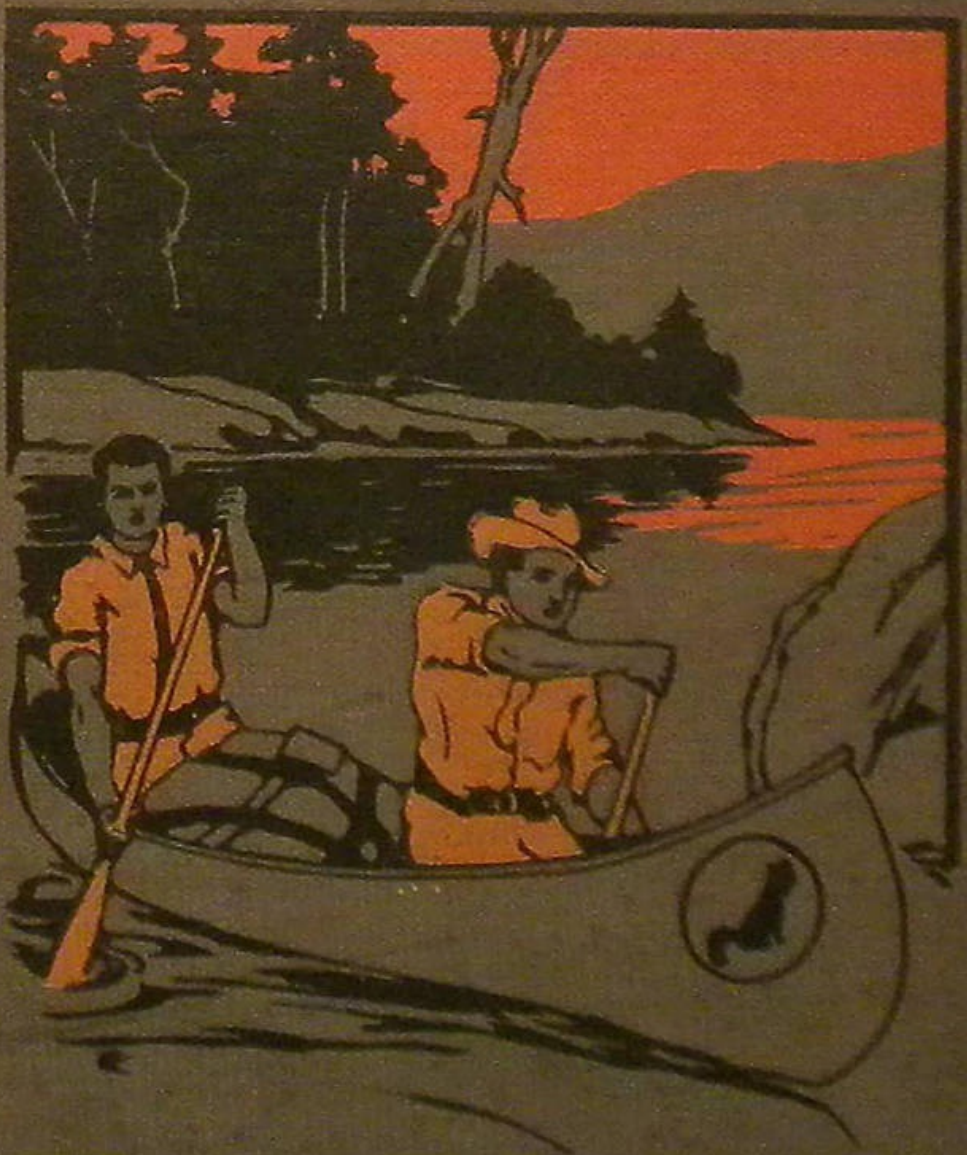

ALONG THE MOHAWK TRAIL

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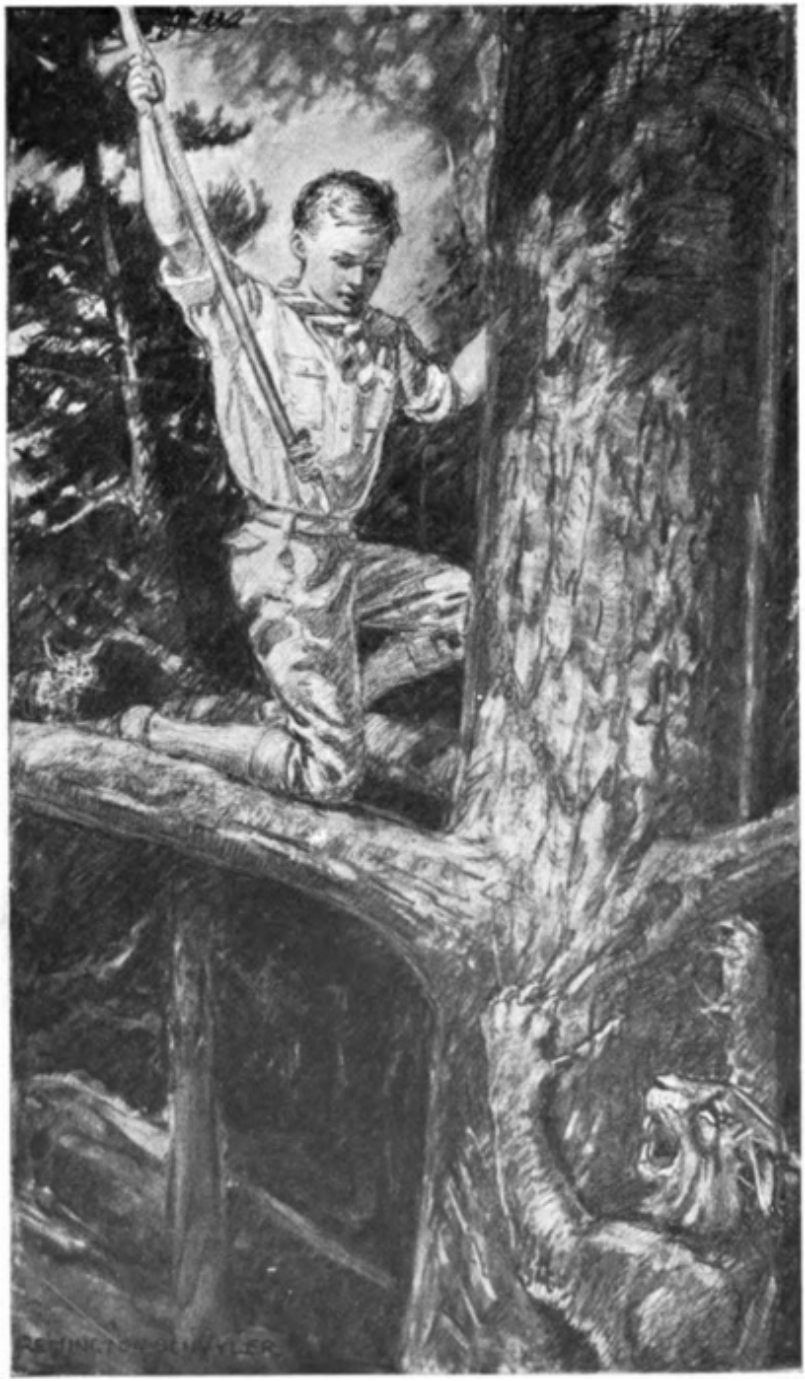

“EACH TIME HE WITHDREW THE STICK, THE BEAST GAINED AN INCH

OR TWO.”

ALONG THE MOHAWK TRAIL

or

Boy Scouts on Lake Champlain

BY

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

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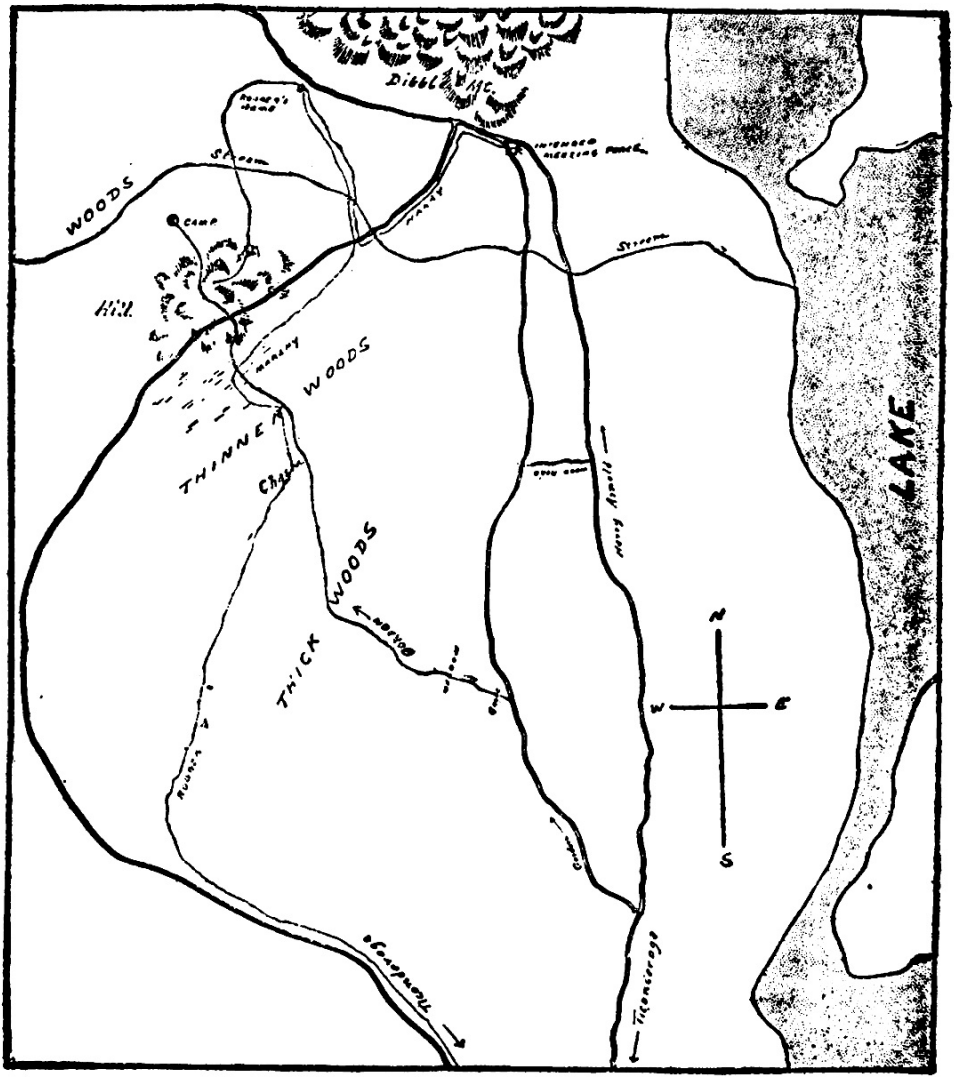

MAP OF THE “HAYSTACK”

CHAPTER I
THE NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK

Gordon Lord flung his duffel bag into the bench on the station platform and, casting himself precipitately beside it, smiled the smile of the Scouts. It was the genuine, original, warranted scout smile, done to perfection. It had often been remarked of Gordon that when he smiled his lips formed a perfect crescent, so that if the words “Be Prepared” had been printed on his white, even teeth, the effect would have been perfectly natural. Moreover, it was somewhat to his credit that he smiled on the present occasion, for several commuters who were in the same predicament as himself stalked up and down the platform in anything but an amiable humor. One of them was muttering unflattering comments on his chauffeur; another was looking scornfully at the gold watch which had deceived him; two others were discussing the dilatory habits of domestic servants; and the rest were denouncing the railroad.

Only Gordon Lord smiled—and swung his legs back and forth, and smiled more and more. He had made a great sprint down the hill, to no avail, and now, as he sat on the bench pulling up his stocking, which had treacherously worked its way down his leg in the course of his rapid progress, an amusing question presented itself to his original mind; and he resolved then and there to confound Red Deer with it, so soon as he should set eyes on that individual. As every scout in good standing knows, it is his duty to *be prepared*, to be on hand when he is supposed to be on hand, and to be on time always. But it is also his avowed obligation to do a good turn every day—one good turn, at least. Paragraph 3, Scout’s Law, sets these requirements forth clearly.

And here was Gordon Lord, scout of the second class, who had stopped to do a good turn and as a direct consequence had failed to be prepared. He could not do the good turn and be prepared both; which should he have done? The scout smile broadened as he pondered over this. Here would be a poser for Red Deer. He loved to ask Red Deer such questions as this; it was as good as a circus to hear the two of them engaged in a learned discussion on the technicalities of Scout Law. And Red Deer (who was scoutmaster of the Oakwood troop) enjoyed it immensely.

But now Gordon realized that Red Deer and both patrols, the Beavers and the Hawks, were gliding merrily into the city to catch the Montreal express.

Twenty minutes before his spectacular arrival at the station (one minute after the train had left), he had started from home at “scout pace”—not because this was necessary, but because it was “scoutish” and Gordon was nothing if

not thorough. He wore his complete scout outfit; khaki hat, neckerchief showing the Beaver hues (blue and yellow), knotted in the celebrated Beaver knot of his own invention, which had been unanimously adopted by the patrol with a vote of thanks to the inventor. No one but a Beaver could untie the knot except Master Gordon's mother, who had laboriously discovered the combination one evening when the young Beaver had relieved himself of the scarf by lifting it over his head. His shirt was of a rich, olive-colored flannel, his loose short breeches of khaki, and his khaki-colored stockings were turned over his garters below the knee, whence one or other of them was continually slipping down. He carried his duffel bag on the end of his staff like a peddler with his pack, and as he went down the wide, tree-bordered street of the fashionable suburb of Oakwood, his popularity was attested by many a cheery call or farewell wish from the lawns and porches that he passed.

He was a picturesque figure that early summer morning as he started for the station. He was small and lithe in stature, rather too short for his fourteen years; his complexion was almost of a mulatto brown, and his brown eyes held a kind of dancing mischief. Long before he had entered the scout ranks he was remarked by all as an exceedingly attractive boy, and it needed only the uniform on his compact, active little figure to complete an altogether quaint and charming impression.

Thus he sallied gayly down the hill, past the big family mansion of the Arnolds, and was just turning into the little village park when he came in sight of Miss Leslie, who was in the midst of an exasperating dilemma. Miss Leslie taught in the Oakwood school, and had taught Master Gordon a year or two before. She was at present trying to carry eight rather thick books, which is a very good thing to do when viewed in the light of calisthenics. For it is easier to read eight books than to carry them unless you have a strap or a satchel, and Miss Leslie had nothing but her small white hands.

When Gordon first caught sight of her, his trained scout vision showed him that four books were in Miss Leslie's arm and four on the sidewalk. She stooped, picked up two and dropped three. She then picked up one and dropped another. Then she picked up two. Then she picked up another one. As she stooped for the last one she dropped three. Matters were about even; at least, she was holding her own. She picked up two more and dropped one. She was one ahead. Encouraged by her success, she made a bold descent for the remaining three, secured two of them and dropped four. The sidewalk had a majority. Miss Leslie glanced covertly up to see if any one were watching. Not seeing the scout as he neared, she cautiously gathered the three books from the sidewalk and for one short, thrilling second held the entire eight under her arm. Then a trifling accident marred her triumph—she dropped one book. With great caution she stooped slowly, grasped the recreant volume, arose

victorious, holding it tightly while—the other seven tumbled to the ground.

"Hello, Miss Leslie," said the young scout.

Miss Leslie, clutching one volume, stood vanquished and humiliated in the midst of the other seven, and contemplated her former pupil with mingled surprise and embarrassment.

"Don't try to pick them up," said Gordon; "let me show you something."

He took the volume which she held and, laying it on the sidewalk, picked up another volume and slipped the front cover of this underneath the cover of the first one. Then he placed the cover of another one underneath the back cover of the second, and so on until he had piled the whole rebellious assortment and effectually locked them together.

"There you are," said he, and by way of demonstrating the reliability of the pile, he balanced it on his hand, allowing it to incline this way and that like the Leaning Tower. The books held fast as if they were glued together.

"Did you *ever* in your life?" said Miss Leslie, in complimentary astonishment at this sleight-of-hand performance, and trying to take the books from him.

"There are tricks in every trade," said Gordon.

"And you know them all," she answered in genuine admiration.

"But they're just as heavy as they were before," he remarked; "I'll carry them for you as far as the school."

Her protests were useless, for possession is nine points of the law, and Gordon held the pile of books. So they went along together toward the school building, which was not at all in line with the station, he talking volubly all the way.

"I think you are the boy who once opened a bottle of camphor for me in the school room by means of a piece of string," she remarked.

"That's nothing," said Gordon, who loved to impart information. "Do you know how to open bureau drawers that stick?"

"Indeed, I wish I did," she answered, smiling.

"Lay a heavy stick on the floor in front of the bureau and hit it a good hard whack with a hammer; if you haven't a stick, just pound the floor."

"Really?"

"Honest."

"Well, that is certainly worth knowing."

"That's nothing—did you know you can make dandy ink out of typewriter ribbons?"

"The idea!"

"That's how I got this suit—asked the stenographers in my father's office to save me their old typewriter ribbons, made ink and sold it; it's better than other ink."

“And is that your scout suit? I heard the boys were starting for camp to-day.”

“Who told you?”

“I think it was Dr. Brent.”

“He’s Red Deer; he’s going with us.”

“And how do you manage to pack so many things in there?” said she, patting his thick, curly hair.

“Oh, there isn’t so much in it,” he answered; “a couple of apples, pair of heavy shoes, a shirt—”

“What?”

“Want to look inside?” he asked, laying the pile of books down and releasing his duffel bag from the end of his staff.

“Oh, no, I meant inside your head,” said she, laughing; “but here we are; I shall remember the things you have told me. Good-by, and I hope your kindness to me will not have made you late for the train.”

She stood on the school steps (it was the last day of the spring term) watching him as he walked gayly down the street, his khaki hat on the back of his round head, and his duffel bag on the end of his scout’s staff. She heard a man across the street call cheerily to him that he had only two minutes to catch the train, and she distinctly heard him answer, “That’s nothing,” and saw him start to run down the hill toward Oakwood station.

But it proved to be a great deal, despite the boy’s laconic comment. Indeed, it is to be seriously questioned whether missing a train ever before had such a variety of delectable consequences.

So there he sat where we first saw him, on the station bench, and thought of the two patrols in charge of Red Deer which were already on their way to the Adirondacks. They knew that he had had a bad headache the day before, and they would doubtless assume that to be the cause of his non-appearance. He pictured their gay trip up the shore of the lordly Hudson, their luncheon at Albany, their leaving the train at Ticonderoga and tramping forth in quest of a suitable camp. But whether they would settle north or south or west of Ticonderoga, he did not know. They would pitch their tents this very night somewhere along the shore of that watery serpent, Lake Champlain, but exactly where Red Deer would lead them would depend largely on information gathered *en route*.

He wondered what Arnold would think of him. Those had been fine plans that he and Arnold had made for hanging together and testing their new signal system, and tracking and stalking in each other’s company. It was Harry Arnold who had brought Gordon into the troop as a tenderfoot, and it had been a great discovery for the elder boy. It had also opened up a field for Master Gordon which belittled his fondest dreams. For even before the organization

came into existence he was, in all essential particulars, a thorough, out-and-out Boy Scout. And indeed, it might reasonably have seemed to him that the local troop had been organized in order to afford a wider scope for the exploitation of his particular accomplishments.

His laconic phrase of “That’s nothing,” when confronted with difficulties, had come to be a familiar quotation among his intimates, and he retained the expression after he blossomed forth with his staff and badge and khaki attire. He could shoot a curve with a marble; he could tell in which direction a bicycle had gone by its track; he was a master worker in birch bark; he could make washers and other useful articles of hardware by the aid of the railroad track; he could kindle an open air fire in a pelting rain; he was the sole inventor of the celebrated suction-pad for walking on narrow cliffs and ledges; and he had memorized the Oakwood fire-signal system.

A whistle had been recently installed on the Town House, which uttered an unearthly din whenever there was a fire in town. If it rang ten it meant one locality; if it rang fifteen it meant another, and thus every street and corner of the town was provided for. Whenever the whistle blew, there was frantic hunting in every Oakwood home for the card which showed the various locality calls. Of course, it is absolutely important that a boy shall attend a fire, and Gordon at once realized that to memorize the entire system would enable him always to be first on the scene. Hence, if he happened to be walking along the street and heard the screech of the whistle sounding 57, he knew at once in which direction to go, and it was not uncommon for him to be waiting for the firemen to point them out the house. Also in school when the lessons were interrupted by the whistle’s ominous sound, the teacher, after fumbling in her desk in a vain quest for the elusive card, would say, “Perhaps Master Gordon can tell us;” and Master Gordon would promptly answer, “Elm St. near Park Place.”

He knew the number of paving stones between his home and the corner; he knew how to locate a baseball in a drain pipe; he could look at a kite caught on a telegraph wire and tell you approximately where the flier of the kite had stood when the mishap occurred; he knew just how far it was to the Guild Room, to the church, to the public library. He loved such little tidbits of information for their own sake, and like all wide-awake boys, he had a habit of finding things.

You will see that here was the material for an A-1 scout, and when I add that Master Gordon’s only vice (if you call it a vice) was an unconquerable and excessive fondness for apples, you will know enough of his character to last you for a chapter or two.

After the first excitement of missing the train had passed and he had smiled the matter off, scout fashion, he opened his duffel bag and sought consolation

in a gigantic and mellow specimen of his favorite fruit. Then he rose and retraced his steps up the hill. There on the summit stood the fine, old-fashioned mansion of the Arnolds, and beyond it a hundred yards or so the more modern residence of the Lord family, standing well back upon its spacious, well-kept lawn.

There was not a soul stirring about the Arnold place, and as he passed it he thought again of the boy whose particular companion he had meant to be. He had a great admiration for Harry Arnold, and Harry, though he jollied the younger boy and called him "Kid," was quite under the spell of his young friend and protégé.

Surely they would write to him and tell him where they were and how to get to them; Arnold would attend to that. But perhaps Arnold did not care so much, after all. He knew he furnished a good deal of amusement to his friend, but whether Arnold really cared enough—no, very likely he didn't. They would all say it was his business to *be prepared*—to be on hand; Arnold would be the first to say that.

So Master Gordon Lord walked slowly up the quiet, suburban street until the roof of his own home was visible through the trees. He had finished his apple, and he now sent the core spluttering against a tree. The scout smile had gone under a cloud for the time being, for the boy now began to realize the extent of his disappointment. There was not another boy in sight. Ordinarily Arnold would have been mowing the lawn or attending to some other outdoor work about the place at this time; but there was no Arnold in sight now, and he seemed doubly absent because Gordon knew where he had gone. Then his disappointment began to take the form of anger, and even his anger was not well-directed, for it included the very boy who had made him a scout and who had helped him into the second class. But the thought that both patrols would soon be rushing gayly up the Hudson while he trudged homeward in an almost boyless Oakwood was too much for him, and he sat down on a rock along the stretch of road between his own home and the Arnold house and blamed them all and told himself that Arnold was a "lobstereen"—whatever may be the meaning of that dreadful appellation.

Now there are many ways in which a man may afford a vent to his anger, but the very best way for a boy to do so and by far the most satisfactory is to choose a suitable target at an appropriate distance and to sit down on a rock or log and proceed to pelt it with stones. For with every cast of a missile goes a certain quantity of the unwholesome spirit till it has all been dissipated in the free air. The first stone is usually thrown in wrath, the next several in a kind of sullen carelessness, and lo, the marksman presently finds himself captured by the sporting instinct and aims, calmly and cheerfully, at his target with no feeling but the sportsmanlike desire to hit the mark. This method is strongly

recommended to boys and its effects will be found to be immediate and magic.

On the present occasion Gordon Lord passed quickly through the wrathful and sullen stages and rose with characteristic determination and a sure aim. You cannot aim true when you are angry, and at the present moment Gordon cared more about hitting the mark than about anything else. Presently the stone sped from his hand and went banging against the slender tree.

"Good shot!" he heard a cheery voice call.

Gordon turned, and there, as sure as you live, stood Arnold.

There was no doubt about it. There was the blue flannel shirt with the double row of pearl buttons. There was the thin book-strap for a belt, and there was the full scout's badge, not on his sleeve, but on the front of his hat. There was the seamanship badge on his right arm. There was the Beaver neckerchief tied in the celebrated Beaver knot. There was the leather wristlet. It was Arnold, all right.

"H-hello, Harry," gasped Gordon; "what—where did *you* come from?"

"Where did *I* come from? Why, from the station—on a fool hunt after you. What are you doing here, anyway?"

"Just throwing stones."

"Do you know you've missed the train?"

"I knew that fifteen minutes ago."

"Well, you're a—"

"No, I'm not, Harry,—now just hold on a minute,—I started down—"

"Yes," said Arnold, crossly, "and I waited till five minutes before train time, then cut up through the fields to your house."

"If you'd only come up by the park, you'd have seen me showing Miss Leslie—honest, Harry, you ought to have been there. She was trying to juggle eight books down to school and most of them were on the sidewalk. So there was the chance for your Uncle Gordon. I happened to know a trick—"

"I know," interrupted Arnold, smiling in spite of himself, "you showed her a way."

"Right."

"Did a good turn."

"Right for Harry."

"And missed the train."

"Correct."

Gordon took a careful aim and sent another stone to the mark.

"And you did a good turn, too, Harry; a bully one, coming to find me. You've started the day fine."

"Yes, we've made a grand starter," said Arnold, as they sauntered toward his home. "We're a couple of A-1 scouts—not. The whole troop will be laughing at us."

“But remember the good turns, Harry.”

“I don’t see us doing any stalking together,” was the reply.

“Do you know how I fixed those books for her, Harry?”

“No, and I don’t want to know.”

They walked on in silence to the Arnold place, and Gordon followed his somewhat disgruntled friend to the latter’s room. It was familiar ground to him, for much of their planning and preparation had taken place in it, and now he threw himself into the comfortable recess of a Morris chair and tactfully awaited some sign of improvement in his companion’s humor. Meanwhile, Harry made a tour around his well-filled apartment, rearranging things and collecting the boyish litter, by way of affording a vent to his mood. He took a canoe paddle from one corner and placed it in another. He straightened his school diploma on the wall. His manner was anything but cordial, and Gordon watched him with a twinkle in his eye but did not venture a remark.

“There’s the blazing system,” grunted Harry, throwing a paper over to the bed. “A lot of good it’ll do us now.”

He hammered a nail in the wall and hung a pair of moccasins on it. The nail came out.

“Put it eighteen inches from the door casing, Harry.”

“How’d you know that?”

“Don’t know—just found it out.”

“Well,” said Harry, after a few minutes more of sullen silence, “what are we going to do about it?”

“Do about it?”

“Yes, what are we going to do about it? Hang around in Oakwood for two months?”

“They’ll write.”

“Yes, I suppose they will,” said Harry. “We’ll hear something in a few days. The trouble is they may not know for a few days just where they’re going to settle. You know, they’re going to get out at Ticonderoga and strike up into the woods north. Red Deer spoke of following the old Mohawk trail. I wish I had his map.”

He thrust his hands into his pockets, and stood gazing out of the window. Neither spoke.

“Harry,” said Gordon, at length, “it would be a great stunt for us to go up there and find them.”

“You must be crazy, Kid.”

“Of course, they’ll write and tell us where they are, but that may be a week or more, and when we got to them they’d all laugh at us. Now, if we could just —”

“It’s out of the question, Kid.”

“No, it isn’t either,” persisted Gordon. “Here we are, a couple of scouts—been tracking and stalking and signaling and woodcrafting and all that sort of thing for six months. We know the troop is going to camp along Lake Champlain on the New York side.”

“Lake Champlain’s a hundred and fourteen miles long,” interrupted Harry.

“That’s nothing. We know they’re somewhere along the west shore of that lake—I say, let’s go and find them.”

“Why, you hair-brained kid, it would be like hunting for a needle in a haystack,” said Harry, warming up a little to the idea under the younger boy’s enthusiasm.

“Well, there’s a way to find a needle in a haystack, Harry. You fix a big magnet on the end of a long stick and then begin—”

But that was as far as he got. Harry Arnold sat down on the edge of the bed and laughed himself hoarse. He came out of this fit in much the same condition as one comes out from the crisis of a fever. His ill humor was quite gone and his mood was more agreeable and receptive than it had been since he left the station in quest of his delinquent friend.

“It *would* be a great thing,” said he, “only—”

“There’s no *only* about it, Harry. It can be done and we can do it. We’ll start before there’s a chance to hear. No sirree! They’ll not have the laugh on me. We’ll drop in on them some fine day as if we’d dropped from the clouds.”

The attractive features of the scheme began rapidly to appeal to the older boy. It was all very well tracking and stalking in the Oakwood woods, where any member of the troop could take his bearings by the church steeple. It was all very well pretending to be lost. It was a good enough makeshift to think up emergencies, to make them to order, and then gallantly to surmount them by a knowledge of woodcraft. But here was a real test for their ability, their endurance, their sagacity, their observation, resource, and experience. A Saturday afternoon grapple with the little patch of Oakwood woods was like a bout with a punching bag—the exercise was good, but the element of uncertainty and real peril was absent. For a punching bag cannot hit back. And after all they had only been playing a game in which Nature—the opponent—had been frightfully handicapped. She had held no surprises for them and presented no obstacles. The difficulties they had overcome had been manufactured for that especial purpose. They had pretended to be lost—but they could hear the Town House bell every half-hour. No, the whole thing seemed tame beside the enchanting picture of a real encounter with Nature up among the rugged foothills of the Adirondacks.

There, along the winding course of Lake Champlain, somewhere within hail of its shore and nestling among the hills that flank it—somewhere in that wilderness would be encamped the two patrols of the Oakwood scouts. And

shielding them and baffling the searchers would be the swamps, the mountains, the valleys, and the strange, dim woods. Here would be a foeman worthy of their steel, and beside it the modest, familiar little patch of woodland that skirted their suburban home seemed pitiably small. So that Gordon very truthfully remarked:

"Honest, Harry, I feel as if I'd been hitting a fellow under my size."

Was there a way? What weapons had they with which to encounter this great silent, enveloping foe, and make it yield up its secret? The wilderness, the hills and streams, the swamps and thickets, must pay the cost of the encounter and sustain them in their quest. They would lay the enemy under contribution for their maintenance.

They talked it over, warming to the idea as new obstacles presented themselves. They likened themselves to Stanley hunting for Livingstone in South Africa. And they told each other what Red Deer would think when he saw them come walking in—which, of course, they would do in a very nonchalant and offhand manner, as if they had just happened in for a little social call.

"It'll be great," said Gordon.

"After all," said Arnold, more thoughtfully, "we can't get lost if we have a compass. A fire with damp leaves on it is as good as a telephone, and—"

"Of course it is," said Gordon.

"You can't freeze if you've got a match."

"You don't need a match, Harry—there's a way—"

"Yes, there's always a way when you're along, Kid."

So they talked over the pros and cons of the proposed undertaking, taking account of all they had learned of woodcraft, and gloating over the surprise they would give Red Deer and the two patrols, until finally, from mere excess of enthusiasm, they sat silent, contemplating the variety of opportunities which the expedition would present for the testing of their resource and woodcraft skill.

"Kid," said Harry Arnold, "the troop can be found wherever they are. We can reduce the area a good deal by deduction at the very start. We know they'll be on the New York shore not far from the lake. It'll be the greatest thing in the world for us to go up there and find them, and by the powers, I'm going to do it if I—"

"Oh, Harry, let's start to-night!" said Gordon.

CHAPTER II
A GLIMPSE AT THE HAYSTACK

Harry Arnold was eighteen years old, and, as you may have noted from the position of his badge and the color of his scarf, he was leader of the Beaver patrol. He was tall, lithe, and active, and, without being exactly an athlete, he gave the impression of being athletic.

There was a certain indescribable something in his appearance which suggested the out-of-door life rather than a gymnasium training, and it is a fact that he seldom did a thing simply and solely because it would make him strong. There was nothing of the athletic faddist about him, and it was said by some of the Oakwood boys that he was not much of a sport. Of course, that depends on what you call sporting, but it must be confessed that he took but slight interest in games—as such. He liked to see a good kick on the gridiron, a good ball pitched; he enjoyed seeing a boy catch a "sky-scraper" or watching a home run. But whether the pitcher, runner, or catcher wore a white suit or a blue suit or a red suit, or the initial A or B or any other letter, made little difference to him.

He was not much given to talking (his friend Gordon attended to that), but he was fond of saying, "The question is, what can a fellow do, not whom can he beat?" He was not particularly fond of either football or baseball but, if I can make the distinction clear, he was fond of each feature of these games for its own sake independently of results. It made several of his companions quite impatient when he calmly protested, on his way home from the baseball field one day, that the visiting team which had just been beaten by the Oakwood High School had really done the best work.

"Well, we beat them anyway, and that's how *I* judge," said Collins. And that, indeed, is the way most boys judge. But Arnold had watched each individual play apart from its connection with the game as a whole, and he persisted that the visitors had done the best work.

