *tragic*, but fortunately there is a way——"

"There's only one way that I can see," laughed Doctor Harris. "Or rather, I should say, three ways. Fortunately, as you were about to say, this old hulk makes a very passable bridge——"

"For the reckless spenders of Bridgeboro," chuckled Mr. Skinner.

"For everybody that wants people to go to their old bazaar," Pee-Wee roared. "And all they could do is laugh at me——"

"Now see here," said Doctor Harris, putting one arm about the irrepressible Pee-Wee and laying the other on the shoulder of Pop Rossey, who seemed but dimly conscious of the purport of the rumpus. "Everybody listen, including you young ladies."

"I can't listen. I'm unconscious," blurted Mr. Skinner, backsiding into uncontrollable merriment. "Go on."

"We can call up the state authorities, the Waterways Commission or whatever they call it, and they'd come up in jig time and dynamite this old scow——"

"It's a barge," Pee-Wee screamed, "and I had a lot of fun on it."

"All right then," said his father in high good humor, "they'll dynamite it because it's obstructing a river and that will be the end of it. That will be the end of Bridgeboro's patronage at the bazaar——"

"It would serve 'em right!" shouted Pee-Wee.

"Atta boy," shouted Warde Hollister.

"Hurrah for the Animal Cracker," shouted Roy.

"Why not dynamite Pee-Wee too?" shouted Westy.

"He's a stick of dynamite himself," shouted Dorry Benton.

"United we stand——"

"Will you shut up!" bellowed Pee-Wee, "while I'm doing a good turn."

"Now another way," said Doctor Harris, "would be for everybody who crosses here to pay ten cents, on account of it being on private property. There's no doubt about that."

"I can prove it," Pee-Wee screamed.

"Speak a little louder so see can hear you," said Roy. "We're deaf in both eyes."

"A Scout is stealthy, he can never be heard," said Vic Norris. "He's as silent as a couple of earthquakes."

Doctor Harris waited good-humoredly, patiently. "And then there's another way," said he. "And that is to have an armistice——"

"I'm going to be the one to make it," Pee-Wee shouted.

"Make a couple," shouted Roy.

"Have a League of Notions," shouted Hunt Ward.

"That would be," said Doctor Harris, "to invite this old gentleman—now please wait till I finish—to invite this old gentleman and his grandson, who are Walter's friends, to sell their ornaments at the bazaar——"

"Wait till you hear about the ornaments," shouted Pee-Wee. "Wait till you see them—that's all I say."

"We really never meant to be unkind," chirped Miss Emily Dorlin.

"It seemed such a *perfectly huge* joke," caroled another girl.

"It's a joke all right," said Mr. Skinner of Skinner's Garage.

"We didn't want outside people——" another girl begun, a little flustered.

"We didn't want people peddling on the grounds," said Elsie.

"In other words," said Doctor Harris, answering them all, "you didn't want to do a good turn. Well, it isn't too late for you to be good sports now—good Scouts. He laughs best who laughs last. This youngster went over there and asked you to join him in a good turn, the kind that Scouts do—and you laughed."

"I'm sure we didn't make *perfect sights* of ourselves as Mr. Skinner is doing," said Elsie.

"Now look here," said Mr. Skinner, jumping to his feet and making a supreme effort to control his mirth. "Walter Harris shouted *hands up*. He didn't know who it would hit, but it hit a couple of robbers. Now it's time for you young ladies of East Village to throw up your hands. There's no disgrace in honorable surrender. And to show you that I'm a good Scout too, I'll send a man over to-day to put up a booth for Mr. Rossey and his two boys, right on the grounds, where they can sell gew-gaws and where Walter can shout till he's black in the face."

"For three days I'll shout," roared Pee-Wee. "And every night till ten o'clock. And wait till you see the things we sell just you wait," he added darkly. "Everybody better come, that's all I say. And anyway you can bet Pop Rossey and Sammy and I are going to stick together because now we're kind of pals like."