Perhaps we can get at it best by saying that he had the true sporting instinct, but lacked the spirit of the contestant. He saw a difference between the word "success" and the word "victory." It was a grand, inspiring thing to see a home run—never mind which side scored.

He cared nothing for dumb-bells, Indian clubs, elastic exercisers, and such. He loved the woods and the water, and the things he loved to do made him strong and enduring. "You cannot get up much of an affection for dumb-bells and Indian clubs," he said; "so they don't do you much good."

I don't know that I wholly agree with him in this, but I think I catch his idea, which is sound and wholesome. At all events, we must take him as we find him.

He was inordinately fond of boating, and had walked away with the seamanship badge so easily that it seemed a shame for him to take it. He gave the examiners good measure in all the tests and threw in several feats gratis. He could ride a canoe as a cowboy rides a mustang, and had come alone in one of those little shells from Block Island to New York, straight through Long Island Sound, in November.

He was thoughtful and far-sighted, and studious in regard to matters that interested him specially. In his seamanship test he had voluntarily drawn a plan of a turbine engine, giving also a description of its advantages in sea navigation. What he knew, he knew thoroughly, and the thing that interested him most, next to wood lore and outdoor life and boating, was Gordon Lord.

That loquacious Beaver, with his head stuffed full of a variety of useful and semi-useful information, furnished him a source of never ending amusement which had blossomed into a genuine attachment for the younger boy. "Kid," he would say, "the inside of your head reminds me of a rummage sale or an old attic. Why don't you get busy and clear it out some rainy Saturday?"

And Gordon would answer, "Because then I wouldn't have anything to make you laugh with when you get a grouch on. See?" And this, perhaps, may afford a hint as to why the two had been drawn together.

It now became the first duty of Harry Arnold to encounter his young friend's father and surmount, if might be, the difficulty of parental objection to the proposed undertaking. This he could not do until evening, but he knew enough to know that he was going to talk to a business man and that it behooved him to *be prepared*. Of his own father's consent he had no doubt.

Mr. Lord had a great admiration for Harry. His shrewd business habit of keen observation had long since shown him that here was a boy who was adventurous but not visionary. He admired the lad's straightforward, self-possessed way of talking. He had even been favorably impressed with the moderate and discriminate use of slang which characterized his conversation.

"Just enough to make what he says pithy and vivid," he told Gordon. "You never hear him use senseless expressions or words that have no meaning—I like to talk to him." In short, he was well pleased with the intimacy between the two boys, for he felt that Harry was an admirable companion for his own impulsive son.

Harry started at once for the city, where he procured from a sporting outfitter just what he wanted and no more, which is not always an easy thing to do. This was a government survey map of the Lake Champlain country. If

there had been time he might have gotten this from Uncle Sam at the moderate price of five cents; as it was, it cost him a dollar.

The afternoon he spent in his room alone, studying the map. Gordon's alluring picture of dropping in on the troop unexpectedly some fine day did not divert him from a calm and thoughtful consideration of the chances of success or failure. Of course, the idea of going up there and searching them out by the application of wit, persistence, and resource appealed strongly to his spirit of adventure. But he was not going to allow himself to be too hopeful. He saw that if they started at Ticonderoga and journeyed north in a direct line they would be, generally speaking, on high ground, whence they could keep the lake in view as well as the two miles, approximately, which would intervene between themselves and the water.

In other words, his plan would be to start at the foot of Lake Champlain and follow the ridge of high land which ran parallel with the lake about two miles west of it. He saw that here and there along the route were high elevations whence they might obtain excellent surveys of the shore line and the country between. A few days' tramping and climbing would enable them to pick out the camp if it were in open ground. But he realized that it probably would not be in open ground.

The only definite knowledge they would start with as to the troop's camping place was as follows:

They were to start at Ticonderoga and press north.

They were to camp on the New York side of the lake.

They would remain in proximity to the lake.

They would, probably, not go north of Port Henry, which was, roughly speaking, fifteen miles above Ticonderoga.

That left a tract of country fifteen miles long and from two to three miles wide to be explored. The long sides of this rolling, wooded rectangle were bounded respectively by the ridge and the long stretch of lake shore. But the ridge was not continuous and well defined, and its constant availability for outlook was, of course, not to be depended on. Indeed, to the average eye the map would have shown no ridge at all. But Harry picked it out, following the contour linings and altitude notations, and saw it as if it were a grand stand. He knew enough of woodcraft to know that a searcher must keep to the high ground, and he did not make the mistake of supposing that the thing to do would be to follow the shore.

He took a lead pencil from his ear. It was the first weapon to be used and he knew its value. Then and there, in the seclusion of his own room, he began the search for the needle in the haystack.

He knew that certain things could be eliminated by deduction and that it was best to eliminate them before he tripped over them. He marked the

imaginary rectangle on his map. Then he studied it as if it were a chess-board and he a player. He knew that the chances were strongest for finding the troop encamped toward the southern end of his rectangle, because when they found the sort of place they were after why should they go farther? There was a river rising somewhere in Keeny Mountain and making its way into the lake about three miles north of Ticonderoga. Very likely they would not be north of that, for why should they not camp along the first river they came to? They would probably not be remote from a road. If they followed up the lake, they would cut in west a little below the river because there was a swamp. If they did this, they would buck right into the river on high ground about one mile in from the lake. If conditions there were as he thought they were, that would mark the general locality of their camp. For people, like rivers, follow the path of least resistance. Harry judged what Dr. Brent would do by considering what he would do. He let the rectangle stand as he had marked it, but he interested himself most in its lower end.

There was a ring at the door-bell.

"If that's Kid Lord," he called out, never looking up from the map, "tell him if he comes up here, he's got to keep quiet."

But it was not Kid Lord, for Kid Lord was otherwise engaged.

That evening, Harry rolled up his map and went up to the Lord house. Mr. Lord was standing on the lawn watching the activities of a new revolving sprinkler.

"Hello, Harry, my boy," said he, cordially. "Well, you and Gordon are a couple of A-1 scouts, aren't you? You made a great botch out of getting off!"

"I think we can find them, Mr. Lord," said Harry, as they walked toward the porch and seated themselves in two large wicker chairs.

"I don't know about that, Harry," said Mr. Lord, seriously. "I'm afraid it's too much of an undertaking. Dr. Brent will manage to get word to you boys, as I told Gordon—you needn't be afraid of that. He'll have one of the boys arrange to meet you somewhere—the nearest station—and—"

"And they'll all laugh at us."

"What do you care for that?"

"Well, I don't know that I do, sir, but it would be a lot of fun to find them."

"That's what Gordon says, but now just think a minute, my boy. You propose to roam around through those woods, tramp up mountains, walk through swamps for maybe two weeks or more, simply for the pleasure of stealing quietly up to their tents some day and calling, 'Peek-a-boo.' I don't think the game's worth the candle, now, do you?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"What's that you've got?"

"That's a map I want to show you," answered Harry, unrolling it and

spreading it on his knee; “I guess maybe Gordon has an idea that we’re going into a country like the wilds of Africa, but it isn’t quite as bad as that. Of course, there are wild tracts, but there are roads and villages, and then there’s the lake to keep us from going too far astray. I’m pretty sure we’ll find camp near the lake. Now, my idea is to follow this ridge—”

“What ridge?”

“Why, right along here,” said Harry, pointing with his pencil.

“You call that a ridge?”

“Yes, sir; those are all mountains, and the high land is more or less continuous. It’ll give us a bird’s-eye view.”

“Now, let me tell you something, my boy. It’s easy to climb a mountain on a map. But a few curlicue lines aren’t a mountain—no sirree—any more than a bill of fare is a dinner. Now, take my advice and do the comfortable, easy way. Stay right here till you get word from Dr. Brent.”

“It would be good sport,” protested Harry.

“I know, but suppose you shouldn’t find them?”

“Mr. Lord,” said Harry, “if I were working for you in your office and you wanted me to do something, you wouldn’t ask me what would happen if I failed to do it. You would expect me not to fail.”

Mr. Lord gave the boy a quick, approving glance but said nothing, only fell to examining the map.

“Well,” said he, “let’s see how you mean to do.”

“I mean to explore this tract, not every inch of it, of course, but by signals, and so forth. I figure that we’ll find some trace of them along the roads or in the wood trails. Also we can see a good deal of country from these mountains, some of them especially.”

“Suppose you tramped away up a mountain for a grandstand view and found it covered with dense woods?”

“I could climb a tree, but even that won’t be necessary. Do you know how they made this map, Mr. Lord? They had men out surveying the country. On the tops of some of these mountains there must be some old disused government survey stations. Here’s a mountain called Bald Knob, so we know right off there are no woods on it. Here’s Owl Pate—no woods on Owl Pate, I guess. Now this is what I mean to do, sir. I’m going right up that road from Ticonderoga, and if there hasn’t been any rain I can pick out their tracks if they went that way. That’s a stretch of flat country. If we haven’t spotted them by the time we get to Dibble Mountain, we’ll go up and take a look and see what we see. We may send up a Morse smoke signal and like enough that’ll fetch them. If it doesn’t, then on for Crown Point. You see, there’s the village, and no harm can come to us.”

“You could wire me from Crown Point,” suggested Mr. Lord.

“Yes, only we wouldn’t.”

Mr. Lord laughed. “See, there’s a good high mountain, Harry; Bulwagga, is it? Yes, Bulwagga.” He was getting quite into the spirit of the thing, and Harry led him along with the lead pencil, which Mr. Lord’s eyes followed as a needle follows a magnet. “Well, I hope you’ll find them,” he concluded. “I guess you’re equal to it. I wish I were young enough to go along.”

Harry rolled up his map and went up to Gordon’s room. He found that young gentleman in a rather despondent mood.

“What’s the matter, Kid?”

“My father won’t stand for it.”

“Oh, I guess he will; I’ve just been talking to him.”

“What’d he say?”

“Said he wished he was young enough to go along with us. Come on now, get a hustle. We start to-morrow morning.”

CHAPTER III
A GOOD TURN AND A SALUTE

That evening Gordon was doomed to disappointment. From the moment that he learned they might go, his active mind had been busy considering what articles they must take, and most of those he thought necessary were ruthlessly vetoed by his friend. He found that the first delight of the novice in camping and exploring was heartlessly taken from him—the delight of making preparations. There was, in fact, scarce any preparation at all. They spent the evening in Harry's room, which had much the appearance of a frontier trading-post, so crowded was it with camping paraphernalia and forest mementos.

From these Harry collected a few things, some from the walls, some from bureau drawers, some from a large chest. There was fishing tackle, a practical jewel-set compass, a jack-knife which he carefully selected from several others, a small belt ax, a flat metal trap, several snares, a pair of mooseskin moccasins, a water-tight match box, the necessary toilet articles, a small file, a small aluminum frying pan, a saucepan, a tin cup, a small aluminum coffee pot into which he put two knives, two forks, and two spoons, for Harry's duffel bag, containing his personal equipment for the trip, had gone on with the troop.

"Now, let me see," he said, standing beside the bed and contemplating the things he had chosen, "you take this paper and write down what I name—or wait a minute, while I think of it." He disappeared, and presently returned with a spool of strong thread and two needles stuck into it. This he dropped into the tin cup, then dropped the tin cup into the coffee pot.

"Now write down what I tell you—these are all things we've got to get in the morning.

"Two tin plates.

"Bacon.

"Rice—do you like rice? Saccharine tablets. Raisins. Salt and pepper. Egg powder. Got all that down?"

"Yes."

"All right, the rest will come to me in my sleep. Now let's see what you've got in that fancy bag." He turned the contents of Gordon's duffel bag out on the bed. "What in the world is this?"

"That's a suction pad, Harry."

"What's it for?"

"Keep you from falling off cliffs."

"We'll cut out the suction pad. Here, eat these apples and get them out of

the way. Now, what's this?"

So he went through the pile of things, approving some, discarding others, yielding here, insistent there, until, as he said, he had reduced Gordon's freight to a common denominator.

The next morning they started, with a minimum amount of duffel for one week's supply, the load divided between them. There were crackers of the iron-clad pilot variety; there was rice, which Harry said he could do lots of things with; there were chocolate, cheese, figs, cereal, besides the things Harry had enumerated the night before. Besides these, there was "fly dope," one or two household medicines, an antiseptic solution, blankets, two empty cushion bags, and a good-sized piece of balloon silk (weighing next to nothing) for shelter.

Harry wore long khaki trousers laced down from the knee, and moccasins of heavy mooseskin. From the belt up, however, he was rather a sailor than a scout, for he had never been able to bring himself to abandon the blue flannel shirt with its flap front and double row of pearl buttons. He positively declined to wear any kind of coat. His belt was a thin book-strap, and from this hung a small belt ax. Of course, he carried his rifle.

Gordon was a scout from head to foot. He would not have missed one detail of the full regalia. He carried his part of the burden in his duffel bag slung over his staff, on which he also ostentatiously hung the trap and snares and to which was bound the fishing rod and tackle.

"You want to do what I did, Harry," said he on their way to the station. "Rip the lining out of your hat and pull it on good and tight—the felt catches your hair and it can't blow off."

"Or pull off either when you're crawling through brush. It's a good idea."

"That's nothing," said Gordon. "Look here." He held his scout hat forward, displaying inside the crown a little flap pocket filled with matches. "See, you can splash through all the water you want, but they'll never get wet there, and you've got them right handy where you want them to light in a breeze."

"Good for you," said Harry.

"That's nothing," said Gordon.

But just then the train whistled and both boys sprinted down the hill.

The ride to the city was not long, one or two trifling purchases at a sporting goods store where Harry seemed to be well known took but a few minutes, and before ten o'clock they were seated comfortably in the Montreal Express, gliding up the east shore of the Hudson, just as the Oakwood troop, minus these two boys, had gone the day before.

It was Gordon's custom always to get his good turn done early in the day. He was not going to be caught at sundown with this duty staring him in the face. Not that he confined himself to one good turn per day, for, indeed, he

acted on the approved theory that one good turn deserves another. But the first good turn was a religious duty; it was essential to his good standing, and when he undertook to become a scout he understood this to be a regular daily obligation. He did not ask for any credit or indulgence. He never let his good turn go over to be made up the following day by two good turns. He rose in the morning, washed, dressed, breakfasted, did his school work, then looked about for an opportunity to do his good turn.

So now he looked up and down the railroad carriage to see if any one were in need of his kindly ministrations. After a minute, he rose and walked up the aisle, where he stood on the outskirts of a little group consisting of the train newsboy, the brakeman, an elderly lady, and two little girls, evidently her grandchildren. The brakeman was trying to open the window for the elderly lady. But the window would not open. The brakeman, giving up the attempt, went up the aisle and out of the car, and an elderly gentleman offered his services with the same result. The lady was beginning to feel the embarrassment of being such a center of interest. As Harry craned his head around he saw Gordon standing modestly apart from the others, hat in hand.

Presently, the latter came back to his seat and got his staff.

"Did you think of a way?" asked Harry, laughing.

"Can't tell yet," said Gordon, as he went back up the aisle.

The car door opened and a sonorous voice called, "Poughkeepsie!"

Gordon stepped in between the seats, placing the end of his staff under the brass lift at the bottom of the sash. As the train slackened speed, he pressed gently on his lever. Suddenly the movement of the train became more abrupt, the cars shunted, there came the slight convulsive movement he had been waiting for, the staff was pressed quickly down just at the right second, the window creaked and rose.

In a moment more he was seated by his friend, volubly explaining the trick.

"If she doesn't come when the train stops, try again when it starts and often that'll fetch her. Only you've got to be careful to press just exactly at the right second—the physical moment, I think they call it."

"That's it," said Arnold, and turned his face toward the window, laughing.

After they had left Albany there occurred another incident which, though trifling at the time, was destined to be long remembered. They were sitting comfortably back in their seats discussing their plan of campaign, when a boy of about sixteen came through the car. He was dressed in ordinary summer outing fashion save that he wore a scout hat, and as he passed the two boys he raised his right hand to his forehead and made the full salute to Harry. He was one of a long line of people carrying bundles, suitcases, and so forth, who were passing through the aisle, and it would have caused a slight interruption to the others had he paused. Probably for this reason he went straight on through the

car and disappeared through the doorway.

"He's a scout, all right," said Gordon.

"Yes," answered Harry, "but this is what puzzles me—how did he know I am entitled to the full salute?"

"From the badge on your hat, of course!"

"Only my hat's upside down on my knees. Guess again."

"Well," said Gordon, "he knew you were a first-class man by your seamanship badge."

"But how did he know I was patrol leader?"

"Your flag?"

"No—that's gone on with the troop."

The only conclusion they could reach was that the strange boy was a wonder. Every now and then they reverted to it, and one or the other would suggest going back through the train to hunt him up and ask him how he knew that Harry Arnold was patrol leader. But they invariably settled back satisfied with the observation that the boy was a "winner" until finally Gordon shouted:

"He saw the badge wasn't on your sleeve, Harry, so he knew it must be on your hat—there you are!"

"No," said Harry, "he wouldn't expect to see it on this flannel shirt—he'd know it belonged on the khaki jacket."

"Well, he's a Sherlock Holmes, all right," concluded Gordon, and there the matter rested for the time being.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the train pulled into the old village of Ticonderoga, which is at the head of Lake George and on the crescent-shaped stream which connects it with Lake Champlain. The boys realized now that it would have been better for them to arrive in the morning, but that would have involved an all-night journey in the train.

There was the inevitable cluster of summer boarders waiting at the station, and the two boys created quite a little ruffle of interest and curiosity as they stepped off the train. They made their way through the group and up to the post-office, where Harry said he wanted to "buzz" the postmaster for any knowledge he might have of the whereabouts of the Oakwood troop. Gordon stood by in fear and trembling lest the official might drop some hint which would simplify their quest and spoil the whole fun of their expedition.

It *had* gotten around to the postmaster by a somewhat circuitous route that a party of boys and one man had arrived in town the day before and were not known to be staying at any of the houses, so they must have gone somewhere. They couldn't have stayed in town very long. "If they had, we'd a knowed it," said the postmaster.

They inquired in the telegraph station as to whether a party of boys had sent a message to Oakwood, N. J., the day before. None had. But the telegraph

operator's sister had called in the doctor that morning, who had told her that the livery stable man had gone into the hardware store to buy a bit and had heard the hardware man say two "rigged-up fellers" had bought a steel trap the night before. So, despite Gordon's protest, Harry interviewed the hardware man. The incident of the trap was true, but that was all they could learn, and they sought no further information.

It lacked still an hour or two of sunset when they left the village and found themselves on the open road which stretched northward. It traversed a tract of fairly level country about two miles to the west of the lake, and about the same distance to the west of the road rose the mountains. Now and then they could catch a glimpse of the water whose winding course they were following, and always to their left were the hills, rolling one over another far to the westward and fading in color as they receded, till they merged into the horizon. Here and there, amid that multitudinous confusion, there arose some lofty peak touched with the first crimson rays of sunset. Doubtless, there were pleasant villages nestling here and there, and cheerful homes, but these the boys could not see—only the innumerable hills, silent, wild, lonesome. It seemed that they might reach to the farthest ends of the earth. To Gordon the country did not look at all like the map, and it was hard to believe that the print and paper really represented anything or could be used to any purpose.

"Well, here we are in the haystack," said Harry, cheerily. "Now for the needle—I don't see it anywhere, do you?"

"Harry," Gordon answered, "I think we've got a job on our hands. Look at those hills. They don't look much as they do on the map—all crisscrossed up with roads and villages and things."

"Especially, *things*," said Harry. "You see, Kid, we're between the foothills and the lake. That ridge bends toward the lake and touches the shore about five miles ahead—savvy? We're cutting right up through the middle of a great big wedge, as you might say, and Dibble Mountain is the point. We're headed right for it."

"The point isn't sharp enough to cut you," commented Gordon.

"And when we get to Dibble Mountain, we'll run upstairs and see what we can see."

The sun was rapidly sinking, and as they followed the unfrequented road, the gathering shadows, the increasing chilliness of the air, the absence of any of the cheerful and familiar signs of human life, were not without their quieting effect on Gordon's buoyant spirit. He had heard Dr. Brent say that this country was not the Adirondacks proper, that it was not, in fact, a very wild country. But now, as he looked about him at the far-reaching hills with their dense patches of woods, growing somber and more forbidding in the twilight, it seemed to him that no country could possibly be wilder and more

impenetrable. Hills, hills, nothing but hills; some rearing their rugged summits high above the rest as if they cherished a kind of lofty scorn at being put on a map and traced with a lead pencil. For the moment, his faith in human resource and the facilities and possibilities of woods-wisdom was shaken in the face of this great, enveloping, silent adversary. He even doubted whether Black Wolf[1] himself (let alone Red Deer) could put up much of a fight against such odds.

Presently the road entered a patch of woodland where frogs croaked despondently in a little marshy pond and crickets kept up their incessant night songs. Then their way brought them into open country again. Silently they tramped on. On their right the road skirted a ravine which descended abruptly and whose bottom was lost in a black, tangled thicket. And beyond, in the direction of the great lake, extended woods till the twilight and the distance merged the tree-tops into one vast dark coverlet. They paused a moment, peering over the broken log fence into the depths. Somewhere in the stillness was the sound of falling water. High above them in the dusk sped a great bird, hastening toward the mountains.

“It’s a pretty big haystack, hey, Kid?” said Harry, cheerily.

“It certainly is,” answered Gordon.

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[1] Ernest Thompson Seton.

CHAPTER IV
THE HAYSTACK VS. GORDON LORD

A little farther on they came to a road branching off from the one they were traveling, and Harry found on examining his map that it made a loop of a couple of miles and reëntered the straighter road.

"There must be houses along that road," said Gordon.

"Why?"

"Else what would be the good of the road at all?"

"Well, then," said Harry, "what's the use of this one, if you come to that? There are no houses on it so far."

"Well, if they both lead to the same place, if the other one just forms a loop, it must be to take in some houses, don't you see?"

"Maybe," answered Harry.

"And I believe it would be a good thing for me to go along there and see what I can learn. We'll meet at the other junction. The troop must have gone along one or the other of these roads, unless they went in another direction altogether. And if there are any houses along there, as there *must* be, why, somebody must have seen them pass."

"You seem to be more anxious for tips than you were," said Harry.

"No, only I think they may have started down that road and cut up into the hills before it joins this one again. What's the use in just marching right past them?"

The idea struck Harry as a good one; so it was agreed that he should keep to the straight road while Gordon covered the loop. They had not traveled to this point, where they were now to part for an hour or so, without keeping a keen watch for any signs of the troop which the roadside might reveal. But an afternoon shower had obliterated any tracks, if such there were, and the road had yielded no hint of those who had gone before. But Harry, still hopeful despite the gathering dusk, now took his way alone, making careful scrutiny of the right-hand border of the road for any intentional signs that might have been left, although he had no reason to anticipate finding any.

The two boys were to meet where the roads again came together, which was at the foot of Dibble Mountain about two miles ahead, their plan being to camp somewhere under the shadow of the mountain and to climb to the summit in the morning for a bird's-eye view of the surrounding country.

The light was fast fading as Gordon left his companion and started along the loop road. It was instinctive with him to keep his eyes wide open, and his

training as a scout, under Harry's special tutelage, had developed this trait until it was said of him by his friends, and especially by Red Deer, that his habit of finding things, of picking up pennies, collar buttons, and so forth, was little less than uncanny. His pockets were a veritable junk shop of miscellaneous trifles, the trophies and mementos of his pedestrian tours.

Now, he had not gone a hundred yards along this road when something caught his attention and he paused to examine it closely. It was nothing more than an arrow, possibly three inches long, chalked upon a rock at the roadside. As nearly as he could judge in the dusk, the color of the chalk was pink, but the arrow pointed neither up nor down the road, but across it toward the west. So he crossed the road, examining the bordering trees and land, but could find nothing. He sat down on a rock and thought. To the average boy a mark of this kind would have meant nothing. To a scout it might mean many things. But, unlike most of the scout signs, its meaning was not manifest. It was not the good road sign nor the bad road sign, nor was it the sign that a message was secreted near. Yet it pointed a direction; but the direction showed no path nor trail and was fast wrapping itself in darkness.

He rubbed his fingers over the arrow, making a powdery blur upon the rock and causing his fingers to feel smooth and powdery as he rubbed them together.

"This hasn't been here long," said he. Then he pondered, for he knew the rule that Dr. Brent was so fond of repeating. Use your brains first, then your hands and feet.

Gordon knew all the signs, Indian and otherwise, that scouts might employ, but he had never seen a scout mark made with chalk before, and it jarred upon his romantic sense to see this schoolroom material used for purposes of woodcraft. Yet there was the arrow, pointing directly across the road, apparently at nothing. He did not know what to make of it. Perhaps it was only a tramp's mark. Perhaps—perhaps—then, suddenly, a thought came jumping into his head which gave him a thrill of joy. Three nights ago, in the club room, Dr. Brent had sketched Lake Champlain on the blackboard *in pink chalk*. That settled it. "I've found them," he shouted, which was very much like him, for he was apt in his enthusiasms to anticipate his triumphs.

Leaping across the road, he got down on his hands and knees, lighting match after match, and searched the ground. Presently he noticed a log spanning the little marshy gully at the side of the road. This he had not seen before, for it was well hidden amid the weedy roadside growths. Now he saw that several reeds which had inclined across the path of this rough bridge had been broken, and hung limply over to one side. The log ran into a floor of pine needles, where no sign of footprint showed. But there were the arrow and the ford and the broken reeds, and these meant that somebody had crossed—

crossed and flown up in the air, for all that he could discover. Nervous with expectation, he hurried about the grove, felt of the trees, knelt and examined rocks, and avoided kicking the smallest stone until he had observed its position in regard to other stones. Stealthily, silently, alertly, he moved about. His scout instinct was aroused. But he found nothing, and the long summer twilight was now almost at an end. Peeling some bark from a tree and pulling off a quantity of the sticky resiny substance from others, he hastily kindled a small fire. In a few moments this blazed up, showing him an illuminated area with a ground as smooth as a ballroom. There was not a sign of track or trail. He paused a moment, thinking. Then he pulled up his stocking, which was an indication that he meant business—a sort of challenge.

Thus, with all his spirit of adventure and scouting instinct, he stood, baffled but thoughtful, in the vast, strange country, with his eyes fixed on his little fire. For a moment he forgot Harry, forgot everything but the pink arrow, the log ford, and the broken reeds, and stood there, his brown eyes fixed on the dancing flame, his staff stuck in the ground beside him and his duffel bag thrown over it. Presently, he went back to the log, knelt down, and examined the end of it which rested on the bed of pine needles. On the near side of the log was a very slight oval depression in the ground in which the pine needles were rotted, and where a little red lizard lay contentedly in the dampness. On the side of the log nearest this depression several slugs crawled distractedly about. Gordon reached his arm across the log and rolled it back into the depression where it belonged. Then he sat down upon it and thought.

"Some one must have lost his balance in the middle of the log," said he, aloud, "and in falling pushed it out of place." And that could not have been long ago, for the slugs were still moving confusedly here and there and had not yet found the under side of the log. Gordon examined the muddy incline which led from the gully up into the grove. The dank, reedy foliage did not seem to have been disturbed, but in the brighter glow of his growing fire he presently noticed a well-defined, muddy imprint upon a flat rock. If he had discovered a diamond he could not have been more elated.

Now he thought to himself that the person who had met with this trifling accident was either not a scout at all or a scout in a great hurry. For such a thing as a scout calmly falling off a log was preposterous, and Gordon would not entertain the thought except on the theory of great haste. But how had both patrols, sixteen boys, gotten through this grove leaving never a sign? For the pink chalk identified the travelers as the Oakwood troop.

He gathered up a few pieces of bark and some leaves, and putting out his fire made his way hastily up through the grove. Presently he stood at its edge and looked across a spacious stretch of meadow land, beyond which were the grim, dark hills. He kindled another fire on a huge, convex piece of bark and,

kneeling, crept along the edge of the grove, endeavoring to discover where the trail came out. But he could find no sign. It was now time to pull up his stocking again and take a long “think,” as he called it.

The result of his “think” was that he walked out into the field about one hundred and fifty feet, placed his little portable fire on the ground and enlarged it with a fresh supply of fuel from the grove. He watched it till its volume satisfied him, then returning to the edge of the grove he “shinnied” up a tree, but was careful not to embarrass his vision by looking directly at the fire. He looked about halfway between it and the grove and there, thrown into bold relief by the neighboring fire and his own high position, there ran a little straight trail across the meadow which died away short of the further side. He slid down from the tree, planted his staff in the ground near his fire, and shook a few burning twigs a yard or two from it. Then he carried his fire as best he could, for its bark tray was now ignited, still farther across the field, as far as the point where he thought the trail had become invisible to him from the tree. Returning to the edge of the grove, he climbed up the tree again. Sure enough, there was the trail visible farther on in the glow of the second fire, and entering the thick woods beyond the meadow. It was barely discernible at that point, yet Gordon, from his high position and by concentrating his gaze, could determine the faint, shadowy line, flickering between visibility and invisibility, as it wound into the silent forest. When he took his eyes from it for a moment, he lost it, and picked it out again with difficulty.

The idea of following it was out of the question; so, looking steadily, he picked out a certain tree near which the trail entered, studying as best he could its height, size, and conformation. Climbing down from the tree and keeping this beacon constantly in view, he ran across the field, stamped out the few remaining embers of his first fire, took his staff, and made a bee-line for his beacon. When he reached it he could not, for the life of him, discover the faintest indication of the trail across the field, but there, opening before him, was a well-defined, beaten path up through the forest. He saw it in the glow from his second fire, a few yards back, which was now dying fast. Leaning against the big tree which had guided him across the meadow, he looked back over the trailless space which he had forced to give up its secret. He looked at the tall, black trees of the grove beyond, whose smooth floor of pine needles had tried to baffle and confound him. Then he threw his duffel bag over his shoulder, and feeling his way cautiously with his staff, started up into the thick forest.

CHAPTER V
THE FOREST HITS BACK

His whole thought now was to reach the camp and surprise the two patrols and Red Deer. Feeling his way cautiously on and upward, for it was a wooded hillside he was traversing, he managed to pick his way along the winding forest path. Now he stumbled over naked roots, now some overhanging or projecting bough impeded his progress. It was useless to look for signs in such darkness; it was with difficulty that he kept to the wild, thickly grown trail. Sometimes he paused, undecided as to its direction, but always went on again, reassured by some trifling clue. Now and then, a clear, unobstructed opening of a few yards convinced him that he was in the path. At other times his only resource was to feel about with hands and feet, determining as best he might the path of least resistance and pressing through its tangled brush to find always an opening farther on. It was difficult work. No one who had gone before, no roadside code, could help him here.

Once or twice he thought of going back and resuming his quest with Harry in the morning, but he had gone so far that it seemed his easiest course, however difficult and involved, to press forward. Moreover, he was fast falling into the odd conceit of viewing the surrounding country, which he had nonchalantly called a haystack, in the light of a great adversary which had thrown down a challenge to him, and he must perforce take up the challenge, else be a coward and a “quitter.” So far he had held his own, and what a glory it would be to march into camp having vanquished these silent, baffling hosts of wood and hill and darkness. “Hello, Charlie,” he would say to the Beavers’ corporal, “hurry up there and get me a bite to eat, will you?” His whole ambition was now to walk carelessly into their midst and squat down by the camp-fire with some cordial, offhand remark.

From this train of thought, he was presently aroused by a sudden vigorous strategic move on the part of his imagined foe. His staff, which he had been bringing to the ground before him like a walking-stick with each step, suddenly sank, touching nothing. He had the presence of mind to drop it and throw both arms quickly behind him, which inclined his body slightly backward and enabled him to retreat a step or two.

Shaking from head to foot, he fumbled in the little flap pocket in his hat crown and lit a match. It flared a second, then went out. But in the sudden glare he saw that he was standing on the brink of a yawning chasm. Still trembling from his narrow escape, he struck another light and saw that one of

his footprints was within eighteen inches of the precipice and that the other had actually rested on the very edge, displacing some of the earth, which had crumbled and fallen in. Gordon had had his first lesson in the tactics which the wilderness can use.

He lay flat with his head over the edge and looked down. Nothing but darkness. So again he must use his faithful ally, the fire. Kindling a fire was his great stunt. He would gather up a few dry, brittle twigs or cones, scrape out a little punk, arrange them daintily, make a dome over them with his hands, and presently show you a very ambitious little blaze, as a magician will take a mysterious rabbit from a hat. “Do the fire trick, Kid,” the boys of the troop would say to him. So now he foraged about, accumulated the necessary materials, and presently had a very respectable flame. But the glare about seemed only to make the depths of the precipice darker. It had shown him, however, that the soil displaced by his perilous step was not the only soil that had been disturbed. Scarce two feet farther along the edge of the bank quite a sizable piece of earth had caved in. But he could see nothing below. He cut a straight stick about the size of an ordinary cane. This he whittled with his jack-knife, cutting in from the end of the stick to a depth of about eight inches, until the curly shavings formed a sort of brush. Between these wooden bristles he wedged as much tree gum as he could find on the adjacent trees, and lighting his torch, went cautiously along the edge of the bank.

This soon began to slope gradually until at a distance of about fifty feet he was able to let himself down into the bed of the chasm. It was filled with rocks and fallen trees and dank undergrowth, and yielded the unwholesome odor of rotting wood.

Gordon picked his way through the gully, holding his flaring torch here and there until he was nearly under the spot where he had all but fallen. Here were three logs, two of them lying flat upon the swampy ground, the other leaning against the side of the precipice. He walked along one of these to avoid the wet as much as possible and suddenly came upon a hat, of the same general pattern as his own, lying in the mud. He was just about to pick it up when he saw a few feet farther on a ghastly object. A boy, his face smeared with blood and his leg in a very unnatural position, lay stark before him.

The sight, as it showed in the glare of Gordon’s torch, quite unnerved him, and he stood for a moment on the other log staring at the figure lying prone and motionless in the mud. He could not bring himself to go nearer. Presently, more to relieve his own nervous tension than for any other purpose, he called. But the figure neither stirred nor answered. There was something about its position that frightened Gordon, and he could not bring himself to go close enough to look at the boy’s eyes. Then suddenly the words of General Sir Baden-Powell, which he had read, came jumping into his head,—plain words,

plainly stated, and for that reason stamped in the boy's memory:

> *A scout is sometimes timid about handling an insensible man or a dead body, or of seeing blood. Well, he will never be much use till he gets over such nonsense. The poor insensible fellow can't hurt him.*

At this recollection the young scout conquered his hesitation, stamped over through the mud to where the boy lay, and did the sensible thing, as a scout should. He circled his hand lightly about the poor, limp wrist and pressed slightly with his two middle fingers. As usual, with a novice, he had the wrong spot, so he moved his fingers ever so little and, sure enough, after a moment's concentration, he became aware of the little, steady throbbing which told him that at least the boy was alive.

He thrust his now waning torch into the mud and thought. He knew that if either of the boy's limbs were broken he should not be moved unless absolutely necessary and then only with such handling as he was not in a position to give. He knew that if anything were the matter with the boy's spine, any save the most careful and skillful moving might prove instantly fatal. But he also knew that no injured person should be left lying there in the mud.

Undoubtedly, the responsibility which had suddenly been thrust upon him, the need of careful judgment, were out of proportion to Gordon's experience and years, and being of a light-headed, sanguine, and buoyant temperament, the "First Aid" training and ambulance badge had not been especially a part of his ambition. His scoutish triumphs, until now, had all been more or less amusing and humorous, but here was a grave duty resting on his young shoulders. And he met it, as a scout usually does, willingly.

First he crowded all the odds and ends of wood and rock that he could find under the edge of the precipice, where the ground was higher and drier. Then, tugging with all his might and main, he managed to get the three logs over to this pile and rested their ends against it, so that they lay parallel with each other at a slight incline. Then he pressed down into the ground four sticks, one at the head and one at the foot of each outer log, thus effectually preventing their spreading. The lower end, or foot, of this inclined rack rested in the mud just above the prostrate boy's head. Across this lower end and under the logs, he laid a stout stick whose ends rested just beside the stakes he had driven in the ground. Now he hurried along the gully and up the bank to the spot where he had left his bag. This he took and also such green boughs as he could procure hastily in the dark, and collected some more gum. When he returned it was necessary for him to re-whittle his torch and re-fill it with this substance.

Arranging the boughs upon the rack and making as smooth a bed as he

could in his great hurry, he spread his blanket over all. Then he kindled a fire up under the precipice where the ground was dry. All of his fuel had to be brought from above, and he carted down several loads in his bag, having emptied it of its contents. After he had succeeded, by much skillful persuasion, in inducing the little blaze to brace up and try to amount to something in the world, he drove two sticks into the ground, one on either side of the fire, and from one to the other of these he strung a piece of snare wire. On the other side of the gully, water was trickling down a rock, but how to entice it into his pail was a question. He noticed on the ground, near the unconscious boy, a little pamphlet. Without any very clear idea of its possible utility he picked it up. On the cover were printed the words:

THE BOY SCOUTS' SCHEME
What It Is What It Is Not

He knew the pamphlet well. Tearing the cover page off, he took his pail and going over to the miniature waterfall he held the page, slanting ways, tight against the rock with the other edge leading into his pail. In a few moments the pail was half filled with fairly clean water. This he hung from the snare wire above the flame.

By the exercise of all his strength and with the greatest care, he succeeded in pulling the prostrate form up the inclined rack, cutting and pulling off the boy's outer clothing as fast as it reached the foot of the rack so that the blanket might be kept dry. It was a delicate and difficult task, but he did it. When the limp, unconscious figure was on the rack, Gordon lifted one side of the foot by means of the cross bar underneath, laying the edge of this cross bar on a rock which he had placed for the purpose. He did the same with the other side. Thus he had succeeded in placing his charge on a couch well above the mud, dry and comparatively comfortable. He took off his own khaki coat and laid it over the boy. When his water had heated, he washed the boy's face carefully with his handkerchief.

As the mud and blood disappeared, a white face with closed eyes was revealed. Gordon started, then stared intently. It was the very boy who had passed through the aisle in the railroad train and given Harry Arnold the full salute. There was an ugly wound on one side of his forehead. This, however, had ceased to bleed, and Gordon bathed it carefully and bandaged it with his handkerchief.

Here his resource failed him. He knew of nothing more that he could do for the poor fellow's comfort. It was quite too dark for smoke signals, and the woods were too dense for an effectual message by fire. It occurred to him to open the little scout bulletin, thinking that possibly something might be written

in it, some name, or troop or patrol name, which might suggest some course better than merely waiting. He held it close to the fire and ran it over. It was Bulletin No. 5, containing among other things the required tests for tenderfoot, first-class, and second-class scouts. These were listed numerically, and as Gordon was very familiar with all of them they did not interest him particularly. Having done all the second-class tests, he did not even glance at these, but he did bestow a fond and covetous eye upon the first-class list. The first test, beginning, "Swim fifty yards," was checked off. The second, requiring the sum of fifty cents in the savings bank, was also checked.

"He's to the good on the financial side," commented Gordon. The third requirement (the signal test) was also checked. Not so the fourth.

> "4. Go on foot or row a boat alone to a point seven miles away and return, or if conveyed by any vehicle or animal, go to a distance of fifteen miles and back; and write a short report on it. It is preferable that he should take two days over it."

"Go on foot, alone, to a point seven miles away and return," said Gordon, thoughtfully. "Ticonderoga must be about five miles from here. But the fellow came up on the train. If he's trying to make his test—. Well, anyway, if he came from the village and was headed for a point seven miles from the village, his camp must be only a mile or two farther on."

Inspired by the thought, he added more fuel to his fire and printed across the back of the pamphlet, with a charred stick, the words, *Gone for help*.

He stuck the pamphlet on a twig and placed it so that the boy, if he opened his eyes, must see it in the light of the fire. Then, hurrying along the gully, carrying nothing but his staff, he sought for a place low enough or sloping enough for him to mount the farther side of the hollow. Finally, clambering up through tangled brush, he reached the brow and went cautiously along the edge to a point almost above where his fire still burned and where the prostrate figure lay, stark and white and motionless. He lighted a match to make sure that the path recommenced here, and in its short glare he noticed something which made him start.

It was a new, clearly defined footprint, pointing in the same direction that he himself was about to take.

CHAPTER VI
THE SIGN OF THE TURTLE

Gordon now found the path easier to follow, partly because it was better defined and less obstructed by brush, and partly because the moon was coming to his assistance. Its light flickered through the tree tops some way before him over the summit of a hill which lay directly in his path. Presently, the woods were all aglow with its checkered brightness.

Keeping his eye ever to the right of the path for possible signs or directions, he hurried on, running when the way permitted, through a marshy hollow, and was just about to begin the climb of the hill before him when his observant eye became riveted on a certain flat stone with an oval wet spot in the center. If he had not been a scout he would not have noticed this at all, and even the average scout would probably have mistaken it for a footprint. But to Gordon, even in his haste, the little wet trail which led from the oval spot to the edge of the stone told another story. He knew a turtle had been basking here within a very short time and had gone away. Why? Gordon asked himself as he hurried on. For he knew from his trusty old friend, "Doc. Wood," as he called the famous writer of natural history, that when a turtle seeks a high and dry position in the evening he does not contemplate moving out at short notice. So Gordon put the footprint and the fact of the turtle's sudden departure together and became very curious. If some one had preceded him along this path, why were there not more footprints? And why had the some one deliberately left the injured boy to his fate? Then suddenly another thought came to him which made him shudder, but he had no time to think, and hurried on.

The woods became more sparse now, and presently a road crossed the boy's path. Beyond it the hill continued to rise gently, with only a few scattered trees here and there. The moon was now well clear of the summit, and smiling down encouragingly upon the sturdy, indomitable little fellow as he paused, gave his stocking a vigorous hitch, and started to run up to the summit. If a view from that favorable position revealed nothing, then he would have to consider whether it would be wiser to attempt to pick up the trail down the opposite slope and thus find the proper entrance into the woods beyond, or give up and go back to the stricken boy. For he knew he must not let his quest for succor run too far, and that a scout must always think and use his judgment.

Excitedly, nervously, he mounted the bare summit of the hill, finding never a footprint to encourage him, nor a familiar scout sign. For a second he stood

there, seeming very small in that limitless expanse, gazing about in the moonlight. He looked down the hill, concentrated his gaze, and tried to pick out some sign of trail. But the hubbly, coarse-grown hillside kept its secret, if it had any, and Gordon knelt down in quest of some hint, some clue, near at hand. He rose, bewildered, uncertain, almost discouraged. His uniform was covered with burrs and torn by the brambly thickets he had crawled through.

But the first round of his encounter with this rugged enemy was over, as he was presently to know. And Master Gordon Lord, scout of the second class, Beaver Patrol, 1st Oakwood Troop, was the victor. For out of the woods which began under the further slope of the hill and extended far into the distance, there rose about a quarter of a mile away, little, fitful, fast-dissolving gusts of smoke.

A few moments later he stood at the foot of the hill looking anxiously through the thick forest where only flickering glints of the moonlight penetrated. But no moonlight was needed now, for he could distinguish several squares of white, half hidden among the trees, and rendered visible by the cheerful blaze of a camp-fire.

“I’m certainly a dandy!” said Gordon, with unconcealed pride, as he started through the woods, running with all his might and main.

No one heard the remark unless it was the man in the moon, who looked down with a broad smile on his face and seemed to wink his eye as if to say, “You certainly are, my boy.”

CHAPTER VII
WHEN SCOUT MEETS SCOUT

The camp consisted of three wall tents, a small tent of modified tepee fashion, and a lean-to used for cooking, outside of which was erected a huge, rough dining board. The whole appearance of the place was very homelike. Woods trophies and articles of woodcraft handiwork hung about from the low-spreading branches, and it was evident that the campers had been there for some time.

Before each of the wall tents was planted a patrol flag, and gathered about the cheerful fire was as merry a company as Gordon had ever seen. A genial-looking man of perhaps thirty-five years was sitting amongst a score or so of boys, who in negligée scout attire squatted and lolled about him, as if intent upon what he was saying.

All this Gordon saw from a distance. But before he had approached within fifty yards of the camp, and before he could possibly have been seen and scarcely heard, a tall boy rose suddenly, looked intently in his direction, and called:

"Who's there?"

"Gee, *he's* a peach, all right!" breathed Gordon, never answering, but rushing pell-mell into their midst. Every boy rose, surveying him wonderingly. The man remained seated. Gordon paid not the slightest heed to the gaping throng, but made a bee-line for the man and, standing panting and disheveled before him, made him the full salute. Then, breathlessly, he gasped out his errand. Instantly all was activity.

"Call in Billy," said the man, quietly, as he took a railroad lantern from a tent pole. "You, my boy," he went on to Gordon, "will stay here. Who are you, anyway?"

"Kid—I mean, Gordon Lord, sir; 1st Oakwood New Jersey, Troop. My patrol leader and I came up to see if we could find camp—our own camp, I mean. They're somewhere up this way. I—"

"Well, you can tell me the rest when we get back," said the man, cheerfully. "Where's Billy, anyway? Give him another call, George."

A succession of shrill whistles was repeated, and presently a boy wearing spectacles came dashing into camp.

"Get your kit, Billy, and come along," said the man. "Walter's gone down that chasm in the farther woods—head cut and leg in a bad way. Here, Wentworth, you and Norton get the stretcher and come along—you'd better

come too, Charlie."

"Sure you can find the place?" asked Gordon, a little doubtful.

"Oh, *yes*," answered the man. "We put up the logs. Is Cattell there? Here, Cattell, you rake up some grub for this boy. Go over there, my boy, and let the Ravens take care of you."

The Ravens knew how to do more than croak, as Gordon presently found, for they sat him at the rustic table and gave him such a helping of hunters' stew as would have sufficed for the entire patrol. He entered upon the ambitious task of eating it with the same nonchalant determination that had led him into the woods, without the slightest idea of the magnitude of the task before him, but with cheerful confidence in his ability to see it through somehow.

While he ate, the boys gathered about him, plying him with questions, and soon had the full story of his trip and the circumstances of his finding the injured boy. He learned that they were a troop of Albany scouts, three full patrols, that the man was Mr. Wade, their scoutmaster, and that Billy, or "Four Eyes," or "Doc," as he was indifferently called, was their "First Aid" boy, who had attained to a superlative proficiency in that art. He learned also that Walter, the injured boy, was, as he had surmised, trying to complete his fourth test for first-class scout, on his way back from a visit to the city.

"They have pink chalk in Albany," said Gordon, "haven't they?"

"Sure they have," answered several boys.

"We have that in Oakwood, too," Gordon commented.

Presently, a tall, serious-looking boy vaulted up on the table and began to question Gordon while he ate.

"You say you saw a footprint just as you left the chasm on this side?"

"Yes."

"Did you see any more of them?"

"No, it was too dark in the woods. In a few minutes when the moon came out and the woods thinned out the other side of the hill I saw a wet spot on a stone."

"Footprint?"

"No—place where a turtle had been."

"Well, what of that?"

"Turtle went away."

"What of it?"

"Somebody must have passed."

"Bully for you!" chimed in several voices.

"That's nothing," said Gordon, encouraged. "Do you know how—"

"Just a minute," interrupted the serious-looking boy. "After you saw the turtle mark, didn't you see any other sign?"

"No," answered Gordon. "I was so crazy to get here that I didn't look."

"Yes, of course," agreed the boy. "You say you saw the wet spot near the swamp, then you started up the hill crossing the road?"

"Yes."

"Have some more stew?"

"Y-es."

"Here, Cattell, fill her up again! He's game." Then to Gordon, "Did you find any trail up the hill?"

"No—didn't look. If I hadn't spotted you fellows from the top of the hill, I'd have gone back down again, most likely, and tried to pick her up, bird's-eye."

"You mean with the fire, the way you did before?"

"Yes."

A murmur of admiring comment passed through the group, and one or two enthusiastic boys pounded Gordon on the shoulder. But the serious-looking boy was absorbed in thought.

"Whoever it was," he finally said, "must have turned down the road—or up."

"Sure," said Gordon.

It was characteristic of him that the suspicion of foul play had sat but lightly in his thoughts up to this moment. The footprint near the chasm had puzzled him and he had attached a significance to the wet spot on the rock—perhaps a greater significance than it deserved. He had also wondered how the three slender logs, out of which he had fashioned the rough couch, came to be at the bottom of the chasm. But he was altogether too lighthearted to connect any or all of these circumstances with the idea of a crime. With him, tracking and such arts were a delightful species of amusement, and the idea of using these things as a means to a serious end had never entered his head.

But now he realized that this serious, precise, calculating boy who sat at his elbow was endeavoring to squeeze information out of these trivial signs and make them point to the solution of a secret, the very existence of which Gordon had hardly suspected. He perceived, somewhat to his annoyance, that he had only noticed those things which appealed to his romantic love of woodcraft, and that certain other things which Harry Arnold might have seen had entirely escaped him.

"You say the pamphlet was lying in the mud?"

"Yes—it—it never occurred to me how it got there."

"Of course not—you were in a great hurry. Don't think I'm criticising you. You've got the silver cross coming to you for what you did."

"Honest—do you think so?"

"It would be a queer committee that would refuse it."

“Cracky!” said Gordon.

“Have another dish of stew?”

“N-no.”

“Now listen. There were no tracks, prints, signs of any kind in the chasm?”

“No, the mud was so thick it would close right up. Besides—”

“Yes, I understand; you were busy and excited, and you did fine. But I’ll tell you something that you didn’t know. That boy had forty dollars with him to buy a canoe. At least, I suppose he had it. He intended to get it while he was at home.”

“You think somebody robbed him?” said Gordon.

“I think it’s likely. There were two young men here, strangers, just dropped in on us a few days ago. Walter and the rest of us talked pretty freely about his trip to Albany.”

“Yes, and he said he was going to get the money,” chimed in another boy.

“He expected to come back last night, too,” said another.

“Who were the strangers?” Gordon ventured.

“No idea,” answered one of the boys, “except that they said they were hunting. They were country fellows,” he added quickly.

Most of the boys, including Gordon, had now repaired to the camp-fire, which was blazing cheerfully. There was a slight constraint among them, caused by their suspense and uncertainty as to the news Mr. Wade would bring them; and Gordon, despite his native buoyancy, felt the influence of this atmosphere.

Presently, the tall, serious boy (the others called him Al), who had been pacing back and forth like an animal in its cage, suddenly paused and spoke to Gordon. The question that he asked, however, was destined to lead him on to very dangerous ground, as he soon found.

“Where did you say your friend is now?”

“He kept to the straight road north from Ticonderoga,” Gordon answered. “He was to wait for me where the road I took joined his again—right under Dibble Mountain.”

“Now this road you crossed coming up the hill yonder—do you know where that goes? Well, if you had taken it and turned to your right, you would have made a long, sweeping curve and brought up under Dibble Mountain on the same road where your friend is waiting, about a quarter of a mile above him.”

“Then that’ll be the best way for me to get to him,” commented Gordon. “I must start along as soon as your scoutmaster gets back. He’ll be wondering what’s become of me.”

“How long do you suppose he’s been waiting?”

“Close on to an hour, I guess, but he knew I was going to stop to make

inquiries."

"Then you think he's still there?"

"Guess so."

"Don't think he'll get rattled because you haven't shown up?"

"He never gets rattled," said Gordon, contemptuously.

The boys smiled.

"He understands the Morse code—probably?"

To this question Gordon disdained to reply except in a very general way. "He understands everything," said he.

"Bully for him!" called several of the boys.

"He's the real thing, all right," commented another.

Gordon was conscious of the suggestion of "jollying" in these remarks, and his answer was not altogether tactful; but he had been touched in a sensitive spot, for he could tolerate no question as to Harry's all-round proficiency.

"He can do anything he tries," he said vehemently. "He's been down Long Island Sound in a canoe; he lived in a lumber camp—he was lost in the Canadian woods once—he knows all about South Africa—he swam three hundred miles, I mean yards—and shot the rapids—and—and—he can make a rice pudding!" That was the best he could do for Harry on the impulse of the moment, and he paused to take breath.

"Did he use his rifle when he shot the rapids?" asked one boy, quietly.

"He's been on a log jam, too," shouted Gordon.

"That anything like currant jam?" inquired another.

"He can lick any scout in—"

"Let up," said Al, still pacing the ground thoughtfully, and the whole thing went up in a general laugh. It was Gordon's fate always to be jollied, which meant (if he had only known it) that everybody, especially older boys, liked him. And on the present occasion it was done largely to relieve the suspense of waiting.

Suddenly, however, Al paused and addressed the group: "Scouts, I suspect Walter has been robbed—by whom I don't know. I shouldn't like to say that I suspect any one in particular, but it looks funny. If the things our friend here noticed mean anything, they mean that whoever tampered with the bridge and then went through Walter's pockets after he fell, came in this direction till he reached the road on the other side of the hill. If there had been any trail over the hill, I think our young friend here would have found it. Now, if somebody turned into the road and went north, he's making a long circuit to Dibble Mountain. There's no crossroad, and he'll come out on the road where this fellow's friend—"

"He's patrol leader of the Beavers," said Gordon.

"Yes,—where the Beavers' patrol leader is supposed to be waiting."

"Well?" said several voices.

"Well, you see that hill? I propose to send a Morse message to that fellow from the top of the hill. I think if he's still where we think he is, he could see it; even if he was farther along the road, he could see it. There's just about one chance in fifty that the scheme will pan out right. But I propose right now to flash a Morse message northeast from the hill. The top of the hill is bare. If this Oakwood scout is anywhere along that farther road, he ought to see it. Whether we can make our meaning clear is another question. If he sees it and understands it—well, here, wait a minute." He entered a tent and presently came out with a paper on which he had written something. This he read aloud.

"Camp here. Take first road north. Notice strangers. Scout robbed. Am safe. Lord."

"How does that strike you?" said he, as a dozen boys crowded eagerly about him.

Gordon was all excitement. He had used the Morse code as a plaything many a time, but now it was to flash a message through the night, over wood and valley, perhaps to outwit a criminal. It was to sweep aside darkness and distance, and take a short cut to the country under Dibble Mountain. If Harry was still there and saw it and read it, he would go a quarter of a mile or so along the road, to where it met the circling road from the hill, and watch any one who might pass. He thought of the boy at the other end, waiting in the darkness of a strange country. And his heart beat with anxiety lest, for some reason, the plan might not carry. Perhaps he doubted a little the reliability of the Morse code. Never for an instant, at least not yet, did he doubt the efficiency of Harry Arnold.

There was a rustling among the trees, and presently the little group of rescuers appeared bearing the stricken scout on a stretcher.

"Come inside a minute, Al," said Mr. Wade, in a low, grave voice. "You come in, too, my boy," he said to Gordon.

There was something in his tone that almost frightened Gordon, and he had difficulty in controlling himself as he followed Al into one of the tents. There was no one there but Mr. Wade, the "First Aid" boy, Al, and Gordon.

"Walter's been robbed, Al," said the scoutmaster. "He was thrown down the cliff—the bridge was fixed. He'll get well. I want Winthrop to go right to Ticonderoga."

"I'm going to flash a Morse message from the hill, sir," said Al. "This boy's patrol leader is over east there somewhere. There's a possibility that he might get it and watch the road."

"That's right," said Mr. Wade. "Good idea."

It seemed to Gordon, however, that he did not have much faith in this. Al did not pause to discuss the matter, but left the tent. Presently, he and a dozen

other boys started through the woods in the direction of the hill.

Gordon stood, rather uncomfortably, near the entrance to the tent, not knowing what he was supposed to do.

“Did you have something to eat?” Mr. Wade asked.

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, go over there a second, then; don’t stand and talk to him, and I want you to go right out.”

Gordon crossed to the stretcher where the “First Aid” boy was adjusting a bandage on Walter’s forehead. Mr. Wade stood quietly by. The “First Aid” boy leaned over and whispered to the stricken scout, “Here he is.”

Gordon stood looking down into the white face. Presently, he was aware of a movement under the blanket. The “First Aid” boy evidently knew what it meant, for he raised the covering slightly and a white, shaking hand appeared from beneath. The twitching fingers seemed to grope for a moment, then the little finger was bent down and the thumb pressed over it. The hand was raised feebly to the shoulder, resting on the pillow. Then Gordon became conscious of a film over his own eyes and everything seemed to glisten. He pressed his own little finger down with his thumb and raised his three middle fingers level with his shoulder. Then the eyes of the prostrate boy weakly closed. Neither spoke.

CHAPTER VIII
THE MESSAGE OF THE FLAME

Gordon made a bee-line through the woods in the direction of the hill, and presently overtook several of the boys, one of whom carried a lantern. When they reached the brow of the eminence, they found that preparations, under Al's direction, were rapidly going forward.

A lone sapling stood on the summit, and about ten feet from this they had planted a pole eight or nine feet high, steadying it by lines running diagonally to the ground and attached to pegs. From the top of this pole to a branch equally high on the sapling ran a stout line on which had been placed two metal rings (evidently all that were available), and some of the boys were now busily binding willow withes around the line, so that presently the rope had half a dozen rings of one sort or another encircling it. The moon had gone behind clouds which were fast covering the sky, and the boys worked almost wholly by the light of their lantern. But they worked rapidly, and within a few minutes a large square of tent canvas had been hung from the line, thus forming a curtain which could be shifted back and forth. Its position, facing a little north of east, was determined by the compass, and was, of course, accurate so far as compass points were concerned. But whether Harry Arnold was precisely northeast, or precisely east, and just how far and in just what direction, there was no telling.

Gordon looked down from the hill, over the low-lying woods which stretched eastward, a little north of where he had found his way through. He thought he could discern a shadowy mass which seemed to appear and then dissolve in the distance, and which he took to be Dibble Mountain. And beneath him he saw a faint gray band which he knew to be the road. This, he now knew, inscribed a great curve through the woods and came out about a quarter of a mile above his intended meeting-place with Arnold. He meant, as soon as this signaling was finished, to set forth along the road toward Dibble Mountain.

As he watched the rapid and rather elaborate preparations, he became conscious of a feeling of responsibility and accompanying apprehension that he might be held accountable in some degree if the signal failed to bear results. So troubled was he that he did not at once notice the boy who was kneeling behind the canvas and littering the ground about him with burned matches.

"Will you let me try it?" said Gordon, finally, coming out of his absorption.

“Sure,” answered the boy, rising with alacrity.

Gathering a number of chips which had been scattered by the ax in trimming the pole, Gordon knelt, crunched a piece of paper into a little, loose wad, and quickly, daintily constructed a tiny pyramid around and above it. Over this pyramid he made a larger one, keeping by the necessary fuel for one still larger. The process reminded one of the wooden egg enclosed by a larger one, and that by a still larger one, often seen at Easter time.

Now his small hands formed a partial dome over the outer pyramid; now there came a crackling and a little smoke, now the third pyramid was quickly built over the second, and Gordon watched it intently while a few little snakes of flame squirmed out from their inner cage. He paid no heed to the admiring comments of the boys about him. Like a true artist, his mind was fixed upon his task, not upon his audience. Now his hand groped behind him for some larger twigs. One or two he threw away (the boys did not know why). With those which met his approval still another pyramid was formed to receive the flames which were now escaping freely from the third pyramid. For a moment he studied the little mass intently, holding several sticks in his left hand. The thought came over him that presently his fire would flash the first sign in a message to his friend, somewhere beyond those thick woods, waiting, or perhaps searching, in the darkness. And oh, how he hoped the fire would be seen, but scarcely dared to hope it would be understood.

Presently, satisfied, he rose, and pulling an apple from his pocket refreshed himself with a gigantic bite.

“You’re all right,” said the tall Al, slapping him on the shoulder. Gordon smiled his broadest scout smile, with unconcealed pleasure at the older boy’s praise. He was the smallest boy in the group, and there was something about him which drew the others irresistibly to him.

“You’re a wonder!” shouted one, with genuine enthusiasm.

“That’s nothing,” said Gordon, as he took another huge bite. I do not know where he got the apple.

The fire was now coming on famously. “Pull her over,” called a boy, grabbing the curtain. “Never mind the regular call signal—let’s begin and run her across the flame quick for four or five minutes—that’ll do to attract attention.”

This advice was taken, for all the nice points and rules of the Morse signal code cannot be observed with a bonfire on a hilltop. They pulled the curtain rapidly from side to side, alternately revealing and concealing the blaze, and skillfully relieving each other from time to time, for it required some strength and a good deal of agility.

As Gordon stood watching them, he was roused by a light hand on his shoulder and turned to find Mr. Wade standing by his side.

"You mustn't expect too much of your friend," he said in a kind of reassuring tone. "It's possible he'll see this, but there's many a slip, you know, betwixt the cup and the lip. Anyway, it won't be his fault."

"He can do 'most anything, sir," said Gordon, earnestly. "Honest, he can. If he only sees it he'll—"

"Yes, of course," said Mr. Wade; "and this is good practice for the boys, anyway."

"But I'm going to start along toward Dibble Mountain just as soon as they get through this. He must have been waiting a couple of hours already."

"Better stay with us till morning," said Mr. Wade; "you've done enough for one night."

Just then Al came up to ask about Walter Lee, the injured boy.

"He's doing well," said the scoutmaster. "The wound isn't deep, and seems to be clean, thanks to our young runner here. It bled a good deal, though, and his ankle is strained. The bridge was tampered with, and he must have gone down as soon as he set foot on it. I was wondering who those fellows were who dropped in on us the other day. Walter's pockets were empty; he says he had forty dollars. I've sent Winthrop and John down to Ti to notify the authorities and get a doctor. I guess they can pick their way there all right; I told them not to try any Gordon Lord short-cuts. Walter'll be all right. Here, Frank," he called, "let Al stand near you with the message in code form. Let's see that. That's all right. Now, just call the code signs and cross them off as they're shown—something may come of this yet."

He started for the camp again, and it seemed to Gordon that he took but secondary interest in the signaling. He did not know whether to be glad or sorry for this skepticism. He felt that if the plan failed to carry, as he feared it would, it would be well to have the head of the camp there to acquit Harry of any blame. Gordon did not give a serious thought to the impression he might have made in this strange camp; but he was very jealous for Harry's reputation, especially after the puff he had given it, and he wanted more than he could tell to have his friend do the improbable and make good. He had an unselfish and unqualified admiration for Harry, and he was sorely troubled now lest his hero fail in the face of these Albany scouts.

The first letter of the message had been stamped upon the darkness when Gordon came out of his preoccupation, and he watched the rest of the work with keen and nervous interest.

"Haul her over, Bill—now back again—cross off your dot, Al—wait a second now—let her go again—that's the ticket. Hold on now—three seconds—there you are. Now show her for two even spaces; now wait—three seconds—don't be in too much of a hurry; he'll wait if he sees it. Let her go again—quick now—do this one careful. Read her off, Al, wake up—short flash—wait

—long flash—wait, wait! Another long flash now—wait—now a short one. There you are, fellows, printed right plank against the side of old Dibble Mountain, C-A-M-P! Hurrah for the Raven signal corps!"

All this involved a good deal of exercise on the part of several boys, but nothing happened as a result. Gordon did not exactly expect anything to happen, but it seemed like a good deal of energy wasted.

On the hilltop all was bustle and excitement, but the dark woods below and beyond, and the open lowland stretching farther still to the shore of the great lake, took not the slightest notice. Gordon looked over Al's shoulder at the message. They had not done one-tenth of it. He wondered how the flashes would look from a distance and thought how much concentration of mind it would require to make head or tail of it. Though he was a scout of the scouts, he found that he had to strain his faith a little to believe that anything could really come of this. And he was conscious of almost a feeling of regret that he had given quite such a glowing account of Harry.

A fresh relay of boys had started the second word.

"Wake up, Al—spin her off!"

"Four short flashes," said Al.

"Four it is; here she goes—over and back—over and back—wait!"

"One short," called Al.

"That's E—now for the next."

"Short, long, short," called Al.

"Pull her over, Ed—now back—now a long one—shut her off! Now a short one. Next letter, Al."

"Short flash."

"Correct for Albert. Over and back—seat your partner!"

"Camp here!" shouted a boy, enthusiastically.

Thus the work went cheerfully on. It required precision, exertion. It was close to half an hour when they reached the end.

"How do you spell your name?" said Al; "G-o-r-d-o-n?"

"Put it 'Kid,'" Gordon answered; "that's shorter and it's what he always calls me."

A sudden inspiration seized Al. "Here," he said; "come and sign your own name."

Gordon hesitated, then went forward. The boys, catching the spirit of the thing, fell back, while Al himself took the other end of the curtain. Gordon hauled the canvas over, revealing the flame long enough to indicate the dash. Then came the short flash, then the dash again. He almost heard Harry's quick, low voice, saying, "Hello, Kid," as he paused before the middle letter.

"Forward and back," called a boy.

Gordon's scout smile broadened into its wonted crescent as his small hands

worked the two short flashes.

"Hurrah for the Oakwoods!" several fellows shouted, and Gordon smiled still more broadly, as he always did when encouraged or jollied or praised.

"Dash and two dots," said Al.

And the name that Harry Arnold always called him had been flashed forth over woods and valley and meadow, toward the now invisible Dibble Mountain and Lake Champlain.

That night the Ravens, of whom Al Wilson was patrol leader, doubled up with the Elephants. The Elephant patrol consisted of smaller boys and was sometimes facetiously called the infant class. The whole six of them were tenderfeet with a vengeance, and Mr. Wade usually slept in their tent. This night, however, he shooed the Ravens into the Elephants' quarters so that Walter Lee, himself, and the "First Aid" boy might have a tent to themselves. But some of the Ravens roosted out under the trees.