"United you stand—" began Roy. But that was as far as he got, for an apple which Pee-Wee had just taken from his pocket, and from which he had taken one huge initial bite, sailed down and landed plunk in the merry face of the leader of the Silver Foxes.

"A Scout is always generous," said Roy, taking a second bite as he picked it up. "He shares everything with his comrades like it says in the foot-book, page forty-seven."

Needless to say before the day was over the old barge *Colbert C. Rossey* was bedecked in flaunting apparel harmonious with the grand bazaar. For the young ladies of East Village were not slackers in the matter of gala decoration, even if they had fallen in the matter of good turns. The old barge was soon as gay as their laughter had been on that occasion when the sturdy little Scout had thundered his request to heedless ears. Festoons of multi-colored lanterns were strung to guide the pleasure-seekers of Bridgeboro along the narrow footways to the welcoming box office on shore where Pee-Wee's Scout comrades presided. Truly indeed, the obsequies of the old *Colbert C. Rossey* were being gaily celebrated.

Streamers of bunting enlivened the little deck-house in which, through all that day and well into the night, old Pop Rossey was mysteriously engaged with his magic jack-knife. Oblivious to the festive preparations being made outside, he sat in a billowy ocean of shavings, while Sammy painted windmills, boats and even miniature bridges, laying each one tenderly upon the table where they made a motley array. No screws or nails were used by Pop Rossey, his little marvels being held together by wooden pegs, products of his own deft and cunning hands. The young ladies who tripped about on the old barge were too engrossed to watch or to ask questions. Now and then Pee-Wee made a mysterious trip from the barge's side bringing soaked fragments of

wood which were dried on the deck-house stove.

"Why don't you go to the sawmills for wood?" his cousin Alice casually asked.

"Because you'll see," said Pee-Wee darkly.

And so, in the fullness of time, the grand Community Bazaar opened, and they did see. They also *heard*. For outside the most pretentious booth on the grounds (thanks to Mr. Skinner of Skinner's Garage) stood Pee-Wee Harris, Scout of Scouts and genius of good turns. He was a vision of primitive hardihood in his khaki regalia as he stood there (appropriately on a wooden cracker box) waving his hat seductively to the loitering throngs and directing their attention to a mammoth sign on canvas above his head.

VISIT OLD POP ROSSEY (The Old Whaler)

And get a real hand-made souvenir of the historic bridge.
They are made of the REAL wood from the

OLD HISTORIC BRIDGE

Step in and see him make them with his own hands that killed

REAL WHALES

Positively Guaranteed

REAL! REAL! REAL! The Same Lumber

But no sign could compete with Pee-Wee's tongue as he stood there, triumphing over everything and everybody, and casting scornful glances down at Emily Dorlin and Cousin Alice as they tried vainly to beguile the interested throng to other centers of temptation. For, alas, Milady's Booth stood deserted and forlorn, its silken and scented handwork unclaimed.

"Don't fail to get your souvenirs of the old bridge," Pee-Wee roared at the top of his voice. "You can't get 'em anywhere else because we got all the wood. Oo—oo—oh! Come in and have a look at Pop Rossey who got wrecked and went around Cape Horn and was in a *real mutiny!* Come in and see him carve 'em out. He sold things even in Austria—I mean Australia *fifty* years ago—even longer ago than that. *He makes 'em by hand.* Every piece came from the old historical bridge that you won't see anymore. Now's your only chance to shake hands with a man that was in a *mutiny* and got put in *irons*. Come in

and meet him. He killed whales even sharks. Even he didn't get eaten up by cannibals once!"



"Don't fail to get your souvenirs of the old bridge," Pee-Wee roared. "You can't get 'em anywhere else because we got all the wood!"