The Elephant patrol was a great institution, and their leader, Frankie Haines, was fully aware of this fact. He attended all the officers' meetings in the tepee, and on one memorable occasion had sat on a troop committee. The Elephants' flag was flauntingly displayed outside their stronghold; they took a mighty pride in their name and were very clannish, and hung much together. They were all very punctilious about their uniforms. Indeed, they furnished so much wholesome entertainment to the third patrol that the boys of that division had found it impossible to limit their smiles to the requirements of Section 8, Scout Law, and were known as the Laughing Hyenas.

It was with the Hyenas that Gordon was to spend the rest of the night. It was with difficulty that he had been persuaded to give up his intention of going in search of Harry; but Mr. Wade realized that he stood in need of rest. To save Harry Arnold from anxiety, however, he offered to send two of the camp boys to the meeting place at Dibble Mountain. So Cattell and another boy had started north along the road, it being agreed that if they found no trace of Harry near the junction of the two roads they should return to camp early in the morning.

If the Laughing Hyenas had been cast to sleep with the Elephants, there is no telling what might have happened. But the Elephants and the Ravens got along very well considering, and it was as good as a circus to see the older boys coming in, one by one, and making the full salute to Frankie.

The Elephants had looked upon Gordon as in some measure their especial property, and felt that his glory was their glory, for he was younger than any of the camp boys save themselves, and small for his age. It would have pleased them to extend the hospitality of their tent to the honored guest and strut a little in consequence, but Mr. Wade's order was not to be questioned.

Gordon lay among the Hyenas, who had given him a rousing welcome to

their tent, and listened to their talk about the accident at the chasm and the sending of the Morse message. One by one, voices dropped out of the discussion as their owners fell asleep, until only three talked on in the darkness.

"He's all right," said one, "and a mighty clever little fellow. He seems to have an idea that his chum is just as smart as he is himself."

"He thinks the world of his patrol leader, all right," said another. "I don't suppose there's one chance in a thousand of that fellow's catching the message."

"Oh, he might have seen the fire," put in another, "but whether he could follow it is another question. It was pretty long for a fire message."

"Yes, and even if he got the sense of it, he'd be a wonder if he did anything."

"What could he do, anyway?"

"He can make a rice pudding."

"Sure he can!"

"Well, it was good sport sending the message, anyway, but jiminy, my arm is stiff!"

"Silence there between decks!" called a new voice.

"Ralph, the bos'n, as I live! Thought you were asleep, Ralph."

"I bet Al Wilson could have caught those flashes and spelled them out, all right."

"You bet he could."

Presently the voices ceased altogether, and Gordon lay in his corner near the wall of the tent, thinking over all that had happened since he parted from Harry. He had made a great hit with this Albany troop, greater than he supposed, but his mind was by no means at ease. He thought of his chum waiting or searching for him with no clue to his whereabouts, and of how Harry must spread his balloon silk shelter and lie down alone, perplexed and anxious about himself. And here was he, resting on a springy cot after a goodly supper of hunters' stew. And he had allowed two strangers to go out in the night to find and make explanations to his friend. Oh, how he hoped that by some fortunate chance Harry had caught the message and actually understood it.

Of course, he had no doubt as to his duty after finding the stricken Walter. But perhaps he ought to have gone first to meet Harry, and then together they could have followed the trail of the pink arrow. He made up his mind that as soon as morning came he would take this road under the hill and go straight to Dibble Mountain, and if Harry were not there he would track him and find him. "I can do it all right," he assured himself; "that's nothing."

During the excitement of the evening, his chief desire had been that Harry

should do a mighty feat in the face of all odds, and show these Albany fellows what a winner he really was. But now he found himself growing more and more doubtful of the possibility of this and thinking only of Harry's anxiety when he did not appear.

Still, he dreaded the morning, when the boys would doubtless speak indulgently of Harry, cheerfully humoring his own hero-worship, and probably feeling in their hearts that his friend's greatness existed chiefly in his own mind. "If they only knew of the things he has done," he thought; "if they only knew."

Then, for the first time, he fell to thinking of the robbery. It was inconceivable to his honest, buoyant soul. Never had he been brought so close to a crime before. Some one who knew that Walter Lee would be coming through the woods with money had tampered with the bridge and lurked about until the boy fell insensible, then robbed him, and left him, perhaps to die. He began to realize the horror of the thing now. He thought of Walter, as he had found him, lying stark and white in the muddy chasm. For all he knew, Harry might now be lying, bleeding and unconscious, in some gully where he had fallen searching for his recreant friend. Sleep was out of the question.

He hastily pulled on his clothing, raised the wall of the tent, and crept softly out, stumbling into the drain ditch. A few yards away a gleam of light shone from a tent upon the Ravens' patrol flag just outside. Gordon stood at a distance looking in. Walter Lee lay on a cot in the center, and the "First Aid" boy stood near making jerky motions as if hammering tacks. Then he placed something in Walter's mouth. It seemed to Gordon that Walter was smoking a cigarette—strange doings for a boy scout! Then he saw that the "First Aid" boy had been shaking down the mercury in the clinical thermometer, preparatory to taking his patient's temperature.

This "First Aid" boy had not mixed with the others, had hardly spoken to any one during the evening. He had shown no interest in the signaling, nor even in the robbery. Apparently he had no intention of sleeping. He wore above the elbow of his right arm one of the grandest badges that a boy scout can seek—the ambulance badge.

"I wish Dr. Brent could see that fellow," thought Gordon. He was always ready to admire others. In a corner of the tent under a lantern sat Mr. Wade writing. Gordon wondered if he were writing to Walter Lee's parents. A faint odor of carbolic from the tent mingled with the pure, still air of the night. It was very quiet within. The "First Aid" boy made no sound as he moved about. "I wish I knew that fellow's name," said Gordon.

He crept away into the woods and up the hill, where the fire—a long period to the message, as Al called it—was still burning,—a useless beacon, as it seemed. He went down the other side of the hill to the road, took out his jack-

knife, opened both blades, and stuck one of them into the earth. Kneeling, he fixed his teeth on the other blade. There was no vibration, no sound which could possibly be construed into a distant footfall. He tried it again, fifty yards or so along the road, with the same result.

Slowly he trudged up the hill again, pulled up his stocking, and stood by the fire. In the woods below he could distinguish the faint gleam of the lantern in the open tent. There was no sound but the low sputtering of the blaze and the distant hoot of an owl. Gordon sat down and clasped his hands around his drawn-up knees.

“These fellows don’t know how hard it is to shoot rapids and ride logs down a river,” he said.

He did not even have an apple to comfort him.

CHAPTER IX
HARRY ARNOLD, SCOUT

Harry Arnold sat on a rock by the roadside, eating raisins out of a small pasteboard box. On the ground lay his canvas pack, and against it leaned his rifle. The air was brisk, for the night was well along, but he wore no jacket, and the double row of pearl buttons on his blue flannel shirt shone occasionally in the fitful gleams of moonlight. The moon was working like a suffragette for its rights, but was continually being effaced by the clouds which were rapidly coming to monopolize the sky. If the breeze continued to increase Harry would, perhaps, compromise with it by getting out a thin sweater, but under no circumstances would he so far yield as to put on a coat. The matter of attire was his weak point, and his total absence of any interest in the scout regalia was the source of a great deal of sorrow to Gordon.

Once he tightened the thin book-strap which he used for a belt and put his belt ax into his canvas bag. Once he leaned and fastened the laces in his mooseskin moccasins. He was as slender as a boy could be without being noticeably thin,—gracefully slender, one would say.

At the present moment he was just passing from the stage of mild curiosity into that of anxiety for his young friend. For, making full allowance for delays caused by inquiries and for Gordon's independent propensity to amble along in search of treasure, he was already very much overdue.

"I bet he shows up with a fifty-cent piece that he's found, or a lady's buckle, or a rusty jack-knife," said Harry.

But Gordon did not show up with any of these things, and when an hour and a half had gone by and still he did not come, Harry became seriously anxious. He knew Gordon's tendency to jump the track, as he called it, and he thought it not at all improbable that he would any minute hear, from the thicket, the hollow hand clap, merging into a rubbing sound, which so accurately simulated the noise made by a four-footed beaver. It had cost the patrol some trouble and not a little expense to get this sound from first sources, and learn to make it, and you might practise it a week and not fool a beaver; but Gordon had it pat.

So Harry did not think it wise to leave the spot for long at a time. At length, however, he tied a wisp of grass around a sapling, and concealing his bag in the undergrowth started down the road along which Gordon should come. A walk of fifteen minutes brought him to a house where a dog barked at him vociferously. He did not waken the inmates, for he knew that if Gordon

had passed or called at the house, he would have heard the distant barking. Another fifteen or twenty minutes brought him to a ramshackle building, the home of one of the unprosperous farmers of the district. Here he made inquiries, but the farmer, roused from his sleep, was very brief and surly and had seen no one. Harry thanked him with unaffected courtesy and went on.

What surprised him most was that the occasional moonlight showed him no footprints. After a few minutes he came to a little opening at the left of the road and, straining his eyes, looked down through a vista of trees which ran through the woods at a direct right angle from the road. This reminded him that he had looked through a similar vista on the west side of the straight road on which he had gone north. So there was evidently a woodland track connecting the two roads he and Gordon had taken, which did not show on the map. Turning rather abruptly into this woodland byway were two wide concave tracks. He walked a little farther down the road and in a flare of moonlight discovered a perfect carnival of footprints. They faced in every direction, north, south, east, west. There were scoopy indentations showing the heel counter of a shoe, and little points in the ground, indicating the downward thrusts of a toe.

"There's only one thing lacking," said Harry; "I wonder where she waited." He walked over to the stone wall and picked up a little reticule containing, on hasty inspection, sixteen cents, a handkerchief, and a bottle of smelling salts. This he thrust into his pocket. He also thrust his hands into his pockets and smiled.

"I bet he enjoyed this," he soliloquized; "I can just see him standing here watching—and waiting for a chance to spring a good turn."

He was perfectly satisfied that an auto had broken down. He picked out where a man had lain on his stomach, had knelt, had lain on his back. He put big prints and little prints together, like a picture puzzle, and made human attitudes out of them. And he concluded that this interesting exhibition, right in Gordon's line, was accountable for the boy's delay. The auto had evidently turned down the wooded byway in order to get into the better road. That Gordon should have abandoned his investigations to be carried to his destination in an auto seemed hardly probable, except on the theory that he was on the trail of a good turn. But what other explanation was there?

Acting on this theory, he turned back, sure that he would find Gordon waiting for him. When he was within hailing distance of the point where the roads converged he made the Beaver call, and was surprised that it was not answered. Presently he reached the spot. The rock was empty, the wisp of grass was as he had left it on the sapling. The moon was behind a cloud now, so he lit a match and examined the eastern road. There were the auto tracks, but running along one of these with lighted matches for fifty yards or so

(covering the spot where the two roads met), he could find no interruption in the concave line. The auto had not stopped. It had gone straight on along the road which skirted Dibble Mountain.

Now, Harry was truly alarmed and more than perplexed. It was late at night, the moonlight was fitful and uncertain, it was more often pitch dark than not. He did not like to give up and rig his shelter for the night. Idly he picked up the empty raisin box. Above him rose almost sheer the grim, black side of the mountain. Soon he must eat something, at any rate, for he was cruelly hungry.

"Kid," he said aloud, "where are you, anyway?"

And then, on the minute, the answer came. Over in the west—a mile—two —three,—he did not know,—there flickered a tiny light in the darkness. Presently it grew larger, then disappeared, then came again. Half interested, in his preoccupation, he waited for it to reappear. Now it came and went, rapidly, in alternate flashes. He looked behind him into the east to see if there were any answering light, but the flame came jumping out faster and faster, as if to say, "Look here, *you*—I have something to say—wait." He waited, and when it came again it stayed, one, two seconds. Instantly he was on his feet. It disappeared and showed again for just a fraction of a second, then flared steadily, then showed for another fraction of a second. He watched it intently as it came and went. Now came a longer pause between the flashes.

And on the bottom of the little raisin box that Harry held he had written with the lead of a rifle cartridge the letters CAMP.

He did not write the arbitrary signs for translation later; he took the message in plain English, with never doubt or hesitancy, and in good time he had it all.

"All right, Kid," he said, smiling; "glad to hear from you," and dropped the cartridge into his pocket.

He was much relieved, of course, and very curious. Taking his pack and rifle, he ran up the road until he came to the first turn. The distant fire now burned steadily, though not as high as before, and he could see that the road he had reached must lead in its direction. He was to go down this road and watch any one he met. He hid his pack near the roadside, took his rifle, and crept stealthily along through the trees which bordered the road. His toes, free and pliant in their soft moccasins, pinned and held the twigs on which he stepped and he made no sound. Now and then a low, sudden scurrying told him that he had disturbed some smaller creature of the wood, but save for these trifling sounds he walked in perfect silence.

The moon edged slowly from behind a cloud. "That's right," he whispered, "bully for you—be a scout—come on out and help." Perhaps the moon was influenced by his persuasive words and felt that such a boy on such a business

and against such odds was entitled to all the help that she could give. In any event, she sailed majestically clear of her encumbrances and, as sure as you live, smiled a broad scout smile down upon Harry Arnold. “Now you’re talking,” commented Harry. “Keep it up and I’ll see you get the bronze medal —only keep it up.”

He crept up to the road and looked for footprints, but found none of recent making. His information was pitiably meager. A scout had been robbed, and it was evidently suspected that the robber or robbers had taken this road. That was all he knew. No one had passed here lately, that was sure. He assumed that the signalers had good reason to believe that some one had taken this direction. He figured that he could get to the vicinity of the fire inside of an hour. So it would work the same the other way. He would conceal himself and watch the road for an hour. If he saw no one, he would simply assume that the robber had not taken the open road.

Now, if he had carried out this plan, he would shortly have seen the two boys who had set out to find him. But Harry Arnold, Scout, was a mile off the road when these boys passed, and this is how it happened.

Before settling down to watch the road, he noticed a small bridge a few yards farther along under which a stream flowed. You could canoe from the Albany scouts’ camp to Lake Champlain on this stream, but Harry knew nothing of the Albany camp. For all he knew, the Morse message had come from the Oakwood scouts. In quest of a draught of water, he went stealthily down the bank. He knelt, looked at the water, felt of it, and shook his head. Then he stood on the brink of the stream with his two hands resting on the bridge, which was about level with his shoulder. Thus he craned his neck, looking up and down the road. Satisfied, he vaulted silently up to the planking. His spring was as graceful and agile as a panther’s. Instinctively, he looked down to see if he had left any sign, for it is part of the A B C of scouting to leave no clue behind, whatever your business, except what you leave for a purpose. There on the edge of the planking were the wet prints of his two hands. “Humph,” said he, and studied them closely. Then he knelt, felt of one, daintily, softly, and brushed his two hands together. “Dried quick,” said he. He leaped down to the bank and felt of the water.

“Tisn’t so muddy, either.” He placed his hands on the planking over the two marks. They did not match his. “I didn’t think I had a paw like that,” he said.

He looked beneath him on the bank where the dank grass was flattened. “Too clumsy to vault it,” was his comment. “One of those big gawking country jays, I guess.” He crept up the bank to the road, where the moonlight flickered down through the branches of a willow tree. Reaching up, he wriggled a broken limb, then smilingly kicked a small twig that lay in the road. Crossing,

he found a ruffled place, half in the road and half in the bordering growths, where the brush seemed to be trampled down. All this he examined in an amused, half-careless way. Presently he took a short run and leaped across the road. “Easy enough,” he said. Stooping, he carefully examined the ground and rose triumphant, holding a small, flat paper package in his hand. “Maunabasha!” he whispered to himself. (Maunabasha was the good Indian spirit that occasionally smiled on his endeavors.) He lighted a match and read the lettering on the package:

FARMER’S FRIEND PLUG CUT
THE TOBACCO OF QUALITY
A SOLACE TO THE TIRED TOILER
THE AROMA OF THE HARVEST FIELD

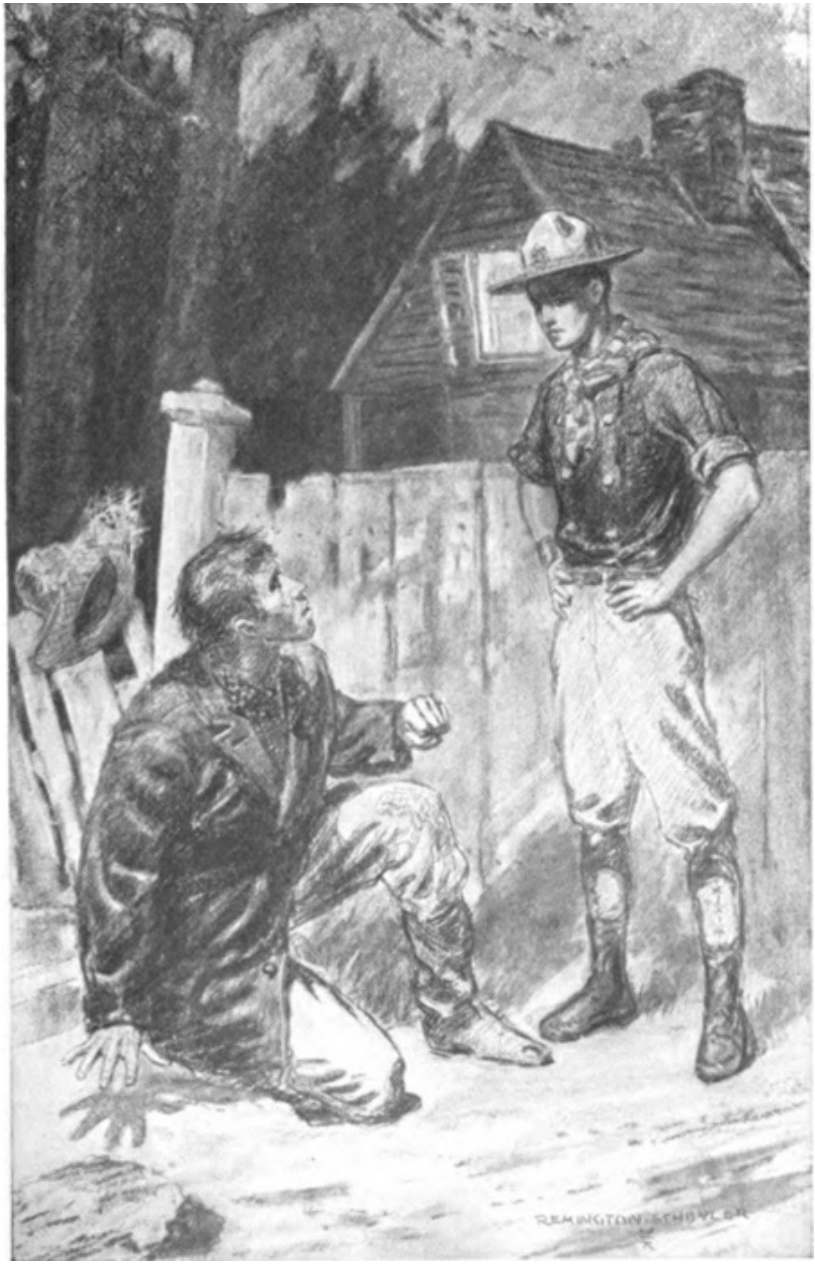
Harry took a whiff of the aroma of the harvest field. “The harvest field could sue for damages on that,” he thought. But despite his scout prejudice against tobacco, he was forced to admit that this little package had done him a good turn. Here was the unmistakable proof of a human presence, and it had not been here long, for it was fresh, unstained, and dry.

He put it in his pocket and went down the bank into the long meadow grass that skirted the river. It was easy enough for him to see where some one had preceded him here. The tall bent grass showed the trail plainly. He plodded on through this marshy patch till presently he found himself on the dry, abrupt shore of the river. Naked roots projected here and there, worn smooth with the friction of feet, and he was able to pick out a beaten path which ran along the stream’s edge. But the earth was hard and there was no sign of footprint. Stooping, he examined the ground carefully and presently discovered something which brought him to his hands and knees. This was a little mark in the earth about two inches long, knobby at one end and pointed at the other, as if some one had attempted to draw a pollywog in the sand. But Harry knew it for the imprint of a nail. He took an ordinary stride and found another one—then another. There was no sign of shoeprint, for the earth was too hard, but he found the nail impressions, printed crosswise for, maybe, half a mile. Then one appeared lengthwise and he turned up from the path.

So far, so good. But here was a stubbly field with never sign of trail or footprint. He tied his handkerchief to a branch of a tree where the trail ended and walked straight ahead for a few feet until he discovered a dim light flickering through the trees, which proved to come from the upper window of a small, dilapidated house. Under the trees in the little grove which surrounded it, he saw a stooping figure. He advanced stealthily to the edge of the grove and watched. By the light from the window he could see clearly a burly country fellow of, maybe, twenty-five years, who drew something from his

pocket and, lifting the edge of a flat stone from the ground, placed it underneath. Harry skirted the grove without making a sound and reached a point in front of the stranger and about fifty feet from him. Here he stood behind a tree, watching the fellow as he packed some loose earth under the edge of the stone. Then, gliding noiselessly from one tree to another, he presently stood before the stooping figure, now pressing the stone down with all the strength of both arms. He spoke in the low, nonchalant, half-interested tone that was characteristic of him:

"Hello, what are you doing?"



“HELLO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?”

The fellow sprang to his feet, amazed at this apparition which seemed to have dropped from the clouds.

“M-me?”

"Yes, you—what are you doing?"

"Who are you, anyway—what are you doing here?"

"I'm standing here," said Harry, quietly. His manner was easy and his voice low, almost sociable. "What are you doing, digging a hole?"

The fellow instantly became as excited as Harry was calm, and tried to hide his confusion under a torrent of abuse.

"I guess you're one of them scout fellers that's always puttin' their noses in other folks' business. Do ye know ye're on private land? I thought them scout fellers had a rule not to trespass. You get out of this double quick, or I'll fix yer. You can't prowl round this farm in the middle of the night—you nor none of yer hifalutin crew. What are ye doin' here, anyway—where d'ye come from?"

"How do you know 'them scout fellers' have a rule not to trespass?" asked Harry, gently.

"That's all right, how I know."

"You've met some of them?"

"None o' your business!"

"You've seen one or two of them quite lately?" Harry asked, with just a touch of sharpness in his voice.

The fellow saw that he had fallen into a trap.

Almost in his first sentence he had admitted a knowledge of the boy scouts, and he stood embarrassed before Harry's rather contemptuous smile.

"Are you goin' ter clear out o' this or not?"

"Not," said Harry.

The fellow stooped and picked up a rock. Harry did not move. He dropped the rock and put his hand around to his hip pocket. Harry also put his hand in his hip pocket, and the fellow started back.

"Here, is this yours?" said Harry, tossing him the package of tobacco. "What's the matter—did you think I was going to shoot you?"

They stood contemplating each other, Harry quietly amused, the other afraid to speak lest he say too much.

The countryman put the package in his hip pocket.

"I thought you had plenty of room there," said Harry; "no pistol after all, eh? You see, you shouldn't have picked up the rock. That was a bad move, because men with pistols in their pockets don't pick up rocks. And I have nothing but this rifle and I'm not going to use it. I'd no more think of using it than I would of using that tobacco. The only dangerous thing you have about you is your 'Farmer's Friend Plug Cut,' and it's no friend to you either, for it gave you dead away."

"You think you can come up here with your city gab, don't you, and scare honest folks on their own land, that don't trespass, nor ask no favors, neither."

“The scouts been asking for milk—or maybe water?” Harry asked, smiling. “What made you think you might be tracked? Because you knew there were scouts about?”

“Who said I thought I’d be tracked? I ain’t a-scared to have my spoor follered—”

“Where did you learn that word—spoor?”

Harry’s voice and manner were now a little sharp. Every time the fellow spoke he was tripped up. The more he said, the more he gave himself away. The active mind of his inquisitor balked and confounded him, and he had no resource except in a tirade or an attack, and these he wished to avoid, partly from genuine fear of this strange boy, and partly because he had no wish that the altercation be heard in the house. Harry saw that he had him. And he went on, speaking in short, choppy sentences, looking the other right in the eye, and sending each word straight to its mark like an arrow. He had no more fear or hesitancy than if he were talking to an infant. The great creature who stood before him looked at him as a grizzly bear might look at its keeper.

“Look here now. In the first place, you didn’t come down the road. Why not? When you had to cross it, you tried to vault up to the bridge and went down like a bag of oats. Then you tried to swing across the road like a monkey and went down again like a bag of meal. Why were you so anxious not to leave a footprint, eh? Then, after all that trouble, you left the ‘Farmer’s Solace’—or whatever you call it—Plug Cut, and went down the bank marking out a trail as clear as Broadway. Then, when I show up, the first thing you tell me is the rules of the boy scouts? What do *you* know about the boy scouts? You’ve been trying to imitate them with your smattering about ‘spooring.’ Who said anything about spooring? Hold on, now—I know what you’re going to say. Of course, there’s no crime in all that. You can come down the road standing on your head for all I care, but just the same I’m going to see what’s under that stone.”

“I thought a scout feller was supposed—”

“Oh, a scout fellow is supposed to put this and that together,” Harry interrupted with some impatience; “and if you think I came here for the benefit of my health you’re mistaken.”

He stepped toward the stone and saw the other look apprehensively at the house. His predicament was a sore one, and Harry had foreseen and counted on it. If he precipitated a scuffle, it would rouse the inmates of the house. If he didn’t, the game was up. He fell back on the only course open to him—a weak attempt at explanation.

“Haven’t I got a right to pick up what I find, hey? What business have you got to trac—follow me, anyway? Haven’t I got a good right to bring home anything I find?”

Harry disdained to answer. Kneeling, he raised the edge of the stone. But the wretched boy who watched him could not quite stand by and see that done. He put his big hand on Arnold's shoulder, and roughly thrust him back. Like lightning Harry's hand was on his ankle. He tripped, staggered clumsily, and went down with a thud. When he had pulled himself together Harry was standing a few feet away examining his find, but keeping a weather eye on his new acquaintance. There was a wallet containing money and a letter. The wallet and the money he thrust into his pocket; the letter he read as best he could by the light from the window. It was dated several days before, and read:

> Dear Walter,—
>
> I have no objection to the canoe if Mr. Wade approves. You say several others have them. You had better take Al Wilson to Ticonderoga with you and be sure you are getting a good one. I should say the one you mention would be a bargain if it is in good condition.
>
> Your examination papers are here and I want to talk over this matter of the mathematics with you. Suppose you run down home over Sunday. You could go back Monday or Tuesday, and I'll give you the money while you are here.
>
> Yours,
> Father.

All this was a puzzle to Harry, for there was no Walter in the Oakwood troop. But he betrayed not the slightest surprise as he spoke to the other boy.

"So you stole Walter's canoe money, eh?"

"I found it in the road," was the sullen answer. "I was going to—"

"Sure you were—you were going to hide it. What's the matter—afraid to let your folks know you found something in the road?" His tone was full of contempt now, and he paused, in a quandary what to do. He knew he could not arrest the farmer boy, and he was not sure that he wanted to. He did not know that the crime had been all but murder. His only feeling was that of disgust, and he surveyed the great, clumsy figure before him from head to foot.

"Go on into the house," he said impatiently. "Who's in there, your mother and father?"

"My mother."

"Well, go on in and go to bed."

"What are you going to do?" the wretched fellow asked desperately.

"I don't know what I'm going to do, if you mean about you. I've got to consult my scoutmaster. Go on in and go to bed—How old is your mother?"

"She's nearly seventy."

Harry surveyed him slowly, contemptuously, from head to foot. He did not understand dishonesty. “Well, go on in,” he repeated, “and don’t wake her up. I guess you’re about through for to-night.” He paused, looking steadily, curiously, at the other, as one might look at a strange animal. Then he wheeled about and went silently off across the field.

“Blamed if I know who Al Wilson is, or Walter, either, but if they buy a second-hand canoe in Ticonderoga they get stuck. Jiminy, but that Kid’s the greatest! I wonder what he’s been pushing into now.”

Gordon squatted before the dying signal-fire, an occasional gape of stupendous dimensions distorting his round face. Below him the camp slept peacefully. The dim light glimmered in the invalid’s tent, occasionally blurred by the shadow of the “First Aid” boy moving to and fro. Gordon knew now that his mind’s-eye picture of Arnold arriving like a conquering hero was an extravagant vision. He knew that the Albany scouts knew it, too.

“Al Wilson could *not* have done it,” said he, “nor any of the rest of ’em. Nobody can do impossibilities. These fellows think it’s easy to bring a ca-a-a-a—” He was trying to say canoe and gape at the same time.

“Hello, Kid,” said a low, careless voice, almost in his ear. “What are you doing here?”

“Harry!”

“Sure—who’d you think? Where’ve you been, anyway?”

“But Harry—”

“Who the dickens is Walter?”

The younger boy clutched his friend by the arm. “Harry—I—he’s a boy here—they—did you—why—”

“I’ve got forty dollars belonging to him. What’s the news, anyway?”

CHAPTER X
THE SWASTIKA

In the morning it began, bright and early. Harry lay alone in the tepee, dead to the world. Mr. Wade had been quietly roused by Gordon and had accorded Harry this resting-place with strict instructions to pay no attention to reveille. Gordon had crept back among the sleeping Hyenas.

It started when the two boys who had gone in search of Harry returned to camp a few minutes after reveille, passing the Hyenas' tent.

"How's Walter?" they called to the one or two who had risen promptly.

"All right when we turned in. Any news?"

"No—couldn't find a sign of his friend. He may have gone back to Ticonderoga. He didn't come along this road—that's sure."

"Maybe he's up on Dibble Mountain making rice puddings."

"Keep quiet, you'll wake him."

All this Gordon heard in a delicious half-sleep.

"We met a chap on a bicycle from a summer place up Crown Point way—said he was hunting for a hand-bag a lady left on a stone wall—auto broke down and she sat on the wall to wait for them to fix it."

"I haven't it," called one Hyena.

"You can search me," said another.

"Guess she'll never see it again."

"Oh, she may, you can't tell; the bicycle chap may find it. Nobody's likely to have noticed it on a stone wall at night—it's early yet. Honest, didn't you hear anything of that Oakwood chap?"

"Didn't we tell you, no?"

"Gone back to the log jam, I guess. The kid'll be awful disappointed. He's got the bee in his bonnet that his friend's as clever as he is,—he's a mighty nice little fellow."

"Sure, it's fun to see him grin when you jolly him. Wade's stuck on him, all right."

"Yes, and he's got Al hypnotized."

By this time the Hyenas were dragging themselves heavily from their cots and sleepily aiding the conversation.

"I'd like to know what was the use of sending that message, anyway. We might have known it wouldn't do any good. Why, man alive, if any one did sneak down that road, it must have been an hour before we got the fire started. Chuck my belt over here, will you, Dan?"

“Well, it was good exercise, anyway. Oh, but my arm is stiff!”

The camp was soon astir, and Gordon, wrestling desperately to suppress his scout smile, came forth with the last stragglers. He stood in the fresh morning air, watching the routine, which began early. A boy with a pointed stick moved about, spearing papers and depositing them in a box for burning. “No news of your pal?” said he, as he passed. Gordon smiled and said nothing. Another boy was hurrying here and there, filling, trimming, and wiping lanterns. “Hello, Oakwood,” he called, “guess your patrol leader was asleep at the switch when we sent that little fire note—don’t you care.” Several others were rigging a rope fence outside Walter’s tent, where a Red Cross flag had already been raised. Everything seemed to move like clockwork. Two boys came in for firewood and departed for more. One was sorting and chopping the pieces. Others were setting the long table-board with plates, while the savory odor of coffee came from the lean-to. Gordon wandered among these early toilers, responding to a pleasant word or a good-natured taunt from each, fascinated with this first view of genuine camp life.

Mr. Wade sat at a small table under a tree, while several scouts hovered near, waiting his leisure. Al Wilson, standing at his elbow, beckoned to Gordon.

“Don’t you worry,” said he. “No doubt your friend is all right. I think he may have gone into Ticonderoga. Most of the folks around here know our camp, and I guess you’ll see him come walking in before the day’s over. And don’t think that he ought to have made good—it was impossible.”

“The fellows say *you* could have done it,” ventured Gordon.

“Well, I couldn’t. I might have made out the message, but that’s all the good it would have done me. None of us can do the impossible, can we, Mr. Wade?”

“Not as a rule,” said Mr. Wade, intent on his writing. Presently he handed three small pieces of birch-bark to a boy, on each of which was written in lead pencil, “10:30.” These were for the patrol leaders and meant, “Come to council.” Atwell, leader of the Hyenas, received his while helping to raise the colors, and was puzzled. Al read his in silence and was puzzled, too, but knew better than to question his chief. Frankie, leader of the Elephants, standing in the door of his tent, took his with great condescension.

“Frankie got a pretty picture card?” asked a passing scout. For answer, Frankie let fly a huge, overripe pear, which went to its mark with deadly precision.

“I suppose you know those Hyenas are a bunch of jolliers,” he remarked to Gordon, who stood near.

“I don’t mind that,” Gordon answered.

“Well, you would if you were I. But I’ve got a way to fix them. It’s my

corporal's idea. You're going to be here through to-day, aren't you? Well, you'll see some fun. I've got to attend council at ten-thirty, and after that I've called a special patrol meeting to consider the plan."

"Peek-a-boo, Frankie," called a passing boy.

"That's one of the worst of the lot," said Frankie, confidentially.

"What's the plan?" Gordon asked.

"You'll see—it'll be the Laughing *Elephants* by to-night."

In a little while came the call to prayers, then breakfast. There was a camp historian in the Albany troop whose business it was to record the doings of each day and to read the entries of the day before, every morning before the campers rose from the early meal. Since the patrols often went about their pleasures separately and the boys were wont to wander off in pairs for a day of fishing, stalking, or exploring, it fell out that this record often contained matter unfamiliar to the camp as a whole, and so its reading was awaited with interest.

This morning, owing to the affair of Walter Lee, it would have a special interest. For Mr. Wade had been so much occupied during the evening and night before that none had ventured to question him.

When the meal was finished Henry Earle, the historian, rose at his place and, according to custom, first announced the camp routine for the day.

Plans for any special expeditions were submitted to Mr. Wade and then handed to Earle. From these he now read:

> "The Raven patrol attends to the cooking from to-day until the 10th inclusive. Not more than two members to leave camp at one time for longer than an hour. No sentry duty. Collins relieved of all patrol duties because of troop duty." (Collins was "First Aid" boy.) "The Hyena Patrol canoes to the Lake this afternoon for fishing. Elephant Patrol to accompany them for outing and assistance." (Smiles from the Raven Patrol.) "Meals as usual. Camp-fire yarns to-night. Blake to go into the village for mail and errands; must have commissions and letters before eleven o'clock. Patrol leaders in conference with scoutmaster at 10:30. No leaves of absence for this evening."

He thrust the papers into his pocket and took up his book. The brief record of Walter Lee's return, with the circumstances, was read. Gordon's name was mentioned without comment or compliment. The troop listened attentively.

> "The suspicions of robbery were entertained," Earle read, "because of a footprint and other signs near the chasm. The visit of two country boys to camp a few days ago and the conversation they

heard about Walter's visiting home to get money for a canoe were regarded with some suspicion. It was thought that the fugitive might have taken the road under the hill, and as the friend and scout partner of Gordon Lord was supposed to be waiting for him on the road under Dibble Mountain, a Morse signal message was sent up telling Lord's whereabouts and asking him to watch the road. But the fugitive, it appears, did not take the road."

At this sentence the boys started, and a stir of surprise passed round the board. Even the quiet Al Wilson looked inquiringly at Mr. Wade. Gordon wrestled valiantly with his scout smile, and looked straight before him.

"At ten minutes after two this morning," the reader continued, "a scout, Harry Arnold by name, leader of the Beaver Patrol, 1st Oakwood, N. J., Troop, brought to camp and delivered to Mr. E. C. Wade, Scoutmaster, a wallet containing two letters and forty dollars belonging to Walter Lee."

Murmurs of astonishment followed this announcement. Gordon's eyes were riveted upon a distant tree.

"The full details of how he received and read the Morse message, made sure that no one had gone along the road, traced the robber by means of finger prints on the flooring of a bridge, and followed his trail over hard land by the print of a nail embedded in his shoe; how he came upon the thief in the very act of hiding his booty near his home, took it from him and brought it here; these details belong to the history of the 1st Oakwood Troop, Oakwood, N. J., and will constitute a glorious page in that troop's annals."

Gordon, still looking straight before him, had conquered his scout smile; yet he was not wholly victorious, for instead his eyes were brimming over.

"Where is he? Where is he, anyway?" shouted several boys, jumping up. Cattell rose, knocking over a cup, stumbled round the board, and clapped Gordon on the shoulder. "Where is he?" he shouted. "Let's have a look at him." Al Wilson came around and placed his arm over Gordon's shoulder, smiling, saying nothing. Some one suggested the tepee, and it was not till a roystering, shouting group had started in that direction that Gordon got himself under control. They did not wait for him. They had forgotten him. But Harry Arnold, his chum, his friend, his idol, had made good, as he always made good, and they were going to honor him. This was joy enough for Gordon.

Then, realizing what they were bent on doing, he rushed pell-mell in pursuit, and coming between them and the closed tepee, spread out his arms.

"You can't go in, fellows," he panted. "He's asleep and Mr. Wade doesn't want him waked up. He's awfully tired—honest, he is!" Then, as they paused, he said, as if on second thought, and so as not to make their disappointment too heavy, "But if you come quiet, you can peek in and take a look at him if you want to."

An hour later Harry sat down to a belated but welcome breakfast, served by enthusiastic Ravens who rejoiced in their special privilege to minister to his comfort. A continually changing group lolled about the long board, asking questions and commenting on his exploit. He answered all their questions in his easy, careless way, correcting when they overrated the difficulty of this or that.

"Oh, no," he said, answering one of Al Wilson's questions, "hard ground's better than soft when there's a loose nail in a shoe or anything sticking on the sole—there's nothing hard about following that—anybody could do it."

"That's just like him! That's just like him!" cried Gordon, excitedly.

His breakfast over, Harry wandered about, a dozen Albany scouts surrounding him. Gordon walked over to the boy who was clearing the table and whispered to him confidentially. "You can't get him to wear a belt," said he. "Red Deer tried to, and his corporal gave him an alligator-skin one, but he wouldn't wear it—he just wears that book-strap. And we can't get him to wear the scout uniform—he likes that blue shirt,—he's very funny about some things."

"Eccentricities of genius," suggested Al Wilson, who stood near.

"He won't even wear a coat," said Gordon.

"Never mind," said Al, "let him wear what he likes."

There was never a happier boy than Gordon Lord that morning. In the excitement of Harry's coming his own adventure of the day before had fallen into the shadow. No one spoke of that now, but Harry knew about it and had praised him, and that was enough. He was constantly near his friend, feasting on the praises which Harry, much to his discomfort, was forced to hear. The rule requiring a scout to "smile and look pleasant" was obeyed by Gordon to the full ability of his mouth. But the climax of his triumph was reached as they sat about under a huge oak waiting for the early dinner which was to precede the trip down to the lake. Harry lolled indolently on the sward, amusing himself with mumbly-peg, and occasionally joining in the conversation.

"Wonder if that bicycle chap found the bag he was after?" one said.

"Like enough—nobody'd see it in the dark and he was out early."

"What kind of a bag was it, anyway?"

“Oh, kind of—this—what do you call it—mesh-work, he said.”

“Bottle of smelling salts in it?” asked Harry, as he twirled his jack-knife and sent it plunging into the earth.

The boys stared.

“Sure,” answered one of those who had met the bicyclist. “What do you know about it?”

Harry laid the blade of his knife between two fingers, eyed it critically, and struck the bone handle with the first finger of his other hand. The knife made four complete somersaults and landed upright in the grass.

“Handkerchief—sixteen cents?” said he.

“Sure!” cried the astonished boy.

Harry fumbled in his pocket, brought forth the reticule, and slung it by its chain to the boy who had spoken. Then he held his knife suspended vertically and, forming a ring with his thumb and finger about twelve inches below it, dropped the knife through the ring.

“Can you do that, Kid?” he said to Gordon, who sat near him.

“Where’d you get this bag?” asked the boy who held it.

“Picked it up on a stone wall near where there’d been an automobile accident.”

“How did you know there was an automobile accident?” chimed in another.

“Oh, I don’t know—just noticed it—that is, the signs of it—there was an auto, that’s sure, and somebody doing acrobatic tricks in the road. Who does the bag belong to, do you know?”

“Lady in Crown Point, that’s all I know.”

“We’ll have to hunt her up, Kid; here” (handing the knife to Gordon) “try this—it’s a good trick—I bet you pull your fingers away. This is the hardest one I ever did.”

“Then you admit there’s something hard you *can* do,” laughed Al Wilson, admiringly.

“Oh, yes,” Harry laughed back. “I’m the star mumbly-peg player—hey, Kid?” And he slapped Gordon on the shoulder. But Gordon was too astonished to speak.

The meeting of the patrol leaders with Mr. Wade had taken place earlier in the morning, but no one had been able to get a clue as to what it was all about. Frankie carried himself with an air of profound mystery—but that was for reasons of his own. Of course, Al Wilson knew, but you couldn’t pry anything out of Al with a crowbar.

The dinner hour came, and it was a merry company that gathered around the rough, tree-shaded board. The trip to the lake was discussed, talk of canoes, fishing tackle, and such things went round, and an occasional remark, in a

particularly loud, significant tone, about Frankie and the Elephants, passed from one Hyena to another. But the Elephants paid no heed to these flippant observations.

When Mr. Wade rose from the table, he asked the entire troop to gather in fifteen minutes under the "assembly tree." This was a spreading oak from whose low branches hung a variety of forest trophies, masterpieces of whittling and willowworking (the product of rainy afternoons), and other specimens of camp handiwork. About six feet from the ground a rough board with ragged ends had been fastened to the trunk, on which was carved the quotation:

> And this, our life, exempt from public haunts,
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

This had been their meeting-place ever since they started camp. Here two of Frankie's patrol, the Stetson brothers, having come from the city to join the scouts, had stood in the dim, solemn light under the thick branches, and taken the Scouts' Oath to do their duty to God and country, to help others at all times, and to obey the Scout Law. Here Fred Brownell, Hyena, had stood before the Court of Honor and received from Mr. Wade's hand the badge for marksmanship, which Frankie's vote had helped to award him. For Frankie was incorruptible in the discharge of public duties, and his worst jollier could be sure of justice at his hands.

The full troop always gathered here for morning prayers and to sing the patriotic anthem when the sun went down. There was always a quiet atmosphere under this green roof, and the boys, as they straggled into the old tree's shade, removed their hats and stood together in little groups. Harry and Gordon stood apart.

Presently Mr. Wade came out of the tepee and through the assembled boys to his usual place, directly under the rustic sign.

"Scouts," he said, "it is written in the law that it is a scout's duty to be useful and to help others, even though he give up his own pleasure or comfort or safety to do it, and that he is bound to carry out an order to the very best of his ability, and to let nothing interfere with his doing so."

("He means you," whispered Gordon.

"Nonsense!" answered Harry.)

"If he be a good scout, he may conceive a mere suggestion, a hint, to be an order, and map out his own path of duty as if he were acting under command. The path may lead him among strangers. He may have to decide his duty, standing alone, without counsel, in the darkness of the night. But that is the law."

(“He does mean you,” protested Gordon.

“Keep still, will you.”)

“The hint may come to him in such a way that an ordinary boy—I had almost said an ordinary scout—could not have known his duty from it. We are not all equally favored by Providence.”

(“There, what more do you want?” whispered Gordon, excitedly.

“Nonsense,” said Harry, blushing a little.)

“He may limit himself to the letter of the law if he chooses,” continued Mr. Wade, “but he usually follows its spirit. The path of his duty may wind its way through hardship or suffering or peril, but these things he will not see.”

(“Tha—”

“Keep still, I tell you!” whispered Harry.)

“If he be a scout favored by the gods and have the gift of prowess—”

(“That’s you, sure!”

“Oh, give us a rest!”)

“—the measure of his achievement may be large, and applause and admiration follow after him to pay him tribute.”

(Harry managed with difficulty to control Gordon.)

“The path may lead him to the wounded, the dying. It may bring him face to face with the guilty and the desperate.”

This time Gordon had no chance to whisper, for a shout went up that echoed back from the hill to meet another and still another, yelled out by a score of boys, who waved their arms and threw their hats in the air.

“Hurrah for Oakwood! Hurray for the Beavers! Hurray for the Beavers’ leader! Hurray for Gordon Lord!”

Mr. Wade’s upraised arm could not stem the tide, nor could Gordon turn it all upon his friend. His attempt to do so, the tendency that he had shown from the first, only increased their admiration and enthusiasm for him. It was as if a dam had burst and overwhelmed him—a dam which had been seeking vent for two days. Harry patted Gordon proudly on the shoulder.

“Hurray for Oakwood!” went up again and again. “Hurrah for Harry Arnold! Three cheers for Kid Lord!”

A rousing “tiger” was given, and then Mr. Wade motioned again for silence.

“I have been authorized by our three patrols,” he said, “represented by their leaders, to present to Harry Arnold, leader of the Beaver Patrol, 1st Oakwood, N. J., Troop, and to Gordon Lord, one of his scouts, the swastika badge of gratitude.

“These badges were made especially for our troop,” he went on, looking toward Gordon and Harry, “and were planned by us as a means of offering some grateful tribute to those who, whether scouts or not, may chance to do us

some special service. Intrinsically they are mere trifles," he said, holding up a small swastika of narrow band silver, "but they will serve as souvenirs to keep in memory deeds of which you two boys may be justly proud. They are given 'lest you forget' for your memories, it appears, are poor. One of you has already forgotten his achievement of last evening in praising the achievement of his friend; and his friend's interest in mumbly-peg seems to be so great that he can remember little else."

A general laugh followed this.

"He's got eyes in the back of his head," Frankie whispered confidentially, in Harry's ear. "He's on to everything."

"These little testimonials of our admiration and gratitude are given you with the wish that you will remain with us as long as you can. But we realize that you are searching for your own troop, and we must not detain you long. It is the earnest request of our three patrols, who agree in this if in nothing else" (he glanced slyly at Frankie and at the Hyenas' leader) "that you, at least, remain for camp-fire this evening and let us have you for our guests one night more."

Harry stepped forward and received the little silver swastika badge in his easy, offhand, but not ungrateful manner; then Gordon, beaming with pride and delight, and smiling his scout smile from ear to ear. It was the first honor he had received from the Boy Scouts, and though many honors were to come his way, there was never another one which gave him just the same pleasure. And though he was destined to learn much, there was one thing that he never learned, and that was why, with such a fellow as Harry Arnold to admire, scouts, young and old (to say nothing of scoutmasters), loved to make him smile his scout smile and persisted in helping him, in jollying him, in liking him, and in cheering him like wild Indians whenever they got the chance.

CHAPTER XI
FRANKIE SQUARES ACCOUNTS

"Come, come, hurry up, Frankie! Don't be all day! Are you all there? Where's the Stetson twins?"

"Coming," answered Frankie, as he and three of his patrol reached the shore. "What's in that bottle?"

"Soothing sirup, in case you cry," said a boy, who was bailing out the dory.

Frankie and his scouts got into the boat, and soon the Stetson twins (aged ten, the very youngest of the troop, and known as "tenderfeetlets") came down. One of them, "Giant George," was hardly big enough to see without a magnifying glass, if you care to believe Atwell, but he made up in fearlessness and resolution.

"There mustn't be more than one boy in the boat with Giant George," spoke up Brownell. "Mr. Wade says we must run no risks. Who's willing to volunteer to paddle the canoe occupied by Giant George?"

"I'll take that job," said Harry Arnold.

"Got a good muscle?" asked Brownell, seriously.

"I guess I can manage it," smiled Harry.

"All right; now, let's see. Frankie, Corporal Tommy, Eddie Worth, and Charles Augustus Denning in the dory—here, Atwell, it's up to you—get in and keep your eye on this bunch. Now, William Stetson, hop in the canoe there with Oakwood" (meaning Gordon), "and I'll make up the trio." This left four members of the Hyena Patrol, who got into the other canoe.

The stream flowed about a quarter of a mile from camp, and, passing under the three roads which had figured in the night's adventures, wound through a beautiful, wooded valley into Lake Champlain. The dory, flying Frankie's official banner ostentatiously at its stern, headed the procession, and the three canoes hovered about it, gliding easily upon the current. Now one of them would swerve near the majestic flagship to make some slurring comment on the Elephant Patrol, now dart forward like a playful child to await the squadron under low-hanging boughs farther down the stream. Now and again a lazy frog, startled by the passing pageant, dived into his muddy sanctum, and here and there along the way the birds complained to one another of this invasion of their domain. The scene was peaceful, quiet, and one might fancy the adventurous Champlain exploring these same woods in his own rough, Indian-paddled craft, many years before. Only, where the colors of France or the banner of the French Jesuits once grazed the overhanging branches, now the

flag of the Elephant Patrol waved gayly and defiantly in the breeze. And never had the bold Champlain such a startling enterprise to carry through as the young leader of the Elephants.

Harry managed his canoe as an experienced driver manages his horse. He never appeared to exert himself. He never had to undo the effect of one stroke with that of another. “Giant George,” his sole passenger, sat in the bow and watched him with unbounded admiration. The canoe containing the four Hyenas had been skirting the shore and its passengers had been reaching out and plucking leaves or twigs or berries. Now one of them called out:

“Here, Giant George, have a pear?”

Giant George’s small hands went up to receive the luscious missile which bounded through the air.

“Ouch!” he said, as he caught and dropped it.

“What is it?” Harry asked.

“Burs!” Giant George answered.

“Sit in the middle, Giant George, and don’t bear down too hard,” came from Atwell, in the dory.

“Hey, Giant George, sit in the middle!” shouted Brownell, excitedly. “What are you trying to do, tip the canoe?” Others took up the cry, yelling at him to sit in the middle, till they had stirred up quite a panic. It was difficult to sit anywhere except in the middle, for Giant George was wedged into the bow where there wasn’t anything but middle, but he sat straight upright and was very much frightened. Then he began to shake the hand which stung him from catching the burs.

“Don’t do that!” came from a neighboring canoe. “My, but you’re reckless! Shake the other one too if you must shake!” Poor Giant George was very much frightened, until presently an assuring word came from Frankie.

“Splash some water on them,” he called. But Giant George would not budge.

“Don’t you mind them,” said Harry. “Suppose I lose you overboard and we’ll make one of those Laughing Hyenas go in after you.”

“I can’t swim,” said Giant George, promptly.

“No, I don’t suppose you can,” said Harry, looking the little fellow over with an amused grin. “But you don’t need to sit so straight, and you can shake your hand all you want to—they’re only joking you.”

“We’re going to get square on them,” said Giant George, encouraged by Harry’s show of friendship. “My patrol leader’s got a scheme to make them laugh on the other side of their faces; he’s awful smart—Frankie is.”

“What’s the scheme?”

“Well, I can’t tell you yet, but you’ll see. Will you stand by us?”

“Surest thing you know. I’m with the Elephants to the last ditch.”

“Hey, Oakwood,” some one called to Harry; “don’t let him jolly you. Here you go, Giant, catch this!” But Giant George was out of the business of catching things.

Presently Gordon’s canoe came alongside Harry’s, and naturally enough a race was in order. Gordon was much troubled. He did not want to be in the losing canoe, but he did not want to see Harry beaten. There was not much danger of this, however, for Brownell had plenty to learn in wielding the paddle. The two canoes shot forward, Brownell taking the lead and splashing water over his rival. Harry soon passed him, however, making neither sound nor spray, and a loud cheer went up, to the delight of Giant George, who was very proud of his companion.

Harry’s swift glide brought his canoe into a marshy basin filled with reeds, beyond which was Lake Champlain.

“Don’t push through there,” called Brownell; “run her up and we’ll cut across that little cape.”

The craft were all drawn up on the shore, and Gordon and Harry saw that a walk of some two minutes across a little grassy point of land would bring them out upon the lake. A beaten path ran here, and it was evident to the two Oakwood boys that this was the customary way to reach Lake Champlain.

“Now, Frankie,” said Atwell, “here’s your happy hunting ground; get busy and dig us some bait while we’re over having a soak.” The Hyenas, one and all, undressed, throwing their clothing into the boats and putting on their trunks. Gordon and Harry followed suit, wearing trunks which had been lent them by the Ravens.

“Come, Giant George, hurry up!” called Atwell, as George stepped gingerly from his canoe. “Who’s got the can, anyway?” The can was not to be found. “Well, that’s a nice fix to get us in, Frankie; here, let’s have that bottle —you’ll have to put the bait in that.”

“How’ll we get ’em out?” asked Brownell.

“Just whistle and they’ll come out.”

“Let’s have the bottle a minute,” said Gordon.

“Let him have it,” laughed Harry; “he’s got a way.”

And sure enough, he had. He placed the bottle between his knees, wound a piece of fishing line once around it just below the neck, pulled it rapidly back and forth for several seconds, then plunged the bottle into the water. The neck remained in the stream and Gordon handed to Brownell a perfect drinking cup, smooth and even where it had broken off.

“Good for you!” exclaimed Atwell.

“Isn’t he the greatest!” said Frankie.

“That’s nothing,” said Gordon.

“Here, Frankie,” said Brownell, “you and the youngsters get busy now.

We'll be back in half an hour and fish upstream a ways. Good-by, Giant George." The group passed out of sight, and the Elephants gathered faithfully about their leader.

"That big Oakwood fellow's with us," spoke up Giant George; "he said he'd stand by us to the last ditch." This was encouraging, for with the exception of Frankie, they were a little fearful and had a cowardly tendency to backslide. But the patronage of such a scout as Harry Arnold reassured them, and Frankie's enthusiasm and resolve lent them courage.

"Quick, now," said he, "one of them may be back any minute. Put your hand up inside my jacket, George. Feel that cardboard?" Giant George presently loosened from under his leader's garment a large square of cardboard on which was printed:

THE ELEPHANTS' COMPLIMENTS
TO
THE HYENAS

This was fastened to a tree in a conspicuous place, while other members of the patrol went through various extraordinary contortions to release from under the rear of their jackets other squares of cardboard, bearing a variety of significant observations:

CAMP TWO MILES
TAKE FIRST PATH TO LEFT
BEWARE OF PINE NEEDLES

AFTER YOU, MY DEAR HYENAS

TEN CENTS TO SEE THE
LAUGHING HYENAS LAUGH!

ELEPHANTS SUDDENLY CALLED
BACK TO THE JUNGLE

HAVE A LEMON, ATWELL?

DON'T FORGET SCOUT LAW,
"SMILE AND LOOK PLEASANT"

"Take one shoe from each pair," Frankie ordered. "They can't wear the other one, and it will make something for them to carry. Same with socks and stockings. And leave them one garter each. Now pitch the rest—everything—

in the boat."

In less than five minutes the tree trunks were decorated with signs and artistic representations of hyenas laughing, ironic directions for reaching home, and so forth. From one tree there dangled here and there an odd shoe, an odd sock, or a garter. A sign proclaimed this "The Shoe Tree," and another sign invited the beholder to "Help Yourself."

In one canoe they laid, in two neat piles, Harry's and Gordon's clothing, shoes and all, and upon them a sign which read:

FOR THE OAKWOOD SCOUTS
TO COME HOME IN
(BE SURE TO SIT IN THE MIDDLE)

Then, after Frankie had contemplated his work admiringly for fully half a minute, the Elephant Patrol pushed off the boat, and towing the two canoes behind, turned their prow gleefully upstream and rowed away with the official banner of the Elephants flaunted gayly at their stern.

Meanwhile, the afternoon "soak" had begun. The lake was narrow at this point and across the water they could see the Vermont shore rising gradually, and beyond the Green Mountains, onetime home of the adventurous Ethan Allen. The little Lake Champlain steamer, making a prodigious racket for its insignificant size, came tooting down, and a deckful of summer tourists waved their handkerchiefs to the boys. On the shore stood an old, disused railroad water tank (for the railroad hugs the shore here), and across the top of the butt which stood on lofty spindles the boys had fastened a springy board for diving.

Scarcely had they reached the shore when every one of them was splashing in the water. Gordon found it much warmer than at the sea beach where he was used to bathing. But he was a novice at swimming and, despite the pleasure he took in bathing, had been slow to pick up the art. He explained this by saying that he "tried to think of things" while in the water and could not give his undivided attention to it.

"What's the matter, Oakwood?" Brownell asked, as Gordon came out, wiping the water from his eyes.

"My, but they smart!" answered Gordon.

"That's because you keep them open when you go under—trying to pick up trails, I suppose."

"Tails?" gasped Gordon, wringing out his hair.

"No—*trails*," said Brownell; "didn't you know you can follow a fish's trail?"

Gordon grinned.

"Sure," said Atwell, always to the fore when there was any jollying afoot;

“that is, *some* fishes’; they say it’s almost impossible to follow a shark’s trail.”

“Stow that, Atwell,” said the Hyenas’ corporal. Then, turning to Gordon, “Better shut your eyes when you go under; guess you’re used to surf bathing, hey? Well, that’s the reason. The eyes are used to salt water—it doesn’t hurt them. Don’t you know the secretions of the eye are salty? Tears never hurt you, did they?”

This was plausible enough, but seeing that it was a Hyena who spoke, Gordon was on his guard.

“He never sheds tears,” called Harry, who was sitting astride the diving board. “Come on up and have a dive.”

Soon they were launching themselves, one after another, from the height of twenty feet into the lake. Brownell had the stiff dive to perfection, his straight body turning so as to bring his head down into the water like an arrow. Atwell did the “drop” to the admiration of all, falling limp and lifeless, till he almost reached the water, then straightening out like magic. The clown element was furnished by Gordon, who came up each time choking and sputtering, but with a grin always on his face. None of his calculations for reaching the water panned out, but he managed to get there each time in some fashion.

“What do you call that one?” one of the boys asked him.

“That’s the celebrated roly-poly tumble, I guess,” volunteered Brownell. “Here’s a good one.” He sprang sideways, maintaining the position till he almost reached the water, then swerved about.

“Good,” said Harry. “Ever do this one?”

He stood a moment on the end of the board, sprang high, turned a complete backward somersault, and sank into the water feet first and hands high in air.

“That was simply great!” Atwell shouted.

“Try this one,” said Harry, as he clambered off the ladder on to the plank. Placing his feet on the very end of the board, he allowed himself to fall to a horizontal position, rolled in the air like a hoop slightly opened at one side, and pierced the water turning like a wheel.

“Fine! Magnificent!” said Brownell, as Harry clambered up again to take his place beside the others who were sitting along the board with their feet dangling into the butt.

“That fellow over there,” said one of the Hyenas, “makes more noise than a ferry-boat.” He pointed to a canoe out in the lake which was occupied by a young man and a small boy. The boy was waving his handkerchief ecstatically in applause of Harry’s feat, and his companion was splashing the water with his paddle, apparently for the same purpose. As they watched, they saw the young man ship the paddle, rise, step toward the middle of the canoe, lift what appeared to be a red sweater and wave it. Suddenly he staggered, and the next thing the boys saw was an overturned canoe, a lot of paraphernalia, and two

figures sprawling desperately in the water.

Harry had risen and without a single word walked across the knees of the other boys and disappeared, before the canoeists were really in the lake and before the other boys had moved. He did not stop to dive or even to jump, he simply walked off the end of the board. Then Brownell, who was at the outer end of the board, dived, but by that time Harry had almost reached the small boy, who was uttering pitiable cries. The young man had managed to get from deep water and stood chest deep near the farther shore, wringing his hands and screaming like a girl.

As Harry neared the boy the floundering figure disappeared and he waited. Presently it rose logily, heavily, the head back. “That’s right,” said Harry, “keep your head back and don’t move.” The only response was a scream and a panic-stricken clutch for Harry’s wrist. He loosened the small hand easily by turning his thumb against its wrist, but the boy’s two hands went convulsively to his neck, clinging desperately. He put his arm around the little fellow’s waist and his other hand, palm upward, under the chin, the tips of his fingers reaching the boy’s nose. Then he pulled and pushed jerkily. In a moment the little hands let go their hold. Like lightning, the boy was turned, almost brutally, as it seemed, and Harry was behind him again, his arms under the little fellow’s armpits, grasping each hand as it tried convulsively to clutch him, and making for the shore.

“Is he all right?” called Brownell, who, with one or two others, was almost across.

“Is he dead? Oh, is he dead?” gasped the young fellow who had been his companion. Harry paid no attention to the question, nor to the excited youth, but helped the boy to get rid of the water he had swallowed and tried to calm him.

“You’re all right,” said he; “and see how nice and clean your hands and face are. Where do you live?”

“He lives right up the hill in that handsome mansion,” volunteered the boy’s friend, who lisped and panted out his words excitedly with chattering teeth. He wore a gorgeous silk outing shirt, a neckerchief with ends tied loosely and hanging in a way of studied nonchalance, and a silly little trinket in the way of a compass hung on a lanyard about his neck. He was the true amateur camper, put together in a sporting-goods store, and now presented a ridiculous appearance as he stood shivering and dripping. Even his jack-knife, which might easily have been carried in his pocket, was suspended on a little silver hook from his belt.

“His people are extremely well-to-do,” he explained in his rapid, lisping voice. “I am a guest there myself; I have not the slightest doubt they will reward you suitably for your bravery.”

Harry surveyed him curiously, but did not answer. “What’s your name, sport?” he asked the boy, who was gradually getting possession of his senses.

“His name is Danforth—Penfield Danforth,” spoke up the summer sportsman; “he’s a delicate boy, father thinks the world of him, youngest child and all that sort of thing. Poor little codger, he seems to be quite upset. I—”

“Oh, let up,” Harry broke out.

“Pardon me?”

“He was upset, all right,” laughed Atwell.

“Yes, indeed, in more ways than one,” said the young man, smiling.

“Well, I guess you’d better take him home,” said Harry. “There’s your canoe down there under that tree; you can get it later. Take him up and get him something hot to drink.”

“I was very much impressed with your diving,” said the young man, “especially that last one—”

“I guess you can get him up the hill, all right?” said Harry.

“Indeed, yes, but I must ask your name. Mr. Danforth will, no doubt, wish to communicate with you.” He pulled out a little blank book with a red morocco cover, somewhat draggled from his plunge, and a pencil pocket along its edge. On the cover was printed in gold letters, *My Summer in the Woods*.

Harry eyed it amusedly.

“Your name, please?”

“Buffalo Bill,” said Harry.

“I’m afraid you’re joking. May I ask yours?”

“Daniel Boone,” said Atwell.

He dropped the book on its cord. “Well, we shall be able to find you anyway; you can’t hide your light under a bushel.”

Harry helped the boy to his feet, and watched the pair make their way up toward a large house with spacious lawns that crowned a hill a little way back from the shore. Then the boys swam across the lake and made for the little grove where they had left the Elephants.

“What the dickens is this?” said one. He was standing in front of a sign which read:

CAN’T GET AWAY TO DIG BAIT FOR
YOU TO-DAY, MY PATROL WON’T LET ME.

“And look at this one, will you?” said the amazed Atwell.

“Here’s another,” called Brownell.

They walked about reading the various signs which Frankie had lost a night’s sleep to manufacture.

“Well, what do you think of that?” said Brownell, as they stood surveying

the “shoe tree.” “The little imps! I wonder how many pairs they’ve left?”

“Haven’t left any, of course; they’re all odd shoes.”

Meanwhile, Gordon and Harry had discovered the canoe and begun quietly to put on their clothes.

The others gathered about and looked on enviously. “You fellows must have a pull with Frankie,” said one. “Going to give us a ride home?”

“Two of you can come,” answered Harry, “two light-weights. I don’t think it would be quite safe with Brownell or Atwell.” He was not going to lessen Frankie’s triumph any more than necessary and he knew that these two were the chief targets of Frankie’s vengeance. Two of the Hyenas lost no time in getting in, and while the others were wandering here and there, ruefully surveying the Elephants’ handiwork, Gordon and Harry pushed off.

“Hey, Oakwood, take these shoes and things, will you?” came from the shore. But Harry was almost in midstream and making a great splash with his paddle, and was discreetly unable to hear.

Two hours later, Frankie sat on a camp chair before the Elephants’ tent, playing dominoes with Giant George. His faithful corporal stood at his elbow.

“Here they come,” said Giant George, in an undertone. Frankie glanced covertly up at a sight which gladdened his heart. The Hyenas, in their bathing trunks, each one carrying a single shoe, were straggling to their stronghold. The perspiration dripped from them, for the heat was intense and their long walk home had been under a broiling sun. The Elephants had thoughtfully relieved them even of their hats and caps.

Mr. Wade and Al Wilson stood in the path, talking. The scoutmaster had a twinkle in his eye as the procession passed, and even the sober Al could not repress a smile.

“What are you going to do about it?” he asked.

“Nothing,” said Mr. Wade, chuckling. “I don’t want to be drawn into these political broils.”

CHAPTER XII
SHADES OF THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS

During the boys' absence, a doctor from Ticonderoga had visited Walter Lee, and pronounced his injuries comparatively slight, predicting a quick recovery. A sheriff had come out with him, secured the best description he could of the robber, and, satisfied who the fellow was, had gone in search of him. But the bird had flown, as he informed Mr. Wade on his way back. Harry was not altogether sorry to hear this, for he had not been able to get the wretched young man's mother out of his thoughts.

That night as they sat around the camp-fire the conversation turned upon the history of the old Fort Ticonderoga and its capture by the patriot, Ethan Allen, in the early days of the War of Independence.