The "OLD SAILOR'S WORKSHOP" was the sensation of the Bazaar. The unique souvenirs sold like hot cakes, as the saying is. Pee-Wee had never seen any hot cakes go so fast, and he knew all about hot cakes. If you should visit

Bridgeboro now you would see a specimen of this wondrous handiwork in almost every home; people paid five and even ten dollars each for these original mementos.

And, of course, old Pop Rossey who "didn't get eaten up by cannibals," didn't go to an Old Man's Home either? Far from it. Not with such friends as the Scout of Scouts, and Mr. Skinner of Skinner's Garage. For Mr. Skinner was on the Commission that built the horrible steel drawbridge which replaced the old historic structure, and Pop Rossey is now bridge tender of the new bridge. He never went back to New York at all. He lives in a little shack at the Bridgeboro end which seems not unlike the deck-house of his old barge. And there Sammy lives too, after the narrowest squeak that a boy ever had from going to an Orphan Asylum. He and Pee-Wee are starting a new Patrol, but that is another matter.

One day, shortly after the Bazaar, Roy Blakeley and his hilarious cohorts were down at the river watching the men taking down the granite pedestals of the old bridge. At intervals, they were jollying Pee-Wee, while Sammy stood by, smiling that diffident, bashful smile of his, which had made him a favorite with them all.

"Why don't you name your new Patrol the 'Mud Turtles'?" asked Roy. "You know all about turtles, and you got stuck in the mud."

"Name it the Crabs," said Vic Norris, "because when you were on the water you went sideways."

"Never you mind what we name it," said Pee-Wee, with his darkest frown. "Anyway it's going to be a secret what we name it, and neither one of us will tell so——"

"United you stand, divided——"

"Will you *shut up!*" Pee-Wee roared. "Ten hundred thousand billion quadrillion times I heard you say it and it hasn't got any sense to it about sprawling, and it shows what fools you are in front of a new feller that's joining the Scouts how you make him think Scouts are crazy telling him if you fall down and knock your head and see stars you're a star Scout, gee—wee whiz! And when he falls for that you tell him *no sooner said than stung* like you said twenty thousand million——"

Suddenly a tremendous boom rent the air, and they all looked up the river. And for a few moments Pee-Wee was silent. Would it be doing him an injustice to say that in those few moments, this terrible hero who had vanquished a dozen giggling girls felt just one little pang of sentiment in his stalwart (and primitive) breast? Will you think the less of him if I say that a certain pensive mood crept over him?

For they were dynamiting the old barge. Only dynamite could budge it. It had flopped this way and that, and balked and floundered and drifted and

bumped the shores in its brief but glorious voyage on the winding river. And to Pee-Wee it had afforded busy and happy hours. Since the bazaar it had stood firm and fast, even as Pee-Wee had stood firm and fast before and during the bazaar. Pee-Wee had done a good job in his blundering way. And so had the old barge done a good job in its clumsy, halting way.

And now, with a deafening roar, it burst open and arose amid a dense cloud of smoke, and fell back into the quiet river, in a shower of broken planks and smaller fragments. And no one picked those fragments up to whittle out a souvenir of the old *Colbert C. Rossey*. Perhaps that deafening report, which echoed back from the new Community House, might be taken as a kind of salute to the wonder worker of the First Bridgeboro Troop B.S.A. even as martial heroes are saluted with great guns.

At all events, the incident was memorable for another reason. And that reverberating clamor will long be remembered among the mirthful Scouts of Pee-Wee's home town. For it was the only sound ever heard there which effectually drowned and silenced the appalling voice of the Scout of Scouts.

“—like you said, twenty thousand million——”

History can only speculate on what he intended to say next.

THE END

TRANSSCRIBER'S NOTE

1. *Pee-Wee Harris, Warrior Bold* appeared in five installments in *Boys' Life* magazine from November 1930 to March 1931.
2. *The cover image was created by the Transcriber and is placed in the public domain.*

[The end of *Pee-Wee Harris, Warrior Bold* by Percy Keese Fitzhugh]