"He was a queer old fellow," said Mr. Wade, who was always "great" at camp-fire, "but I've never been able to make out how he did that trick. There he was, a backwoods farmer, up in Bennington, Vermont, which was then a wilderness, with a pack of lumbering backwoodsmen following him about. Why, half of them didn't have firearms, and half the guns they had didn't work. I understand they used to use their swords to hoe potatoes. A uniform would have been a curiosity. They were simply a parcel of big, burly, ignorant farmers, strong just as an ox is strong, and almost as stupid. Allen had some wit, though. Well, finally the news works up that way that the colonists are going to war. Up jumps old Allen, and says he, 'Come on, let's go over there and take those two forts. Crown Point and Ticonderoga.'

"They were loafing around the village store, talking about liberty and tyranny and all that sort of thing. 'It's a go,' said Seth Warner, who was as reckless as Allen himself. 'I'm with you,' piped up the sheriff. 'Me too,' called another, and they got ready, chose Allen leader, and came right down through to Shoreham, opposite Ticonderoga.—Put another log on the fire, and rake her up a bit, will you, Cattell?

"Well, sir, there was one man who happened along, and he had some military training, but they had no use for him—said he was nothing but a soldier, and that was young Benedict Arnold, who turned traitor before the end of the war. But they let him go along. Now, history tells us that this pack of rough farmers, I don't know just how many, brought up on the shore right opposite Ticonderoga and Allen made them a great speech. Then they appropriated a few dories that happened to be moored about, for transports.

"That was long after midnight. They kept crossing and recrossing till

daylight, bringing the men over. You know, the fort, garrisoned by English regulars, was scarcely two hundred feet from the shore. And this thing was going on right under Captain Delaplace's nose till daylight. Then the whole crowd started up the hill, overpowered the sentry, marched in, and Allen called upstairs for Delaplace to come down.

"'What for?' says Delaplace. 'For me,' says Allen; 'I want the surrender of this fort.' 'In whose name?' called down the Captain, his nightcap bobbing over the stairs. 'In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress,' shouted Allen. And according to all accounts, the Captain immediately surrendered the fort. Then, as if that wasn't enough, Seth Warner finished the job by taking Crown Point Fort in the same way. And the Americans held them till General Burgoyne came down through this country and retook them.

"Now, all things together, I say the whole thing was impossible!"

"It was done," said Al Wilson, quietly.

"I know, Al," said Mr. Wade, "but it was impossible just the same—couldn't be done."

There was a great laugh, and Fred Brownell said: "You're like the old farmer that went to the menagerie and saw a camel for the first time. He'd seen dromedaries with one hump before, but when he came to the real camel with two humps he stood and looked at it for a few minutes in amazement with his mouth wide open. Then he let out, 'Gosh, ther ain't no such animal!'"

"Those farmers were full of patriotism," ventured a boy, when the laughter had subsided.

"Yes, and patriotism will carry one a long way," said the scoutmaster; "but I could never understand that capture—that and Paul Jones's victory. We'll look over the ground when we go down there; the doctor told me this morning that he'd see if he couldn't get us permission to camp a week or so right in the old fort. They say an old underground passage to the lake is still there."

Harry had listened carelessly to all this, but now an idea came to him.

"You mean to camp in the old fort, sir?" he asked.

"That's the idea, if we can get permission. We'll pick up here about the middle of August and spend our last two weeks on historic ground. You know, they've been restoring the old fortress after a fashion. A patriotic woman became interested in it, and they've made quite a fort of it. You two boys ought to see it. You know, old Ticonderoga has a great history. It played a part in the bloody French and Indian War, passed from the French to the English, then to the Americans when Ethan Allen took it, then back to the English when Burgoyne took it, then finally back to the Americans again. And now the Boy Scouts propose to occupy it!

"We'll explore the old Trout Brook where young Lord Howe was killed by

the Indians. I believe I can pick out the very spot."

"Then you do admit Ethan Allen took it?" smiled Harry.

"Well, in a way," laughed the scoutmaster, "according to history, yes; according to reason and common sense, no." Then, more seriously, he added, "There are some things in history, freakish things, which are theoretically impossible, but which are done. Paul Jones's great battle is one. The storming of Stony Point by Mad Anthony Wayne is another."

"Washington put him up to that," protested Al Wilson.

"No, he didn't, Al; Washington told him to go ahead if he wanted to, and Wayne, who was as crazy as a March hare, went ahead."

"And succeeded," finished Al.

"Yes, but logically he oughtn't to have succeeded," laughed Mr. Wade, "and Ethan Allen ought not to have succeeded. There was something wrong somewhere. If I were a military man and had a force of regular soldiers under me in that old fort, do you suppose a pack of undrilled backwoodsmen could land under my very nose, fire off a patriotic speech, and take the fort without the loss of a single life or the shedding of a drop of blood? No sirree!"

They all laughed at his good-natured vehemence, and he laughed himself, for at such times he was no more than a boy among them.

"Oh, but it was great, though!" cried Gordon. Harry said nothing; he was idly whittling a stick, and thinking. He hoped Gordon would not have the same thought, and blurt it out. He was thinking that if this thing could be done once without the shedding of a drop of blood, it could be done again.

"The last two weeks in August," he said to himself. "I wonder what Red Deer will think of it."

It was natural enough after this that the camp-fire "yarns" should turn on the history of the famous lake, of the old forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and the story of the reckless, adventurous Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys. Thus the evening passed, the cheerful fire crackling and lighting up the solemn woods and shining upon the faces of the merry company. They sat later than usual, in honor of the two guests who were to bid them farewell in the morning.

Gordon and Harry had the tepee to themselves, and the next day, early, they took their leave of the hospitable camp. But first they went in to see Walter Lee, who was to sit up that day. They had seen but little of Collins, the "First Aid" boy, and now the three sat about the injured scout's couch and talked. Harry liked Collins immensely. When they rose to go and had shaken hands with Walter, Harry lingered a moment. "I want to ask you a question," he said. "You remember when you passed us in the train, you made me the full salute? How did you know I was patrol leader?"

Walter's hand went up to a slightly frayed buttonhole in Harry's flannel

shirt. “I guess that’s where you fasten the lanyard of your patrol whistle, isn’t it?”

Harry smiled. “You’ll do,” said he.

Gordon paused to lean down and speak confidentially to the invalid. “We can’t make him wear a belt,” he said, “and he won’t wear a khaki coat, either. He’s very funny about some things; well, good-by.”

Mr. Wade gave them a letter to be delivered to Dr. Brent, *alias* Red Deer, and bade them a hearty good-by, with many hints to be used in their search for the needle in the haystack. The three patrols stood together and gave them a great send-off. But not the full troop, either, for seated by the roadside over the hill, they came upon Frankie and his faithful follower, Giant George.

“What did you think of that scheme yesterday?” said Frankie.

“It was great,” answered Harry.

“I thought up all those signs,” Frankie continued.

“They were very clever, too,” Harry said.

“I thought up that about the odd shoes, too.”

“That was the best part; well, good-by, Frank.”

They had gone perhaps a hundred yards when the piping voice of Giant George was heard in rebellious altercation with his leader, and presently a frantic shout from him brought them to a halt.

“I thought up that about the odd garters!” he shouted.

“Good for you, George!”

CHAPTER XIII
AN EXTRAORDINARY INVENTION

(Patent not applied for)

They cut up through the woods where Gordon had picked his way to the Albany camp, for he wanted to show Harry the chasm and the path he had taken.

"Now, Kid," said Harry, "you will be kind enough to keep your beautiful brown eyes straight ahead, or by the great eternal sphinx I'll put a pair of blinders on you. No more pink arrows! Just look ahead and listen to me. We've got three things to do, and one of them is right in your line. First, we've got to strike Crown Point and find the elderly lady who lost this bag."

"How do you know she's elderly, Harry?"

"On account of the smelling salts. Then we've got to find the troop, and if all goes well I'm going to give Mr. E. C. Wade the surprise of his life. How would you like to be Ethan Allen?"

"What!" said Gordon, the idea suddenly dawning on him.

"Well, now," Harry continued, "Ethan Allen was like you; he was the kind of a fellow who could find a way."

"That's like you, Harry."

"Well, but he liked to talk and make fine speeches, too, so I think it's up to you. Anyway, I'm going to put the idea up to Red Deer, if we can root him out, and see if we can't plan an assault. We'll reconnoiter the locality, send a couple of scouts in, then go over into Vermont, transport our men in dories right under Mr. Wade's nose, gag his sentries (he'll have some out, you can wager), and enter the fort, call upstairs and give him Allen's speech about Jehovah and the Continental Congress. Exactly how we'll take the fort is a thing I'll have to think out and talk over with Red Deer. But so far, how does it strike you?"

Gordon was radiant. "It's great, Harry! It's simply fine! And I read in a book—the school history—that after it was all over Ethan Allen and Seth Warner made a trip to Philadelphia and received the thanks of Congress; and we'll do that too, Harry, we—"

"I don't just see how we could do that," said Harry.

"Yes, we could, Harry; there's a way. My uncle belongs to a club where there's a man who knows a senator, and he—"

"Now just come down to earth," said Harry. "Do you suppose Allen was figuring on the thanks of Congress before he did anything? You're a nice kind

of patriot!”

They had reached the chasm and explored it together. Harry found a strip of wood which had evidently held the three logs together when they spanned the gully, and found that it contained several nails exactly like the telltale one whose impressions he had followed. He even found another one lying in the mud.

“It’s seldom a man commits a crime,” he said, “without either taking or leaving something that he doesn’t mean to. Sometimes it isn’t large enough to convict him. Sometimes it’s so small that it escapes notice. But a hundred to one, he takes or leaves something. Come on, let’s get away from here. You did great work, Kid.”

That was the last that Harry ever said, voluntarily, about the sordid crime. He seemed disgusted at all mention of it and anxious to forget it.

Emerging on the road where Gordon had seen the pink arrow, they started north for their belated ascent of Dibble Mountain. Their purpose was to get an outlook from its summit and go down its northern slope into the little village of Crown Point. They had almost reached the point where the stream ran under the road in its journey to the lake, when they heard voices ahead, and presently came in sight of a country boy leaning over the railing of the bridge and talking to some one below.

“Never heerd o’ no sech feller outside a book. I seen a book onct with a guy by the name o’ Dan’l Boone onto it, but I never heerd tell o’ no sech a feller in these parts; there’s a Dan’l Berry over to Hammondville. How’s that?”

A voice answered from below, but Harry and Gordon could not hear what it said.

“Oh, why didn’t ye say so?” the country boy called down. “Kind o’ play-actin’ folks, was they?”

By this time the boys had reached the bridge. Underneath, rocking gently in the water, was the handsomest motor boat that Harry Arnold had ever seen. Its brass trimmings shone dazzling in the morning sunlight. Cushions of scarlet plush covered its seats, their vivid color thrown into relief by the color of the boat itself, which was as white as snow. Also as white as snow was the mustache of the gentleman who occupied it, and the eyes which met those of Gordon and Harry as they looked down were genial with just the suggestion of a humorous twinkle. He wore a linen suit, very much wrinkled, and very much wrinkled, also, was the kindly face, and rather scanty were the gray locks that showed under the little blue yatching cap which he wore. A young man in chauffeur’s attire sat near the engine with his hand on the steering-gear.

“Good morning,” said the gentleman. “How far can I get with this thing?”

“Not much farther, I’m afraid,” answered Harry. “How much does she draw?”

“Now, you’ve got me,” said the gentleman, laughing. “How much does she draw, Pat?”

Pat shook his head.

“She draws about twenty dollars a week in the summer,” said the gentleman, “and if she were mine, I’d discharge her.”

“What seems to be the trouble?” laughed Harry.

“The trouble,” responded the gentleman, merrily, “is between herself and my son—it’s not my quarrel. She is occasionally taken with carburitis, which is a complaint of the carbureter. To-day she’s doing very nicely, thank you. Do either of you boys know where the Boy Scouts have their camp—how far up this stream? I’m trying to get to them.”

“We just came from there,” Harry answered. “They’re about two miles up, but I’m afraid you’ll have to foot it. It’s pretty shallow and rocky from here on.”

The gentleman put on his glasses. “Oh, yes,” said he, “I might have noticed. Is that a blue shirt you’ve got on? The sun is right in my eyes—you tall fellow, I mean?”

“It’s supposed to be blue,” laughed Harry.

“He’s got a khaki one,” added Gordon, “but he never wears it.”

“You belong up there, I suppose?”

“No, sir, we’ve been making them a visit. We’re a couple of tramps just now.”

“Is that a leather wristlet you’ve got?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, just come—no, wait a minute—I’ll come up there.”

“Stay where you are, sir,” answered Harry. “We’ll come down.”

He led the way down as if he expected to be charged with a crime. He suspected what was coming.

“Come in here, my boy—you too. My name is Robert E. Danforth. I have a place across the lake. You saved my boy’s life yesterday—don’t attempt to deny it! You’re the very boy I’m looking for. Did you give your name as Buffalo Bill? You did—don’t deny it! Who are you, anyway? Why didn’t you come up to the house so that we could thank you? Do you realize what you did?”

Harry had hoped that he might hear nothing more of the incident, but there was nothing now for him to do but face the music.

Mr. Robert E. Danforth, according to gossip, had begun life with nine cents, and he now had nine million dollars. It was not likely that such a man would permit the modesty of a boy scout to stand in the way of his purpose. And his purpose now was to make suitable acknowledgment to the boy who had saved his little son’s life. In the winter Mr. Danforth worked very hard; in

the summer he played very hard, and this was his play season.

He would hear of nothing but that the two boys should go back with him to Overlook, his magnificent estate on the Vermont shore. So the boat's prow was turned downstream and the little craft went chugging out through the reedy basin and across the lake toward a beautiful boat-house surmounted by an octagonal cupola, in one of the open arches of which they could see a small figure. They were halfway across when suddenly a white object shot from the cupola and dropped into the water a few feet from the boat.

"Get it, Pat," said Mr. Danforth, and the boat was steered over to the floating object, which Harry reached for and secured. It was a little aeroplane, crude enough in construction, having a plane about twenty inches long, on which dried glue, somewhat sticky now from the plunge, appeared in untidy masses. But as Harry lifted it, the propeller, which was nothing but one of those celluloid fans which shoot into the air when twisted from between the hands, began to revolve with a steady, even motion, continuing for fully half a minute. Mr. Danforth smiled as Harry examined it.

"He thinks he's going to revolutionize juvenile aeronautics," said the father.

"Well, I don't know but what he will!" said Harry. "What is this, anyway?"

"It's the alarm apparatus from a clock."

The mechanism was bound with thread under the center of the plane. The brass frame which encased a set of clockwork had been filed into and broken off, so that nothing was left but a little corner of frame holding a small clock spring, one little cogwheel, and the catch and release teeth which create and govern the vibration of the upright striking bar. The little metal knob, or striker, on the top of the bar had been twisted off and, since its weight modified the striking action, its removal created an excess of power which was here taken up by the propeller. This latter was rather clumsily connected with the mechanism by a light, flat-linked brass chain which ran around the cogwheel. The trouble with the whole affair was its weight, which, though small, might easily have been reduced still further.

They had now reached the boat-house, where the man jumped out and hauled the craft in between two others, one a beautiful steam yacht. The other, about the size of an ordinary rowboat, was covered with canvas. The little boy whom Harry had rescued met them on the stairs, his eyes glistening with tears.

"It's the twenty-third time it wouldn't go," he said.

"Never mind, my boy," said his father, putting his arm affectionately over the little fellow's shoulder. "Maybe it will go next time."

"Twenty-three's a hoodoo number, anyway," added Harry. "Why do you send it over the water?"

"Because if it flies across the lake, I'll win the cup. But it won't—it never

does."

"Well, Pat will row out and get it for you every single time," said his father, soothingly.

"It'll get spoiled—it's spoiled now—the ones you buy go." He almost broke out crying, and Mr. Danforth looked as if the little fellow's disappointment actually hurt him.

"I was all this week and two days of last week making it—and it's spoiled." He set his lips tight in a manly effort to control his distress.

Harry stepped forward, placing his arm over the boy's shoulder as his father had done. "You remember me?" he said in his quiet way. "Well, now, you listen a minute. Never mind if your machine is spoiled, you've still got the idea and it's a mighty good one, too. You can work it up again and make it still better." He smiled encouragingly and patted the little fellow's shoulder. The father was delighted.

"Hear that, Pen? This is the boy who got you out of the water yesterday—come to see how you are—maybe he can give you some ideas. Take him up to the aviation tower and show him things—show him the cup." He winked at Harry. "I want you boys to stay here till to-morrow," he called after them as Penfield led the way upstairs, "as a favor to me."

"I'm afraid we'll never find our friends unless we get about it," Harry protested.

"Well, one day won't make any difference. I want a chance to talk to you. Come up to the house when you've seen his den."

Penfield led them into a little octagonal room, littered thick with shavings, pieces of silk, tangled masses of reed, and a fishing rod which had been laid under contribution for strips of bamboo. Magazine cuts of the various types of air craft, the Curtis, the Voisin, the Cody, and the Wright, were tacked on the wall.

"That's the Voisin," said Penfield, excitedly, as Harry stood before the picture. "It looks like the Wright, but it isn't, it's got more longitudinal stability on account of the enclosed ends and partitions. But it can't coast like the Wright. I like monoplanes best, don't you? That's the Bleriot. You can flex the tips of the planes, that's one thing about it I like. Pat likes the Antoinette model, but I don't. The Curtis is my favorite,—only, of course, that's a biplane. You can't make a toy biplane fly, it needs too much control. But the Curtis is my favorite. It's the lightest of all, but that isn't why I like it. And it has the best finish, but that isn't why I like it, either. It's the control; you lift and decline the fore planes by shifting the steering wheel. And the balance is controlled by moving your body sideways. Isn't that a dandy idea? But I like the Wright brothers—my, I'd like to see them!"

"Well, they began just like you," said Harry.

There was one thing he noticed in particular as he picked up the broken and unfinished models that lay about. The most common, everyday objects had been used for some practical purpose. A circular typewriter eraser acted as wheel to a cog chain. Metal paper clips were used to hold joints. The circular, hollow bar of a gas jet held together and served as ferrule and fore-weight to the three dowel sticks forming a motor-base. The boy seemed to have his own way of doing everything, and everything he had done was ingenious.

On a rough bracket, six feet or so above the floor, stood a battered pewter stein.

"That the cup?" Harry asked.

"Yes, that's it, but I can't touch it—not till I've won it."

"Who offered it?" Gordon asked.

"I did, but I make believe it was a club. I'm trying to win it—it's a trophy. I can't even touch it till my monoplane flies across the lake."

Gordon would have laughed, but he encountered Harry's look, and refrained.

"Well, now, let's see," Harry said, sitting down and taking the little model on his knees. "I think we're just the fellows for you. You've heard of the Boy Scouts, I suppose. Well, we belong to the Scouts of Oakwood, New Jersey, and there's an aero club in our troop—"

"Oh, my father's building a house there," cried the boy.

"Where—Oakwood?"

"Yes, we're going to live there this Fall when it's finished. We're not going to live in the city any more."

"Do you suppose he means the big house they're putting up on the hill?" Harry asked of Gordon.

"Yes, it's on the hill," Penfield spoke up, "and I'm going to sleep outdoors."

"Well, that's news," said Harry. "I wondered who was putting up that house."

"Yes, and may I join your aero club—if I make one that goes?"

"You certainly may!" said Harry. "You can join the troop, and then if you are interested in aeroplanes you can join the little club six of the boys have formed. There's going to be a big meet in Oakwood this Fall; any boy that lives in the county can enter his 'plane—provided he made it. I believe the *Oakwood News* is offering a cup, too, isn't it, Gordon? I don't know very much about aeros myself."

"He does too," said Gordon.

Penfield was delighted. Excitedly he explained his crude little model to Harry. And Harry saw that the novel motive power which he had used held vast possibilities. He wound up the spring and found that the power sustained

the propeller in rapid motion for thirty-four seconds.

"Twelve seconds is the best ever done with elastic band torsion," said Penfield. It was evident that he had been studying the subject.

"Well, then," said Harry, in a brown study. "I don't see why we should lose those twelve seconds. Let's see, twelve and thirty-four make forty-six. Forty-six seconds in the air will beat any model airship ever made. Say that you lose six seconds for the transfer of power—there you have forty left."

"What do you mean?" asked both boys.

"Why, see here. The way they run these things usually—those you buy as well as the home-made ones—is by a long, thin strand of elastic from the axis of the propeller to a stationary hook. Wind the propeller and it winds the elastic—there's your power. Now, see this little jigger here?" He put his finger on the upright wire bar on which the striker of the alarm had been mounted. "This vibrates rapidly while the spring is unwinding. Now, suppose you bend the top of it into a hook, wind up your elastic, then wind up your spring. This striker bar will hold the wound spring stationary until the power of the elastic is exhausted. As soon as the elastic is run down, the spring goes to work. There are half a dozen ways to connect the spring movement with the propeller—the catch chain is one. You'll have to work it out. I give you the tip—the name is also thrown in—it's the celebrated Strikastic Multiple Motor, producing a sustained flight of about forty seconds. 'Strike' stands for striker; 'astic' for elastic."

"Or you might call it the Clockubber Transfer Motive System—that brings in clock and rubber," said Gordon. "Or better still, the Penalarm Torsubber Champastic Double Motor—there you've got everything in—Penfield, Alarm, Torsion, Rubber, Champlain, Elastic and—and—wait a minute—"

"No aeroplane could carry such a name as that," said Harry, "it would keel right over. Now, old boy," he said to Penfield, "if I were you, I'd take time and make this right, and I believe you'll have a winner. Make your plane bigger—thirty inches anyway, and flex it. You take a wooden pie plate and see how much higher it goes than a flat disk.

"Flex it this way" (he showed with pencil and paper); "then if I were you I'd have the sticks of your motor-base, or backbone, as you might call it, just wide enough apart to wedge this clockwork business between; it'll stand rigid and you'll get rid of a lot of friction. You might take away the brass frame altogether and line the wooden casing with aluminum. You've got to have the spring farther aft than this so as to have a good long span of elastic. I don't know what will happen up in the air when the power is transferred. Your propeller will probably slow down a second or two; you've got to experiment with that. Your difficulty is going to be in utilizing the power supplied by the spring by some light, simple mechanism. Cogwheels eat up a lot of energy—

but there's a way, as my old college chum here would say, and it's up to you."

The boy stood radiant as they rose to go.

"Did *you* think of using the alarm apparatus?" Harry asked him.

"Yes, but now I see what can be done with it—and—you're a genius."

"No, *you're* the genius," Harry answered; "you'd have worked it up this way sooner or later. You see, your plane was too small for your motor; then, again, this isn't a first-rate propeller, it hasn't enough slant."

"I know how to make one," Penfield broke in. "You cut strips of cigar-box wood, glue them on top of each other, put a nail in the middle, then before they begin to dry, twist them a little, as you do with a pack of cards. When the pile dries, whittle off the uneven edges, and you've got a dandy propeller. It's easier than trying to make one out of one piece."

"How'd you learn that?" Harry asked.

"Oh, I thought of it when I saw some one twist a pack of cards."

They went up a gravel walk which wound through the green lawn, and found Mr. and Mrs. Danforth on the porch. Penfield disappeared and Mrs. Danforth greeted the boys, thanking Harry profusely for his service to her son. They found it was true that Mr. Danforth was building a house in Oakwood and that the family were to go there early in the Fall.

"We have done everything we could for Penfield," said Mrs. Danforth. "We bought this place so that he might have the mountain air, and we are leaving New York for the same reason. Yet we can't get him to go outdoors and play with other boys. He would much rather sit in the house and read. Last year the boys in Ticonderoga had a baseball eleven, the small boys, and asked him to play quarterstop—"

"Shortstop," corrected her husband.

"But we couldn't get him to, he simply wouldn't. And it was the same with football. He *would not* go on the frying pan."

"Gridiron," said Mr. Danforth.

"Diamond," said Mrs. Danforth.

"No, 'diamond' is in baseball."

"Well, then, where was it they wanted him to play quarterdeck?"

"Quarterdeck is on a ship; Roger said something about quarterback, but Pen couldn't play quarter."

"Why don't you have him join the scouts?" asked Gordon.

"I wish you boys would take him in hand this Fall," said Mr. Danforth.

"He spends all his time indoors making aeroplanes and reading about them."

"Well, that's a good thing," said Harry. "But he ought to get outdoors, of course. I've been telling him about an aviation contest they're getting up in Oakwood, and he thinks he'd like to enter. Suppose we get him to join the

scouts after we all get home, and then—”

“Do they shoot off guns?” asked Mrs. Danforth, looking fearfully at Harry’s rifle.

“Sometimes, but not the younger ones. It would be a great thing for your boy.”

The answer surprised him. “I think it would be splendid.”

An hour later, as Mr. Danforth was showing the boys over the place, he stopped abruptly.

“You’ll stay over night with us?” Harry thanked him but said it was impossible. He knew the house was full of guests; the tennis courts were crowded with young people, among whom he could distinctly see the valiant hero of the day before bobbing about, and he thought of his own and Gordon’s very limited wardrobe. Then, too, they were anxious to lose no more time.

“Well, then,” said Mr. Danforth, “I won’t urge you, but you know you’re welcome. Now I want to make some little acknowledgment for what you did yesterday—something in the way of a trophy, as you might say.” He had evidently sized Harry up with his wonted business shrewdness, and he avoided the word “reward.” His tact did him small good, however.

“I don’t think you could make any better acknowledgment than you have done,” said Harry, feeling a trifle uncomfortable, as he always did when any one praised him. He spoke in his customary careless tone, but his nervous little smile seemed to say that he would like to have done with all this. This uneasiness of the boy who was always so much the master of himself was amusing.

“Of course, it would be absurd,” Mr. Danforth continued, “to ask you if you are fond of the water.” Gordon’s eyes opened wide and he listened with rapt attention. “The boat we came across in was recently brought up from New York. But before that my elder son, who is away at present, ordered one which we tried, but found too small for our parties. In fact, it’s nothing but a little motor-dory. It’s down by the boat-house now, and I want you to tumble your freight into it and take it along just to remember us by—or leave it here till you come back if you’d rather.” There was an awkward pause. Gordon stood in terrible suspense.

“I couldn’t do that, Mr. Danforth,” said Harry. “I don’t know how to thank you, and if you knew how fond of the water I am, you’d see how the idea of a present of that kind nearly turns my head. You’ve—you’ve hit me in the weakest spot,” he said, kicking the gravel walk and smiling ruefully, “but I can’t take it—I—I—just can’t.”

“Why can’t you?”

“Because it’s one of our rules to accept nothing for service to a stranger. We have our own awards, honors, and of course we can try for those. That’s

different. Saving life isn't always hard, anyway; the little fellow isn't heavy, and, well, I guess obeying rules is sometimes harder. Maybe that's the good thing about rules." His foot still kicked the gravel, nervously.

"Now, look here, my boy, you listen to me. That's all nonsense, and what's more, I don't believe you understand the rule."

"Yes, I do, Mr. Danforth, it's part of the law."

"Well, see how lawyers differ about the law," he went on cheerfully, "and besides, you can't have a law that isn't constitutional—you must know that. Now here's a rule which infringes on personal liberty, which forbids *me* to dispose of a boat that I don't want. That isn't fair, now, is it?"

"That's right, Harry," broke in Gordon, "we have no right to interfere with personal liberty—no one would say that was right. We'd have no right to even if we wanted to, Harry."

Harry laughed in spite of himself.

"Last year," Mr. Danforth went on, "I gave a thousand dollars to the library out in the little Western town where I was born. They didn't refuse it. This year I gave five thousand dollars to help start a hospital. They took it all right."

"Well," said Harry, "if you wanted to do something for the Scout organization, I couldn't stop you, but—"

Mr. Danforth seemed about to speak, then suddenly changed his mind, studying Harry closely. The boy was not aware of the scrutiny, for his eyes were on the ground. Neither did he know that he had put an idea into this kindly gentleman's shrewd mind.

"What, for instance?" Mr. Danforth asked.

"Oh, I don't know; I didn't just mean to say that."

"Is there any reward, or honor, as you call it, for doing a service to the Boy Scouts?"

"There is, yes, sir. But I think it's only given in very rare cases. There was one boy up in Maine who stopped a forest fire which threatened a big summer pavilion that the organization owned. I think they made him the award, but that's the only case I've heard of. I think the rule says, 'rare and exceptional service,' or something like that. My friend here knows the regulations better than I do. I think that's the only case."

"What is it called?"

"The gold cross," said Harry.

"Where is the headquarters of the organization?"

"It's in New York, sir," said Gordon.

"I see."

Penfield joined them, and they wandered down to the shore. "Let me show you the boat, anyway," Mr. Danforth urged.

"I'd rather not, sir," said Harry, hesitatingly. "I—well, I'd just rather not."

Instinctively he held out his hand, and Mr. Danforth shook it cordially.

"There's no use asking you to think it over?"

"No, sir, but I don't know how to thank you—I wish I did. You'll let Penfield join us in the Fall, won't you?"

"Of course, I want him to."

"He's going to walk away with the prize cup," Harry added.

"Yes, and he'll accept it, too," was Mr. Danforth's final shot, as the two scouts got into the boat in which Pat was to take them across the lake.

"Good-by, Pen," said Harry, shaking hands with the little fellow. "You work up that idea now, and make your planes large enough, and don't forget to flex them the way I showed you—get some strips of whalebone. We'll be home when you get to Oakwood, and we'll sail in and win that trophy so easily it'll be a shame to take it."

"He's a mighty nice little fellow, and clever too," Harry said, as they crossed the lake. Gordon disdained to reply. Neither did he speak as they left the boat and started across the quarter-mile stretch of flat country toward Dibble Mountain.

"Where are we going, anyway?" he finally demanded sullenly.

"Up Dibble Mountain to spy round the country—where'd you think?" was Harry's cheery answer.

"How'd *I* know?"

"Why, that was the idea, wasn't it?"

"I don't care where we go."

"What's the matter, Kid?"

"Nothing the matter with *me*. Goodness, I can speak, can't I!"

"Well, what are you grouching about, then?"

"Who's grouching?"

"You are; don't you want to hunt up the troop?"

"Oh, certainly, if you care to."

"We'd be a couple of gumps to go back home now."

"Well, there's more than one way of being a gump."

"Refusing a boat, for instance? What do I want of a boat? I've got you along, Kid, and that's all I care about. I'd rather have you than twenty boats. Come now, brace up, old man."

"You didn't have sense enough to be convinced by reason. That was a fine argument about the public library and the hospital."

"I know it, Kid. I don't claim to have much sense—you'll just have to put up with me."

"You won't gain anything, either," Gordon continued spitefully. "My father knows him; he belongs to a trust and he'll manage to get around the law all right."

“He’s a pretty shrewd business man, I should say,” Harry commented.
“You bet he is, and he’ll think up a way.”
“He’s like you, Kid, eh?”

CHAPTER XIV
ON DIBBLE MOUNTAIN

The belated quest of the needle in the haystack now went forward in real earnest. In the cool of that same afternoon they stood on the brow of Dibble Mountain. Gordon's hands were dyed purple from the berries he had picked and eaten along the way, and a goodly smootch ornamented his cheek. Sometimes the ascent was so steep that they found the easiest way was to "shinny" up the slender trees along the mountain side, and step off on to the jutting cliffs. It was slow work. From a great bowlder they finally looked down upon the surrounding country, which now, for the first time, as Gordon said, actually did look like a map.

To the east, and almost under them, as it seemed, was the lake, and beyond it the green hills of western Vermont. On its northern side the mountain sloped gradually, including Breed's Hill and Sugar Hill in its easy descent, and beyond these lay the little village of Crown Point. Close on the west rose the great bulk of Buck Mountain, towering above them and closing out their view. Five miles southward lay Ticonderoga, and looking to the west of the village the boys followed an imaginary course northward, trying to pick out in the dense woods the location of the Albany camp. The several roads which they had traversed looked like gray pencilings.

Between them and the lofty Buck Mountain ran a high, walled valley, almost a cañon indeed, known as Burgoyne's Pass, for it was through this valley that the British general led his army for the surprise of Ticonderoga,—the army which, hungry and forlorn, was destined to surrender to the Americans at Saratoga. Far in the north, but near enough to see its outline clearly, rose Bald Knob, a veritable monarch amid its great neighbors. Here and there thin columns of smoke rose, suggesting pleasant habitations and reminding the hungry boys that it was supper time.

"Well, what do you think of our seats up in the family circle, Kid? Pretty good view up here, hey?"

"It's A-No. 1! But I don't see the troop, do you?"

"Certainly, right over there."

"Not! That's a church! Let's take a squint through that field glass, will you? Placing the telescope to his eye," Gordon continued, suiting the action to the word, "our young hero now proceeded to gaze round the landscape, when suddenly—"

"The bully, who was standing near," interrupted Harry, also suiting his

action to the word, “gently took it from him.”

“Ha! I will be even with you yet!” said Gordon, dramatically.

“Kid, I think the best thing for us to do is to camp here for the night. If the moon comes out, we can see pretty nearly the whole section of country that I marked on the map—I mean we could see any smoke that rose. This is the very nearest mountain to the shore. We can overlook the low land immediately north and south. As for the west, that big chunk of earth is in the way, but they wouldn’t be to the west. If we have to go up Buck Mountain, we will. But to-night I think we’d better perch here, and when these folks about the country get through supper they’ll let their fires go out, and any smoke we see after that will be from a camp-fire. There’s no use going west of that ridge, is there?”

“What ridge?”

“Why, we’re in the Champlain Valley; this mountain happens to be standing almost alone, commanding north and south.”

“Is it standing in the bottom of the valley, Harry?”

“Yes.”

“How about old shaggy-headed Buck, next door, here?”

“That’s part of the ridge.”

“I believe you’re honest, Harry, so I’ll take your word for all that.”

“All right, we’ll stay here, then.”

“But answer me one question, Harry, before I trust my fate to thee. Where is the other side of the valley?”

“Over in Vermont. The Green Mountains.”

Gordon looked about. “Over there?”

“Yes, but I’m not considering that side. I’m only considering this side of the lake.”

“You are splitting the valley down the middle like a piece of kindling wood?”

“Correct.”

“Harry, you would not deceive me?”

“I’ll *gag* you in a minute.”

“And this mountain is a kind of knot in the wood, Harry? Do all the splitting you like, but for goodness sake, be careful—”

Harry placed his hand over Gordon’s mouth, and by a dexterous movement tumbled him on to the ground. “Get up now, and help pitch camp, and I’ll make you a rice pudding with figs in it. How does that strike you?”

“I can stand it if you can.”

“No sooner said than stung,” observed Harry.

Their first business was to find water, and this they soon discovered—a crystal spring, ice cold, that bubbled temptingly up between the rocks. While

Gordon kindled a fire, Henry felled a small sapling and binding it horizontally between two other saplings, in a sheltered spot, threw his balloon silk shelter over it, drawing it diagonally toward the earth on either side. Gordon kept up a running accompaniment as he busied himself with the fireplace.

"'Oh, we are merry mountaineers,
And have no carking cares or fears.'

"What kind of a care is a carking care, Harry?"

"Don't know."

"One that's made out of khaki, I guess—don't you throw that! Roll that green log this way, will you, Harold? Many thanks. Placing the green log in a parallel position to the other one, our young hero now knelt stealthily—"

"Our young hero will never see home again if he isn't careful," said Harry, as he tugged at the cover of a can.

"When suddenly," continued Gordon, "the bully—"

But actions spoke louder than words. The bully let fly both camp cushions, one after the other, and under this rapid fusillade "our young hero" sank to the ground.

"Coward! Coward!" he called.

"Look here, Kid," said Harry, standing over him and brandishing the can opener, "I've got you on the top of this lonely mountain. My contract provides that I shall accompany you in searching for camp. It does *not* include your old friend Alger, nor Harry Castleman, either. In just a minute—"

Gordon rose contritely. "What next—Harold?"

"Put some water to boil."

They sat with their backs against the trunk of a large tree, and Gordon admitted that fried bacon never tasted so good, and that nothing went so well with it as pilot biscuit. "I don't see what they have bread and butter for, anyway," said he. But his inventive genius would not long remain satisfied with the fare which Harry provided, and presently he was announcing luscious combinations. "I say, try this, Harry—it's simply great!" He handed Harry two slices of bacon with a fig between them. When the rice pudding was served, words failed him. He ate it with silent and serene delight. They topped off with squares of chocolate, on one of which Gordon was on the point of pouring a little "fly-dope" by way of experiment.

When they had finished the meal, Gordon suggested "going back the way they had come," beginning with chocolate, thence to rice pudding, thence to bacon; but Harry vetoed this novel plan.

It was with considerable suspense that they awaited the rising of the moon. As the twilight faded, the smoke which rose here and there in the distance disappeared till no stir was visible on the horizon. The boys knew that a

cooking fire in the open, unless it were very close at hand, would hardly be discernible, but they set their faith in the camp-fire of huge logs, such as Red Deer had never tired of describing. About nine o'clock Gordon, who had gone to the spring for water, came rushing back, wildly pointing to a circling line of smoke in the southwest which was thrown into clear relief against the moonlit sky.

"Look, Harry, there they are!" he cried.

"Yes, I saw that," said Harry. "You see that little silvery streak just beyond? That's the stream. It's the Albany camp. I'd like first rate to be there with them, too."

"We'll see them again," said Gordon, somewhat crestfallen.

"You bet," Harry answered, "when we surprise them in the old fort."

"We'll give them a jocular demonstration, all right, hey, Harry?"

"Ocular!" said Harry.

They played mumbly-peg in the moonlight, and discussed the proposed attack upon the "British stronghold." Gordon was for doing everything, even to the smallest detail, with historical fidelity. "You must be sure to call 'What, ho!' Harry, when Mr. Wade asks who it is, because that's in the book, and you must roll your r's the way they do up in Vermont. I wish we had an old rusty sword!"

"What'll we do with them when we've made them prisoners, Harry?"

"That'll be our chance to return their hospitality," Harry answered. "They'll be the guests of the Green Mountain Boys, and Mr. Wade will have to go away back and sit quietly down."

"Oh, it'll be great!" said Gordon, with a positive groan of delight. "I wish it was the last two weeks of August now!"

"If we do it."

"*If* we do it? Of course, we'll do it!"

It was ten o'clock or after when Gordon's roaming vision was arrested by a thin, gray line rising out of the black woods far to the north. Harry got out his compass and found that it was a little west of north and, as nearly as he could judge, five or six miles distant. He studied it closely.

"That's it, sure," said Gordon.

"You might run up there and see," Harry answered dryly. "I'll wait till you get back." He got out his map and tried to determine the locality. "Port Henry is eight or nine miles north of here, see?" he said. "It may possibly come from there, but it's not coming out of a chimney, I'm almost certain. Of course, there's no telling how far north it is, but it's probably this side of the high land which begins with Bulwagga Mountain. I dare say it's between Bulwagga and the shore. There's a stream there, too—Grove Brook—and that would attract them." He studied it long and carefully. "I don't see any suggestion of

lightness below it, do you? It must be at least five miles off."

"Harry, I have an idea!"

"Good for you."

"You know Red Deer's rule—eleven o'clock sharp. We all agreed to it. You remember what he said about not leaving any fire burning? Well, now, if they smother that at eleven o'clock—I can just see Conway jumping up like a little tin soldier and piling on green stuff as soon as Red Deer gives the word. You'll see, Harry, something will happen to that at eleven o'clock!"

Harry folded his map, took a piece of chocolate, and settled himself comfortably against the tree trunk. "We'll wait and see," he said.

The thin, distant column wavered in the moonlight, its top dissolving in the air. Sometimes it was scarcely visible. As eleven o'clock drew near, they watched it with growing suspense. The smoke in the southwest had long since died away. For twenty minutes or so before the hour the boys fancied that the column was losing somewhat in volume. Eleven o'clock came—five—ten minutes after eleven and nothing happened. Gordon looked puzzled. "I—I guess, maybe, Red Deer's watch is wrong," he said.

"Look!" shouted Harry, jumping to his feet.

The thread of smoke had suddenly expanded into a dense mass. They could see it plainly now.

"We've found them! We've found them!" shouted Gordon.

"When our young hero gets over his fit," said Harry, "I will gently remind him that we have *not* found them at all. There is something going on up in that direction—there seems to be a fire. That's all we know." But they watched the thickening mass intently. "Well," said Harry, "we may as well obey the rule, Kid; let's turn in. In the morning we'll cut up through Crown Point village and camp on high ground to-morrow night."

"No, *sir*! We'll go straight—"

"Where?"

"To that—to camp."

"Yes, but where?"

"Right where that smoke is."

"There won't be any smoke there to-morrow morning. Where do you propose to go? Can you point me out on the map just where that smoke is? Well, then, come down out of your airship and listen to reason. If to-morrow is very clear we may possibly be able to pick out the smoke of the cook fire—assuming that that's our own camp. But I don't think there's much chance of our seeing it. That smoke has been coming from several good-sized logs—it's a big fire. To-morrow we'll drop into Crown Point and return this little reticule to its owner and then—"

"And you'll ask questions in Crown Point, Harry, and they'll tell you just

where our camp is, and you'll spoil the whole business. No sirree, we've picked up the trail ourselves, and I'm not going to run the chance of our getting information."

"I'll promise not to ask a soul, Kid."

"Then what *will* you do?"

"We'll get up north of Crown Point and camp to-morrow night on Bulwagga Mountain. If my idea is correct, we ought to see that smoke to-morrow night close underneath us. Then the next morning we can drop right in on them—*if*—"

"There's no *if* about it," said Gordon. But he reluctantly agreed to this cautious advance, and they turned in for the night. Gordon sang Kipling's "Scout Song," chastising his companion by way of accompaniment:

> "These are our regulations:
> There's just one law for the scout.
> And the first and the last.
> And the future and the past,
> And the present and the perfect is,
> Look out!"

With every emphasized word a camp cushion came down upon Harry's head. "And the first" (*bang*) "and the last" (*bang*).

"You bet it's the last!" said Harry, "Look out!" and he promptly returned the compliment with the other cushion.

> "And the first and the last,
> And the future and the past.

I say, that's a terrible song, isn't it, Harry? Say it. Go on, say it once. You can never get it out of your head. There was a fellow over in England—a tenderfoot—and he learned it and it drove him crazy. Go on, say it, Harry."

"Who told you that?"

"You say it once—please."

Harry said it, and lost two hours of his night's sleep in consequence. For while Gordon slept peacefully, dreaming of what the next day was to bring forth, his friend lay looking out into the darkness and saying, over and over:

> "And the first and the last,
> And the future and the past,
> And the first and the last,
> And the future and the past,
> And the present and the perfect is,
> LOOK OUT!"

He finally shouted the last two words in hopeless exasperation.

"What's the matter?" said Gordon, sitting suddenly up. "Look out for

what?”

“And the first and the last,
And the future and the past,”

moaned Harry, while a smile of delight stole over Gordon’s sleepy countenance.

“Kipling’s a fiend, isn’t he, Harry?”

“Kid, if you ever mention that song to me again, I’ll do something desperate!”

CHAPTER XV
THE OWNER OF THE RETICULE

The sleeping propensity of a top is nothing to the way Harry and Gordon slumbered. You cannot sleep such sleep indoors. You need the starry sky, the dark surrounding trees, the lullaby of cricket and locust, the low, musical rustle of leaves. Then you can sleep, as Gordon put it, “till the cows come home.”

It must have been the custom for the cows in that vicinity to come home at seven A. M., for at that hour the boys awoke, and Harry soon had water boiling for the coffee. Of course, every one’s way of making coffee is by far the best way. The scout way is to bring your water to a boil first, then drop your coffee in and stir like the mischief.

At eight-thirty they had every single thing in their bags and were on their way down the northern slope of the mountain. You would not have known that any one had camped at the spot except for the ashes of the fire and the beaver’s head scratched on a rock.

They followed a winding, woodland path, scarcely visible in places. “What’s this?” asked Gordon, picking up a small, flat, triangular stone which his alert eyes had discovered. It proved to be an Indian arrow-head about an inch and a half long and nearly an inch wide at one end, tapering to a blunt point at the other. Harry showed his companion how, wedged into the split end of a stick and bound firmly, it constituted the old-time arrow of the bloody Mohawk tribe, whose savage warwhoops had no doubt once been heard along this obscure mountain path.

Gordon trudged along, kicking the earth in search of more of these murderous souvenirs. Although they searched carefully, they could find no more of them, but Harry came upon something which held a grewsome interest. At the base of an old oak tree where the earth was gray and powdery, he found the head of a tomahawk, eaten with rust and so encrusted with earth that he was able to break off the corners of it as if it had been made of plaster.

“I guess some poor chap met his end here,” Harry said soberly. “How would you like to be tied against that old tree and have a pack of savages throw these things at you?”

Gordon shuddered. “Do you suppose we’re on the old trail of the Mohawks, Harry?”

They were, indeed, treading the very ground over which that treacherous, bloodthirsty tribe had once carried their victims to torture and massacre. The thought of it had a quieting effect on Gordon, and they pressed their way along

silently for a little while. Then he began humming:

"Though you didn't or you wouldn't,
Or you hadn't or you couldn't—"

"What's that?" asked Harry.

"It's the rest of that 'Scout Song,' Harry," said Gordon, looking slyly sideways at his friend.

"You know what I told you, Kid! So help me—"

"Where do we come out?" Gordon interrupted.

"We're headed for Crown Point Centre."

Within an hour they came upon an open road and soon reached the village. It was not necessary to inquire for the owner of the little reticule, for on a wooden post outside the post-office was a notice written in a delicate hand on a half sheet of note paper:

LOST

Lady's small hand-bag on road near Ticonderoga. Finder will confer great favor by kindly leaving with postmaster or returning to

MISS ANTOINETTE CROSBY,
BUCK MANSION.

The word "great" was underlined several times, the word "kindly" was underlined twice, and the word "Miss" once.

"How far is it to Buck Mansion?" Harry asked, sauntering into the post-office.

The postmaster took a leisurely scrutiny of both boys. "What yer want to go up thar for?"

"Just to see some one. About how far is it?"

"Well, up here folks calls it three mile. City folks sometimes calls it five. One man that was up thar last summer calc'lated 'twas ten—said 'twas ten mile down and twenty mile back. He was a kind of a comic. But I can tell you right now they ain't got a vacant room in the house."

"Thank you," said Harry. "Come on, Kid, we'll go up there. We don't need to get up Bulwagga Mountain before night."

The distance to Buck Mansion was somewhere between one mile and ten, and the way led them through a fragrant country with houses at intervals along the road. To-day the distance was rather shorter than usual, or else the "scout pace" helped to make it seem so, for within an hour the boys reached a spacious white house, standing well back from the road. The lawn in front was covered with trees, where a number of hammocks hung. The fence skirting the road was broken in one place by a little summer-house containing a pump, and

the half of a cocoanut shell hung near by way of a cup.

The position of this little well-house on the very edge of the public road afforded a tempting resting-place for tired wayfarers. Through the trees the boys could see that a deer's head with spreading antlers hung over the doorway of the house. On the deep porch easy-chairs stood about, and in a frame swing to one side of the lawn a solitary figure sat writing. With this exception, not a soul was to be seen, which seemed odd in a spot that afforded such tempting facilities for idleness and repose.

"The deserted village," said Harry, "but I guess this is the place, all right."

Just then voices reached the boys through the trees:

"Shall I come to you?"

"No, try to go out."

"She's for that wicket."

"*She* can't get through."

"I could send her down to you."

"She plays before I do."

"Well, I'm going to try to hit her anyway." There was a second's silence, then a whack, then "Missed! I told you so!"

"Come on over there," said Harry.

On a smooth croquet ground an exciting war was going on. So intent was the group of ladies on the game that it was fully five minutes before any one spied the two scouts who leaned on the picket fence watching the play. Then one of them came toward the fence, her croquet mallet over her shoulder like a musket.

"Excuse me for interrupting you," said Harry, removing his hat, "but I didn't like to come out on the ground. Is this Buck Mansion?"

"Yes, indeed," she said, eying the boys curiously. "Is there some one you wish to see?"

"Is there a Miss Crosby here?"

"Indeed, there is. Nettie!" she called. "Here are two young gentlemen to see you."

The figure in the swing rose quickly, spilling a writing tablet, a bag of candy, a fountain pen, and a magazine. As she straightened out her gown, which did not reach anywhere near the ground, the boys saw her to be a girl of not more than sixteen. They turned toward her.

"Miss Crosby?" Harry asked.

"Ye-es."

"I think this little hand-bag is yours."

"Oh, *did* you find it?"

"Yes, and I ought to have returned it sooner. I'm afraid I found it within an hour of the time you lost it, but better late than never." He handed her the bag.

“Oh, thank you so *very, very* much. How *did* you find it?”

“Oh, I was just amusing myself noticing where your auto broke down.”

“It isn’t *my* auto.”

“And I picked up the bag on the stone wall.”

“Oh, thank you so *very* much for your trouble. The bag isn’t really *worth* anything, but—” She stopped short and looked at him suspiciously. “How did you know I was in an auto?”

“You just said so—or said as much,” smiled Harry.

“Yes, but *you* said it *first*.”

“Well,” said Harry, driven to it, “I happened to be along the road above Ticonderoga that night, and I saw the auto tracks in the moonlight and the ground all rumpled, and, oh, one thing and another, and then the bag on the wall. So I put it in my pocket to return it if I could find the owner.”

“You *knew* we broke down?”

“I thought so.”

“Oh, *isn’t* that just *wonderful*?”

“That’s nothing,” said Gordon. “He does things like that every day—he does them by deduction.”

“Deduction?”

“Yes—putting two and two together and making four.”

“That’s arithmetic,” said she.

“For instance, he thought this bag belonged to an elderly lady,” Gordon continued. “Of course, once in a great while he’s wrong,” he added quickly, rather regretting that he had selected this particular illustration of Harry’s talent for deducing.

“What made him think *that*? Why, it’s a pale blue—it matches—what *made* you think that?” she demanded of Harry.

“On account of the smelling salts,” said Gordon.

She opened the bag and closed it hastily. “I think you’re just *horrid*!” she said, looking at Harry. But she did not think he was *horrid*. Quite otherwise.

“You see,” explained Harry, “I had to open it to see if it contained a name or address.”

“Of course,” she said, “but it was just horrid to *think* I was an *old maid*! Do you always finds things out about people that way—what is it?”

“Deduction,” Gordon spoke up. “All scouts have to learn to decide things that way—it’s dandy fun.”

“I think it’s horrid. I suppose you’re just finding things *out* about me *now*. It makes me *creepy*! But you’re *very* kind,” she promptly added. “Tell me, honest and true, what *are* you deducing about *me* now?”

“Well,” said Harry, “I deduce that you’ve been writing a letter and underlining lots of words.”

She opened her mouth in astonishment. “You’re a *perfect* ghoul!” said she. “But I haven’t *even* asked you to sit down yet. Won’t you come over here and rest?” She led the way to the little well-house by the roadside, giving Gordon an opportunity to whisper to Harry:

“Now, you see, Harry—if you only had your uniform on! Did you see how she looked at me? It wasn’t I she cared about, Harry—it was the scout uniform. The scout suit catches them every time. I know more about those things than you do, Harry, because I’ve had more experience. Now you’ve learned a lesson.”

There was no chance for Harry to reply, for the young lady had reached the little shelter and stood waiting for them. She was an extremely pretty young lady, with a great mass of dark hair held together in the back by a huge bow, and she had a very snub nose and a way of puckering her brows into a kind of whimsical frown. A number of rebellious locks hung about her forehead, shaken loose by the habit she had of giving all her adjectives a racking emphasis, thus causing her head to be in a state of almost continual agitation. She wore a white sailor blouse, with blue trimming and a blue anchor worked in front. Also a blue braided cord with a tiny round mirror on the end, used in capturing and confining the loose locks after a particularly emphatic tirade. The other extremity of Miss Antoinette was on the whole more demure and reposeful, her small feet being encased in bewitching little pumps, which were hardly worth while at all since they were almost completely obscured by enormous silk bows.

It took Gordon about one minute to forget his anxiety to keep secret the object of their wanderings, and presently Miss Antoinette was apprised of their intention of ascending Bulwagga that very day. She said it was all *wonderful*.

“And it was so *clever*,” she went on, “your *knowing* that I was autoing. They were friends of mine over in Vermont, and have such a *lovely* place. Mr. Danforth—he’s just, oh, *so* generous and *such* a dear! It was his son, Roger, that I was with that evening, and oh, he’s so *dreadfully* unlucky!”

“I should call him lucky,” said Harry.

“Oh, *no*, you wouldn’t. *Something* happens *every* time he goes out. Now what *are* you looking that way for? You’re *deducing* this very minute—you *know* you are!”

Harry clasped his hands behind his head, settled far back on the seat, and looked serious and thoughtful. Gordon cast his eyes heavenward as if buried in deep calculation.

“There must be some cause for this bad luck, Kid,” said Harry. “What do you make of it? He understands autos perfectly, I suppose, Miss Crosby?”

“Oh, yes, he has *two*.”

“Interested in mechanical matters, then?”

"Oh, *very* much."

"Probably has a motor boat, also?"

"Yes, he *has*."

"Such traits usually run in families. Has he any brothers and sisters?"

"Yes, the *dearest* little fellow—and *he's* interested in mechanical things, too."

"Ah," said Harry, thoughtfully. "He would probably be interested more in some other form of mechanics—aeroplanes, for instance."

"He is, he is!" cried Miss Antoinette.

"And if he spent too much time reading and studying about them it might affect his health," suggested Gordon, innocently.

"I catch your idea," Harry said. "You think the older brother might be preoccupied by concern for the little fellow's health, and so not give his full attention to his car?"

"That might account for his having so many accidents," said Gordon. "He ought to take his chauffeur along."

"Possibly he leaves him at home to help the little fellow with his aeroplanes," said Harry, after a moment's thoughtful pause. "Living in the city, as I suppose they do, the little chap would naturally take advantage of being up here to try out his models. And they might be afraid of his meeting with some accident—being so near the lake, too. *Is* his health at all delicate, Miss Crosby?" he added.

"Yes, *indeed*," cried the girl, who had been staring from one to the other in speechless amazement.

"They all worry about him *so* much. And he *does* stay indoors too much, reading and experimenting with his aeroplanes. Roger is *always* speaking of it, and I believe he *does* leave his chauffeur at home for that *very* reason."

"Then, too," said Gordon, placing the tips of his fingers together, "the chauffeur would be needed for the other auto—taking parties about. The house is probably full of guests most of the time."

"Pre-cisely," said Harry. "And the father probably doesn't understand much about motors," he added, as an after-thought. "He naturally wouldn't. May I ask if the chauffeur is Irish, Miss Crosby?"

"His name is Pat," she answered, as if in a trance.

"Probably cheerful and good-natured," mused Harry. "So you think they do worry about the younger brother's health?"

"Oh, I *know* they *all* do, for his lungs aren't strong."

"I should say they'll probably move to the country before very long," said Gordon, with great deliberation. "The little boy would be better there. Very likely they'll build in some good, healthful suburb, most likely somewhere in New Jersey, and give up their city residence altogether."

“Not necessarily,” said Harry.

But Miss Antoinette had jumped to her feet. “I *never* in my *life*!” she exclaimed. “It’s *perfectly miraculous*! That’s *exactly* what they *are* going to do! Mr. Danforth is building a *beautiful* place up on a hill in New Jersey, and they’re going there to live this Fall!”

"'I NEVER IN MY LIFE!' SHE EXCLAIMED."

"'Twas merely a guess of my friend," said Harry, in a deprecating way, as he rose to pump some water. But the repressed twitching around Gordon's

rebellious lips made the girl suspicious.

"You're just *fooling* me!" she cried. "You must *know* them!"

In a few minutes it was all out. Gordon, entirely heedless of Harry's scowls and embarrassment, gave her a complete account of the rescue of little Penfield and their subsequent visit at the Danforth place. She was entirely of Gordon's way of thinking as to the acceptance of the boat, and assured Harry that there was really no hope of escaping Mr. Danforth. "You might *just* as well have *taken* it," she said, "and then you wouldn't have to be *worrying* about what he might do next."

"You don't think he'll really get up a conspiracy?" Harry laughed.

"I *know* he will, and it will serve you *right*; you *did* interfere with his liberty."

"Now you see," sneered Gordon, with great satisfaction. "What did I tell you? He never takes my advice," he added, confidentially, to the girl. "Now you take to-day, if he only had—"

"Is that a tennis court over there?" Harry interrupted.

"Yes—do you like tennis? I *hate* croquet—they *all* play croquet here, and there's not a *boy* in the place. Oh, I wish I were you, you can have *such* fun, going *wherever* you want to, and just camping out."

They walked over through the croquet field and were presented to twelve ladies and two lonely gentlemen, all of whom showed a lively interest in them, as people usually do in boy scouts. Then to the tennis court, where Miss Crosby and Harry played a lively game, while Gordon sat on a rustic seat and gorged himself with apples. Between games she made a hasty trip to her mother on the croquet ground, and presently that lady strolled over and insisted that the boys remain to dinner.

Gordon's eye was on Harry, and he did not dare decline. They found the summer guests a cordial set, who were only too glad to vary the daily routine of alternate croquet and bridge by entertaining them and plying them with questions.

Early in the afternoon they set forth for Bulwagga Mountain. Miss Crosby had acquired a lively interest in their enterprise and had made them promise, at parting, that they would call again if they could possibly manage it, "and show me some more *deducing*" she had said, with an injured look.

And she added that she would "*certainly* stay up until *midnight*, and try to discover smoke, and if she *did* discover it, she would know that *they* had seen it too, and would be with their friends in the morning, and *wouldn't* that be just *dear*?"

Harry said it certainly would, but that it was too good to be true.

"Now, Harry," said Gordon, as they started into a clump of woods in the direction of the great Bulwagga Mountain, "the trouble with you is that you

don't recount your adventures. That's the only trouble with you, Harry. You should have recounted your adventures. There was your chance to recount them to a maiden."

"A what?"

"A maiden—it's the same as a girl. And you've got the very best kind of an adventure, too—rescuing some one from drowning—it's always a winner. Why, Harry, a maiden always marries a fellow that saves her from drowning—always! It's all right to have adventures, but if you want to be a real hero, you've got to recount them. They always do in books. 'After he recounted his adventures—'"

"Well, that shows I'm not much of a hero, Kid, doesn't it?"

"I know, but you *might* be. You've got the adventures all right, only you don't recount them. *I'm* not blaming you, Harry, because you don't know much about girls. Now there was a fellow in a play, named Othello, and oh, cracky, Harry, but he was a peacherino! He used to recount his adventures all the time—to a maiden. And he made a great hit, too. And you could do the same thing, Harry. There's no kind of an adventure like a rescue from drowning. Of course, I don't say anything against pulling a maiden off the railroad track, especially if she's bound with cruel thongs, because that's a winner, too. But a rescue from drowning catches them every time. Why, don't you suppose that Alger, and Henry, and men like that, know? You bet they do! 'Most all their heroes save people from drowning, and that's how they win her hand. If I had an adventure like that, I'd recount it to maidens, you can bet! But I'm not saying you didn't make a hit, Harry."

"Oh, stop that, Kid."

"No, I won't stop it, either. If you'd only had on your khaki suit, like me, it would have been great. But even as it was, you made a hit, Harry."

"You're dreaming, Kid."

"All right; but you're going there again, I can tell you that."

"Not."

"I bet you do."

"I bet I don't."

"She invited you."

"She invited both of us."

"Yes, but she meant you."

"What the dickens gives you that idea?"

"I deduced it, Harry."

CHAPTER XVI
GORDON INTERFERES IN FAMILY MATTERS

At six o'clock that night the two boys stood on the summit of Bulwagga Mountain, or on one of the summits, for Bulwagga has two peaks. It was the hardest afternoon's work they had ever undertaken. Long before they threw down their burdens, two thousand feet above sea level, Gordon had ceased to talk and devoted his breath to panting. It was a tough, tedious climb, but the game was well worth the candle. They looked off upon an endless landscape, dotted here and there with toy houses and pigmy villages.

"What's the use of sawing wood and laying bricks and building houses and churches," said Harry, "if that's all they amount to?"

Indeed, Bulwagga, standing silent and serene, close to the shore of the great lake, seemed to belittle everything. There lay Crown Point, a modest little cluster of tiny buildings. There lay the lake, almost under them, with all its little juttings and indentations plain to view. There was the Crown Point peninsula curving out into the middle of the lake and pointing northward like a great, clumsy thumb. Inside it was Bulwagga Bay.

Once upon a time, more than three centuries ago, the adventurous Champlain sailed up this great lake which bears his name, with an exploring party of merry Frenchmen. Instead of turning their prows eastward into the narrow channel formed by the peninsula, they sailed gayly into Bulwagga Bay, supposing that an open path lay before them. But the bay proved to be a trap. Down out of the fastnesses of the old mountain came the Mohawk savages, and the gay little company was caught like a rat. Harry, who knew the history of the lake, now saw just how it had happened. Many a time and oft had the bloody Mohawks made good use of this deceptive bay, and many who were caught and slaughtered there supposed they had reached the end of the winding sheet of water, for there was no sign posted on the end of the peninsula informing the explorer to turn to his left.

But now the old mountain, which had so long been the secret ally of the bloody Mohawk tribe, gave up the secret, as if to say: "You see how we worked it. Wasn't it a great scheme?"

"Harry," said Gordon, "I'm all in—let's rest."

"Your motion is unanimously carried," said Harry, sitting down on a rock. "If I saw the camp ten feet in front of me now, I wouldn't budge. Now that's just about where I think the smoke was," he continued, pointing down into the woods which extended from the base of the mountain to the lake; "and if I'm

right, we've got a grandstand view on them, provided there's a moon. Just as soon as they get their old logs blazing, we've got them. If—"

"Now you spoil it all when you say *if*, Harry. It isn't necessary to say that. We're sure to see them from up here. We've got them, sure, Harry."

There was some reason for his hopefulness. Bulwagga Mountain is, indeed, a mighty grand stand built on the shore of Lake Champlain. It is long and narrow, its length running parallel with the lake. There are two peaks, precisely placed, one at the northern, one at the southern, end of the ridge. By reason of Bulwagga Bay, the northern half of the mountain actually forms the shore, descending sheer like a great wall, as if to crowd the railroad into the water. The southern half sits back like a dress circle in a theater, or rather the lake flows wide of it, leaving a stretch of flat, wooded country between. Here the mountain slopes down from its southerly peak, admitting of a descent, if you are cautious and care to undertake it; but there is no way to descend from the northern peak eastward except to go to the edge and jump off, a method which has never been popular with tourists.

On his western extent old Bulwagga is more amiable. There is a road which works its way up toward the northern peak, as many a tired horse knows, but it does not get to the top; and you alight and plod on till you look straight down into the bay and can see the ruins of the Crown Point fortress on the end of the chubby peninsula. The southerly summit looks down with lofty scorn upon the touring parties that make the ascent of his brother peak, for he encourages no sightseers to come too near and trifle with his lonely majesty.

It is all very well for Bulwagga to raise his twin crowns proudly and make a great show to summer boarders, but I can tell you that he might better bow his heads in shame, for he has a most bloody and disreputable history. I dare say there is not a mountain along the whole stretch of Lake Champlain and Lake George that has gotten itself mixed up in so many massacres. For years its fastnesses echoed with warwhoops and with the cries of the dying. It was a favorite stronghold of the savage and treacherous Mohawks. But all that is past.

It was the baffling, lonely, wild southerly peak of old Bulwagga that the boys had succeeded in mounting. There was no road, no path, nothing but their compass to guide them. They had come up from the west and the spot where they threw themselves down commanded an unobstructed view of the stretch of woodland between them and the lake. As they looked down, a sudden jut of white smoke rose under the precipitous northern end of the mountain, the column traveling diagonally across the base of the peninsula toward the lake.

"Listen," said Harry, and they heard the distant rattle of a hidden train, as it rushed across the peninsula to regain the shore.

"My, but it's lonely up here, isn't it, Harry? When are we going to eat,

anyway?"

"As soon as little Gretchen brings in the firewood. I've got to sit right here so as to keep that woods down there in view. It wouldn't be safe for me to move."

"It wouldn't, wouldn't it?" said Gordon, pushing his staff against Harry's chest and toppling him over backward. "Get up and pitch camp, you lazy thing!"

They set to work putting up their shelter, and in a little while the frying pan sent forth its savory odor.

"Let's have some more of those bacon sandwiches, Harry. Where are the figs?"

"All gone. Want coffee?"

"I certainly do."

"It'll keep you awake."

"Never! A brass band wouldn't keep me awake up here."

"All right, hand me over that egg powder. Could you eat an omelette?"

"Could I? Here you go, catch this—catch this chocolate, too."

"What's that for?"

"Scrape some into the egg powder, Harry. It'll make a sort of chocolate omelette."

"Why not put some cereal in, too, while we're about it?"

"Just the idea, and we'll have a new breakfast food—choc-chocerealeg."

"Reminds you of the Champastic Motor," laughed Harry. "I wonder how the little chap's getting on with his model."

"We'll get him in the troop, hey, Harry?"

"By all means."

After supper, to which both did full justice, they sat back to await the darkness. They had hoped to see some smoke which might indicate a cook fire, in the woods below, but supper time had come and gone and there had not been the faintest suggestion of any. It was true their outlook was by no means limited to the woods directly east of them. By shifting their position somewhat they could scan the country far to the west and south. But the woods to the east afforded an ideal spot for a camp; there was the lake just beyond—it was just such a spot as Red Deer would have chosen and near enough to show the trained vision of a scout the smoke of its cook fire. But there was none, and both boys rather dreaded the approach of darkness with, perhaps, its greater disappointment. For Gordon enthusiastically, and Harry quietly, had set their hopes all day on what a view from this old mountain might reveal.

"I know one thing," said Harry, "and that is, if we stay here over to-morrow, I'm going to find a place where little fishes dwell. Methinks I could dally with a fried trout, Sir Gordon."

“But why should we hang around here over to-morrow, Harry?”

“Because, my son, we don’t happen to be weather-vanes on the top of a steeple. If we don’t spy anything down there, we’ve got to get over that way till we can command the west,—savvy?”

“That’s a good expression, Harry, ‘command the west.’”

“You like it?”

“It’s all right.”

“If I happen to use an expression you don’t like, just mention it.”

“The pleasure is mine,” said Gordon.

Ten o’clock arrived—eleven. No sign of a camp-fire. Weary, sleepy, and disappointed, they turned in for the night.

The morning broke damp and foggy, with a drizzling rain veiling the country roundabout. The wind was east, the sky dull and heavy, giving no promise of clearing.

“Rain before seven,
Clear before eleven,”

sang Gordon, cheerfully. “It’ll be a good day for fishing, anyway. I’m going after minnows. We’ll see if that trickle of water doesn’t broaden out some, hey?”

“I can tell you that without going,” said Harry. “It does. It flows into the lake.”

“Rises in Bulwagga Mountain,” said Gordon, “takes an easterly course, and flows into Lake Champlain. Correct; be seated, Master Lord.”

“A little south by east,” said Harry, looking at his map.

“Aye, aye, sir,” Gordon answered. “A sail on the weather bow, Cap’n.”

“Look here, Kid, we’ll have to stick it out up here to-day, and if there’s any sign of clearing by afternoon we’ll move over through this clump where we can command the west.”

“Don’t talk about commanding the west, Harry. Last night you were going to command the east, and now the east has got you rattled. I don’t see us commanding this old country at all. It seems to me the country is having a great laugh on us. Look at this game that we’re mixed up in now. This rain wasn’t on the map, was it? You give me a pain with your ridges and outlooks and things—and so does Red Deer with his blackboard charts! You call this a peak? I don’t see any peak to it. It’s a jungle—that’s what it is! Where’s the peak?”

“We’re on it.”

“Harry, you’re crazy. There’s no sign of a peak here.”

“Isn’t that other one a peak, Kid? Well, over there this one looks the same.”

"All right," said Gordon, as if to make allowance for his friend's peculiarities, "only don't talk about 'commanding the west.'"

"Getting discouraged, Kiddo?"

"No, I'm trusting to luck. I'm usually lucky. I found a quarter and a dime and a gold ring and a watch charm last year, and I believe I'll run up against camp—that's all."

"Good for you! Well, now, give me your ear. I was just going to rise to remark when you made your little speech, that we'll go over to the western side of this sharp peak, this tack point, this spire—"

"And the first and the last,
And the future and the past.
And the first and the last—"

sang Gordon, doggedly.

"Keep still!"

"Well, then, *you* keep still."

"Kid, all you need is an apple. Now listen to your patrol leader. It's a scout's duty to obey his leader. You need to brush up on the law a little."

"I suppose that precipice over there is what you call a contour line," said Gordon, with deep sarcasm.

"That's what Uncle Sam's surveyors call it, but, of course, anything you say—"

"And when it comes to the law," continued Gordon, "you just want to read up General Baden-Powell—what he says about chivalry. It's a scout's duty to recount his adventures to maidens."

"Well, if I'd recounted a thrilling adventure like a rescue, she might have cried, Kid."

"Maidens don't cry—they weep."

"Well, this mutiny has got to be put down, anyway," said Harry. "I order you to dig a hole and bury this refuse, as per camping regulations of the Boy Scouts."

The odds and ends of breakfast (and they were not many) were soon disposed of "as per," and Harry outlined his idea for exhausting all the possibilities of spying which the mountain afforded, before, like the famous Duke of Yorkshire, they marched down again.

Despite the drizzling rain, they made their way to where the little neighboring rivulet formed a pool with a bright, pebbly bottom, and here they scooped up minnows almost by the handful, until their pail was thick with the little, darting, silvery fishes.

These Harry fried in cracker crumbs, and they sat under their little shelter and enjoyed them, Gordon keeping up a running comment on their tastiness

and flavor. And I can tell you that if you happen to be on a lonely mountain on a drizzly day, you cannot do better than arrange yourself comfortably under your shelter, enjoy the remoteness, the wildness, laugh at the weather, and eat fried minnows.

In the afternoon Harry, who was a true philosopher, took both camp cushions, which they had filled with balsam the night before, spread his blanket, pressed all available clothing into service to form a means of reclining, and settled back comfortably with a paper copy of "Kidnapped," which he had taken the precaution to bring against the possibility of just such weather as this.

"If any one calls, Kid, I'm not at home—office hours after six."

Gordon knew what that meant. He hated Robert Louis Stevenson as a rival. As sure as a rainy day came, Harry would double up in a corner somewhere,—in his room, in the library, in the troop room,—and be dead to the world. At such times Gordon was powerless, nothing could rouse his friend. He had hoped that Harry might get through with this trip without an attack of the kind. But now it had come. Stevenson, like rheumatism, was always to be counted on in bad weather.

"Why don't you tackle 'Brave and Bold,' Kid?" said Harry, as he settled down. Gordon chose to interpret this as a cowardly and slurring attack on Alger, and he disdained to reply.

"If you're going to be knocking around in the Scotch Highlands all afternoon, I might as well take a walk."

"Don't fall off the peak."

Gordon scorned this shallow attempt at humor. "How near through are you, anyway?"

"Eight more chapters."

"That'll take you two hours. Good-by."

"Here, take the compass—and don't trip over those contour lines."

Gordon caught the compass, but his scout smile was conspicuous by its absence. The rain had held up somewhat, and he picked his way through the thick brush, every stir of which shook water upon him, for old Bulwagga was thoroughly soaked from the continuous drizzle.

Stumbling and creeping on, he soon found himself in a labyrinth which it was impossible to pass through, so interwoven were the limbs and vines. He retraced his path and was able to pick out a comparatively open way around this tangled spot. Never had he seen such wildness. There was not a thing to indicate that any human being had ever before set foot on this rugged mountain top. Great bowlders, covered with tenacious vines and sheltered by crooked sinewy branches, lay about in tumbling confusion.

"This is a peak, I don't think!" he sneered, and brushed the water from his

clothing. He came to a black pool in which broken twigs lay motionless, and there was the pungent odor of rotting wood and wet foliage. A few feet away stood a tall hemlock which seemed to rear its head out of the pandemonium of rock and thicket, into the light of day. As he looked about him in the silence of this untamed spot, it seemed as if all the materials of creation, rock, water, trees, creeping vines, had been thrown here in an indiscriminate heap.

It occurred to him that if he could get to the top of this big tree he might obtain an unobstructed view of all the country, north, east, south, and west. The trunk was large and the lowest branches a good distance from the ground, but he noticed that a young spruce rose within its spreading radius. He hung his hat and khaki coat on a projecting bush, wet his finger and made a mystic circle on his forehead for good luck, embraced the spruce, placed the wet soles of his sneakers against it, and went up like a monkey. Transferring himself to the lowest branch of the hemlock, he paused for refreshment, producing from his trousers pocket a fishline, two sinkers, a jack-knife, an oval pebble, and a lead-pencil eraser. An exploration of the opposite pocket proved more successful, yielding half a handful of shelled nuts. He sat on the bough, dangling his legs and eating these. Then up, stepping from bough to bough.

He had not gone far when he was conscious of a slight movement on the branch where his foot rested, and looking down he saw two little eyes gleaming at him out of what looked at first like a knotty projection of the wood. He moved his foot, and the little animal stirred correspondingly. It was no bigger than a cat.

Gordon was a scout, and he had no wish to harm the animal, whatever it was; but he was also Master Gordon Lord, and he was very curious. He let himself cautiously down and straddled the branch, facing the two eyes. The little creature, frightened at this move, backed out toward the end of the bough and Gordon crept nearer. Presently, they were at close quarters, and for a moment his quarry seemed undecided what to do. It scanned the tree above, then looked to the ground, then backed another inch or two—as far as it could go. Gordon's next move decided it. It gave a tremulous whine. Instantly there came from below a sort of restrained howl, and Gordon saw, climbing up the trunk of the tree, a good-sized gray animal with catlike eyes and a little bushy beard under its chin. He suspected it was a lynx.

The boy was about halfway out on the limb, the frightened kitten crouching ludicrously on the end, and its mother, presumably, coming to its rescue. Gordon's predicament was not a pleasant one, and again the words of Red Deer came jumping into his head: *Always use your brains first; then your hands and feet.*

A move in either direction would hasten the animal's ascent. The three participants in the affair paused motionless, staring at each other, the large

animal's body flattened against the trunk. Then, with its cold eyes fixed cautiously on Gordon, it resumed its climb, growling irritably. Gordon fumbled for his jack-knife and opened it. The lynx paused again with its narrow eyes fixed upon him. The kitten humped its back and glared in a way that would have been amusing if the situation had not been dangerous.

With as little stir as possible, Gordon pulled the fishline out of his pocket, which, being unwound and somewhat tangled, brought one or two of his precious possessions with it. He distinctly saw his lead-pencil eraser strike a branch below and bounce off into the pool. Binding the open jack-knife against the end of his stick, he had a spear long enough, if effectual, to reach below the lowest branch and prevent the mother's gaining a vantage ground above. He moved inward, much to the little animal's relief. Growling menacingly, the mother stealthily mounted, inch by inch. She was just making a quick movement to gain the lowest bough when she encountered the large open blade of Gordon's jack-knife. Her mouth opened in a hissing growl as her paw cautiously felt the end of the stick. Then she glided upward and Gordon pricked her vigorously. With a howl that woke the forest, she crouched back and gave a spring, her fore paws clutching the lowest branch.

By this time the kitten was thoroughly frightened, crowding back on the end of the bough and whining piteously. This only served to make the mother more frantic. Gordon stood on his branch, bracing himself against the trunk, and fought back the infuriated creature. And with every prick of his makeshift spear, it crouched back and advanced with renewed rage. It was a difficult and perilous encounter for the boy, for should he lose his foothold or pause but for a second the lynx would gain the lowest branch and it would be hopeless to try to check it. As long as he could keep it hugging the trunk, his chances were good, and this with all his might and main he strove to do, manipulating his weapon with the greatest dexterity to prevent the animal's getting it between her teeth. Each time he withdrew the stick, the beast gained an inch or two, retreating with each fresh thrust. Its mouth was dripping blood and its paws were stained, but it fought with increasing fury, howling in a way to strike terror to the boy's heart.

The jack-knife began to wobble on the stick, and presently it fell to the ground. The animal seemed to appreciate this advantage to itself, for it straightway made a savage onslaught. Gordon waited till its mouth opened wide in a menacing hiss, then thrust his stick between its jaws and pushed it vigorously from him. There was a moment's terrific struggle, the stick broke in the middle, and the lynx, clutching the end of it, went to the ground.

Like lightning, Gordon moved out toward the little animal and shook the branch desperately. But he could not shake it off. The mother was halfway up the trunk again, howling and climbing rapidly. There was no time to think.

Neither was there another small branch which he could quickly detach. In his desperate plight he stood above the infuriated creature, clutching the tree and kicking wildly with one foot. But he wore only sneakers, and presently he withdrew his leg, very much the worse for the encounter. He had gained time, however, to perform the acrobatic feat of tearing off his flannel shirt with one hand. Hastily getting a match from his hat, he set fire to the shirt and held it down above the animal's head. Singed and howling, it backed away from this new weapon. But the shirt was presently all aflame and Gordon could not hold it. Reaching as far down as he could, he dropped it against his enemy's face.

Then arose such a howl as he had never heard. Backing down the trunk, principally by means of its hind legs, the animal tried to rid itself of the blazing garment by its fore paws. The result was that its claws caught in it. Presently it bounded from the trunk to the ground, freeing itself from the burning shreds. Gordon saw that he had but a moment in which to act. If he failed now there was no other weapon available.

He moved rapidly out toward the little creature. It whined as he approached, and an answering whine came from below. The mother, its front hair singed, was again on the tree trunk. He feared if he went farther the limb would break, but it was his only hope, for he could not shake the little creature off. So he moved out, the branch crackling ominously beneath him, and grabbed it by the nape of its neck. It whined piercingly and clung to the tree. He wrenched it off just as the lynx had reached the same branch. Holding it up so that its mother might clearly see what he was doing, he threw it into the pool below. At this moment the infuriated mother was within five feet of him. What she might have done if he had thrown her baby to the ground is uncertain. Seeing it in the pool, she did not hesitate. With the hatred of water which all the cat tribe possess, she could not trust her kitten to its dangers. With a shriek she sprang from the bough, and ran excitedly round the pool. Then the necessity gave her courage and she swam to the little one's rescue. Dripping with the slimy water, her head woefully singed and matted with blood, Gordon saw her bring the little one to shore in her mouth and trot silently off into the thicket.

"If she had only known," said he, "that I didn't mean to hurt it."

The creature had given him a great scare and called forth all the agility and ingenuity that he possessed, but now that it was over he felt nothing but admiration for his foe. And afterward, when he "recounted the adventure," he always made a great point of its plunging into the pool and coming out, dripping and bloody, and trotting off with the kitten into the forest.

He had lost all desire to climb the tree, his leg was badly scratched, and his nerves on edge. He knew that he had come in a southerly direction from camp and that he had only to work his way northward through the woods to return.

And though the way was tangled and baffling, he could have managed it except for one trifling circumstance.

He had lost the compass.

CHAPTER XVII
IN HOC SIGNO VINCES

It was now late in the afternoon, and the drizzling rain had stopped; but the sky remained dull, and a chill wind was blowing. The sun, which might have guided him, had not shown itself all day. He tried vainly to find it by holding his knife blade vertically on his thumb and twirling it round in hopes that it might reveal a faint shadow. He might have secured an outlook from the top of the hemlock, but his leg was scratched and sore and one sneaker torn almost apart. He realized now how exhausted he was. For a moment a panic fear seized him; then he remembered what Red Deer had once told him, in case he should be lost in the woods, "Don't get rattled—keep your shirt on."

"But I can't even do that," said Gordon.

He sat down on a bowlder. "If I ever hear Harry call this a peak again, I'll —" Suddenly a thought came to him. The wind had not shifted; it was still in the east. He stood facing it, holding his left arm outstretched, sideways. "That ought to be the north," said he. Looking where his hand pointed, he noticed a small hole in a tree trunk near him. A worm seemed to be hanging out of it, but as he approached it gave a sudden whisk and disappeared. It was no worm, but a mouse's tail, and he recollected with great elation (for he seldom forgot anything) that a field-mouse almost always dwells on the south side of a tree. So, with the wind and the mouse-hole agreeing as to the compass points, Gordon started north.

He believed that camp was a mile and a half or two miles distant, and he sorely regretted now that he had not blazed the way for his return. But he went straight ahead, as he thought, pushing through the underbrush until he found himself in comparatively open land. There was no outlook here, and he was too stiff to climb a tree. Nevertheless he fancied that one or two objects were familiar, and was convinced that he was heading directly for camp.

Wet, shivering, sore, and tired, he plodded on. When he believed he was within call, he shouted, but there was no answer. He would give another shout a little farther on. Presently he came to a thicket, and in a few moments stood, limp and weary, staring about him in amazement, in the very spot of his fight with the lynx. There was the hemlock. There was the pool.

Very much discouraged, he sat down to rest, kicked off his battered sneaker, which was of no further use, and took a long "think." He knew that he had done what people lost in the woods are almost sure to do—walked in a large circle.

“That’s a funny thing when you come to think of it,” he said; “we must be built lopsided.”

As he tugged his rebellious stocking into place, another idea came to him. Well he recollected one evening when Red Deer (in his civilized role of Dr. Brent) had sat on the porch talking with Mr. Lord. He, Gordon, had sat in the background catching and retaining everything like a sponge. He remembered Dr. Brent’s telling his father an interesting theory to account for this tendency of people to walk in a circle. The theory was that the heart, beating on the left side, throws extra strength and activity into the left leg, so that one unconsciously edges to the right. “Now,” thought Gordon, “if I just limp a little more on my sore leg, that ought to straighten things out.”

So, when he had rested, he started north again, resolving to keep this mischievous inclination of the heart in mind and counteract it by limping uniformly with his left leg. That his limping very nicely balanced the extra strength was demonstrated (to his own complete satisfaction, at least) when an hour later, shoeless and shirtless, but with a radiant smile, he limped into camp just as Harry was beginning to think of going in search of him.

“Harry, I don’t *have* to limp as bad as this, but I’ve made a wonderful discovery.”

“Where’s your shirt?”

“Wait till you hear—I’ve had a great adventure! You know we’re all lopsided, Harry, on account of our hearts; we’re not built true, and I’ve thought of a way—”

“All right, come in here and get dressed. Lucky you’ve got another shirt and a pair of sneakers. What have you been into now, you little son of trouble?”

“Shall I begin at the beginning, Harry?”

“Certainly! Let’s hear it all!”

So Gordon recounted his adventure with his wonderful discovery as a climax, and Harry listened with a dry smile. “Guess it was a lynx, all right,” he said.

After supper Harry displayed an elaborate drawing of a model aeroplane which he had made on the inside cover of his book. Ever since he had left Mr. Danforth’s hospitable roof, his thoughts had run somewhat on Penfield and his model. The result of his studying the diagram was that he had written Penfield a letter on the fly leaves of the book and stuffed it in his pocket to mail as soon as he should strike a post-office. It read:

Dear Pen:—

Be sure to soak your clockwork in kerosene oil. If you can’t hit on any whalebone, get an old umbrella and use the ribs. The silk will

make good covering, too. Drop a glass bead on your propeller axle—it will do for ball bearing. Put some vaseline on it. Be sure to have your covering hang a little over the back of the planes to hold the air a second, and I think the cover of a fountain pen would do better than a gas tip to hold your sticks together—it's lighter. Hairpins are handy, too. Maybe you've got one of those bamboo porch screens that pull up and down. The strips would be great if you're making a curved plane. If your sisters have any old hats with flowers on them, you'll find good thin wire inside the stems. Peel the green stuff off. The wire would be just the thing for binding your frame corners, too. Don't get discouraged. We've got them beaten already. Only don't be too reckless with your glue, and have plenty of oil on your cog chain. And don't have your propeller go too fast—it only cuts a hole in the air. If you could get hold of one of those little hoops ladies embroider on, you could cut it in half and you'd have good rudder frames. If you need strong spring wire, the sides of a pair of spectacles would be just the thing. You might find some good stuff in a willow chair. Be sure not to have any flat surfaces against the air.

We'll try to see you before we go home. We're up on Bulwagga Mountain now—still hunting. Hope to get a clue this afternoon or night.

Your friend, Harry Arnold.

P. S—If you can't get hold of a lady's hat, maybe Miss Crosby, over at Buck Mansion, can fix you up. Tell her I deduced that she has a few. Gordon had a fight with a lynx—how's that? Lost his shirt and gained an adventure.

The night continued cloudy, and the boys had no alternative but to turn in again with neither information nor clue. And this was especially unfortunate since the moon was rising later each evening and soon all hope of night searching would have to be abandoned.

"Kid," said Harry, "I don't think they'd have gone north of this—I can't get that woods down there out of my mind. But we could never follow the stream down, old boy, not with your leg as it is. It means more climbing than walking. It looks to me as if the stream would be a series of waterfalls. Then I wouldn't dare go far from it without a compass."

"Harry, now don't spoil it all, whatever you do. I won't vote for sending up a signal—there's no use asking me. We're going to find *them*. And everything is going fine. Gracious, I was scared when I lost that compass, but now I know

it's the regular thing to do, Harry. Now, there was a fellow they called the Black Ranger, and he did the same thing, and it said that without food or compass and limping from his wound, he pressed on with dauntless courage. And we've even got the limp, Harry—if it don't go and get well before we find them. We ought not to find them, Harry, till we are well-nigh exhausted."

"How's that?"

"We ought to drag ourselves, weary but triumphant, into camp."

"Hmmm," said Harry.

He lay awake long, thinking. They might kindle a large signal fire on the mountain, but that, if it were seen, would lessen the triumph of finding the camp. It would be, in a way, calling for assistance, and he did not like the idea any more than Gordon did.

The morning dawned dull and cloudy; it bade fair to be a repetition of the previous day. Gordon slept long, and when he awoke he found the shelter empty save for himself. While he was pulling on his things, Harry came in, his mood wholly out of keeping with the weather.

"Hello there, Kiddo! Here are some minnows for breakfast."

"Hello! I guess we won't see any sign of camp-fire to-night. Doesn't this weather beat all!"

"Don't grumble about the weather now. This is just the day to do my sewing. I've got to patch up your stocking and fix you up generally, so that if you should meet any maidens you'll be in shape to recount your adventures."

"What'll be our next move, Harry?"

"Our next move will be to explore that woods down there. That's the likeliest place for camp that they could strike in this vicinity, it seems to me. It's between the two forts, it's flat woodland, and it's got a stream running through it—this stream that begins up here. So I think we'd better get right down there and not waste any more time up here."

"But when we get down on the mountain side, Harry, we won't be able to see where we're going."

"We're going down just the way we came up," said Harry, "and strike into the Port Henry Road. I think we'll hit a road that goes around the northern end of this old mountain and skirts the shore, and we'll follow that along till we strike the stream in level country. If they're down there at all, they're near the stream—you can be sure of that; and we'll follow along the stream to the lake. I shouldn't be in the least surprised if we found them."

"But if we don't?"

"Then we'll go on to Port Henry, and I'll buy a regular spyglass there if they have such a thing—and on to Bald Knob.—And if the collar button's under the bed, we'll find it, or break our necks in the attempt!"

"Or drop in our tracks is better, Harry."

"Well, we'll do that, then. So now for minnows and coffee and—do you want bacon?"

"Surely."

"Bacon it is, and then the sewing circle. Dump that spool of thread out of the coffee pot, will you? Kid, you're a horrible sight! You look as if you'd been through a sawmill."

By ten o'clock they were picking their way down the western slope toward the Port Henry road. It is probably the easiest descent from the southern peak, but it was difficult for all that. Noontime found them again in open country, trudging along the road toward the little village of Port Henry, which is on the lake shore about three miles north of the mountain. Instinctively, each took a side of the road, watching it closely as they went along. Now and then Harry would pause to examine a trampled spot near the roadside. Every suspicious stone was carefully scrutinized, then kicked aside for any secret it might be hiding. Usually their inspection was only casual, and they discovered nothing which justified them in pausing. Footprints were out of the question considering the length of time which had elapsed and the rain which had fallen. Every time Harry paused, Gordon looked expectantly over and asked, "What did you strike?" and Harry would answer, "Nothing."

They had almost reached the crossroad when Harry stopped to examine a little hole in the ground, no larger in circumference than a broom stick. He stuck a twig into the hole, finding that it was about six inches deep.

"Locust hole?" asked Gordon, going over.

"Don't think so," Harry answered, pulling the grass carefully away from it. "It's octagon-shaped, isn't it? Let's have a match." He held the match down. "Humph, seems to go to a point, doesn't it?"

They stood looking at each other.

"Morrel has an octagon-shaped staff, hasn't he, Kid!"

Gordon's face was an ample substitute for the recreant sun.

"We've found them! We've found them, Harry!" he shouted.

"Let's sit down and think," said Harry, quietly. "Kid, that crossroad ahead there would take us round under the mountain, under the precipice, and so into the woods below."

"Harry, we're on their trail!"

"You don't call a hole in the ground a trail, do you? This is nothing but a poor, weak, sickly little apology for a clue. So don't go up in the air. In the first place, has Morrel an octagon staff, or hasn't he?"

"He has, Harry."

"All right, now you're talking. Evidently they stopped and talked here. That stick must have been stuck down pretty well into the ground to leave a hole that would stay there after the rain we've had in the last couple of days.

But if they knew they wanted to get into that woods, why didn't they come up the shore? What were they doing away in here west of the mountain? Let's take a look at that road for a little way."

They could see by the map that the crossroad skirted the northern slope of the mountain and ran along the bay shore, under the precipitous east wall, and thence into the woods. But surely if the Oakwood troop had come up from Ticonderoga knowing their destination, they would have taken another and easier way to reach it.

With their inspection of the crossroad, the weak, sickly little clue grew to robust proportions.

"Here's where Mac got hungry, Kid," Harry commented, kicking a piece of silver paper. "Let's see, now, if we can make anything out of all this." He looked smilingly round.

Meanwhile, Gordon's observant eye had discovered something which gladdened his heart,—a true, out-and-out scout sign. A little way down the crossroad, along the right-hand side, a small square was scratched with stone on a rock, with an arrow pointing from one of its sides. It did not take Gordon long to take three paces from this stone in the direction of the arrow.

"Let's have your ax, Harry."

In a minute more, both boys were sitting by the roadside poring over a few words written on a piece of paper, which puzzled them more than they helped, however. It simply said, in what appeared to be a hasty scrawl:

"If any of you come back this way, follow blazing."

"*If any of them come back this way*," repeated Harry. "What in the dickens have they done—separated?" In a moment the answer came to him. "Kid," he said, "I may be all wrong, but I have an idea that some of them went on into Port Henry to hire boats. That's why they were up as far as this. Probably they couldn't find half a dozen canoes and dories farther down. Here's where they separated. Some went on, and the rest stayed here—you can see they loafed around here—look at the chocolate wrapper. Mac can't sit down a minute without eating—he'll weigh a ton if he keeps on. Maybe the fellows that went on expected to make arrangements for boats and perhaps come down the lake in them. Anyway, the boys that waited here probably thought that some of them might come back along this road expecting to find them, so when they decided to go on they left this. I can't make it out—they've been here, that's sure, and they've blazed a way off this road down a ways. Come on!"

They started down the road, watching carefully for any signs. Gordon was almost too excited to speak.

"Oh, Harry, won't it be great when we find them! What'll we say?"

They came to a blazed tree and turned into the woods. Other trees were blazed at intervals of a few yards, leading deeper and deeper into the forest.

They were now shut off from any outlook and did not know in what direction they were traveling; but they followed the blazing, and before long the lake showed in silvery patches through the trees.

"Harry," said Gordon, stopping, "let's decide how we'll act. I say, let's just walk in as if nothing had happened and sit down. When they ask us questions we'll just answer kind of careless, and stretch ourselves, you know, as if we didn't want to be bothered. I've been thinking, Harry, and I believe that'll be better than dragging ourselves into camp, hungry and exhausted, but with dauntless courage. You see, the trouble is, Harry, there's really enough food left in our packs for several days more. By rights we ought not to find them till about three days after our—what is it they call food, Harry?"

"Grub?" suggested Harry.

"No—means of something or other—"

"Means of sustenance?"

"That's it, Harry,—till our means of sustenance is exhausted. Then again, Harry, I don't really look so very bad—I mean I don't look bad *enough*."

"You look very dressy, Kid."

"Now, keep quiet about that, Harry. I mean I don't look as if the bleak wind had penetrated to my very—"

"You look as if you needed a pair of stockings," said Harry. "We'll have to get some in Port Henry. You've got an extra pair, but you ought to have two good pairs in case we should happen to go—"

"Ha! What did I tell you? Didn't I say you'd be going there again? And now you want to use me for a scapegrace!"

"A what?"

"Well, you know what it is when you want to do a thing and lay the whole blame on somebody else."

"Oh, that's a scapegoat."

They had walked on and now reached a spot where they stopped short. It was within a few yards of the shore. Before them was a large charred spot, covered with ashes. A rough pole rested horizontally between two saplings. A stream flowed into the lake near by. The ground was trampled, and they could plainly see stake holes. Clearly, there had been a camp here.

Both boys stood silent, contemplating the deserted spot.

"Well, what—do—you—think—of—that!" said Gordon.

"Kid," said Harry, after a minute, "this is where we saw the smoke from Dibble Mountain—just about where I thought. We didn't see it from Bulwagga that first night because it wasn't here."

"Correct; be seated, Master Arnold."

"What do you say, Kid?"

"I have only one thing to say, Harry. We have been handed a large and

juicy lemon."

"Let's go down and look around the shore."

The shore was sloping in one place—an ideal spot for hauling up canoes; but no sign was there, not the slightest ruffle in the sand, to indicate that any boats had been there.

"Maybe they went back the way they came, Harry."

Harry paid no heed to this remark, but walked about the shore, stooping now and then, examining it closely. He walked along the stream to its nearest point to the deserted camp, but found nothing. Gordon sat on a large rock by the shore, watching him.

"Harry, you look like an Uncle Tom's Cabin bloodhound."

Harry, meanwhile, had taken a stick and prodded it into the water under the rock. "Pretty deep, eh?" he said. Then he felt of the rock by Gordon's side. His finger rested on what appeared to be a wet spot, but it was perfectly dry. He leaned down and smelled of it. "Take a whiff of that, Kid."

Gordon smelled it. "You can't prove anything by me, Harry."

Harry vaulted on to the rock and sat by Gordon's side. "You'd better read up what your old college chum, General Baden-Powell, has to say about smelling clues, my son,—that's a grease spot."

"Maybe somebody laid a frankfurter there," suggested Gordon.

"More likely it was an oily rag out of a motor-boat. Now, kindly keep your seats, ladies and gentlemen; the show is not over."

But Gordon, heedless, had taken a flying leap, and was sniffing the spot with inquisitive enthusiasm.

"I smell it! I smell it!" said he. "Oh, Harry, I smell it! It's gasoline! Eureka! Excelsior! or whatever they call it!"

"I think not," said Harry, quietly. "It was a wipe rag. Probably the engine went on strike—as it naturally would if Walden monkeyed with it. I never thought Walden's bungling would be any use, but I believe he's done us a good turn here. Let this be a lesson to you, my son, never to smoke cigarettes."

"Harry," said Gordon, dramatically, "I never shall. But kindly tell me what that's got to do with a motor-boat—or with Walden, either—he doesn't smoke."

"No, nor any other scout. And you show me a fellow that smells an oil stain in the open air after two days of rain, and I'll deduce for you whether he smokes cigarettes or not. You can take that little sermon from your patrol leader, and if you don't believe me, ask Red Deer."

"If I ever see him again, Professor Arnold."

"You'll see him again, all right," said Harry, examining the grease spot. "Do you understand Latin?"

"I can tell if there's any quinine in a prescription, Harry."

“Well, listen to this: *In hoc signo vinces.*”

“Harry, *don’t* tell me they’re in hock!”

“No, some one came down here in a motor-boat, got the rest, and went chugging back again.”

“You’re a *perfect ghoul!*,” cried Gordon, mimicking Miss Crosby. “You’ve picked up a loose chug—you *know* you have! It’s just *wonderful*!”

“Do you want to know what *In hoc signo vinces* means, you little monkey?”

“I shall never be happy till I find out.”

“Well, then,” said Harry, pointing to the grease spot, “it means, “By this sign thou wilt conquer.”

“But I don’t see how you know they went off in the motor-boat, Harry. Even supposing there was a motor-boat here, there’s nothing to show the fellows went off in her. It might have been just somebody that stopped here to visit the camp.”

“Well,” said Harry, “they didn’t go back the way they came, that’s sure. They’d never have left that note under the rock if they’d gone right back past it. There’s no other road leading away from here, and I don’t believe they’d have struck right across country. I’m pretty sure they wouldn’t follow the railroad track either, so there’s nothing left but the motor-boat. We shall now count the railroad ties from here to Port Henry.”

CHAPTER XVIII
AT THE FINISH LINE

"Now we've got something to go on," said Harry, as they walked along the road that skirts the shore.

"You mean, *they've* got something to go on, if your idea is right," Gordon corrected. "Think the sun's coming out, Harry."

The belated sun was indeed breaking through the clouds. Harry saw from his map that there was but one stream emptying into the lake between them and Port Henry, and on reaching this they found that it was not suitable for even a motor-dory.

They had no intention of making inquiries in the village, their plan being now to go up the lake shore till they found a boat, or boats, moored, or streams to explore. They would march straight through the village as if they did not know it was there.

"I understand we're not to recognize Port Henry, Kid?"

"We'll snub it, Harry. We don't want to get any directions at the last minute."

But Port Henry had something to say about this. She was not in the habit of having people pass by without acknowledging her, and just at this particular time she was putting on her holiday clothes. She always makes a great splurge in the summer, and in the winter rolls herself up like a bear and goes to sleep.

It was well on in the afternoon when Harry and Gordon came in sight of the town and decided to pitch their shelter in a little grove till morning. For Gordon was too weary to go farther. As night came on, they could see the lights of the village in the distance, and they busied themselves speculating what the morrow might bring forth.

Harry looked at Gordon critically. "Do you feel you need some meat, old man? How are you, weak?"

"No. Just tired. I'm going to turn in early."

"I'll try for a rabbit if you say, Kid, but I'd rather not. If you're weak, just say so, and I'll find you something hearty."

"Bacon and cereal will do for me, Harry."

"All right, then. Sit where you are—I'm going to learn that trick of yours, making a fire. Here, get under the shelter and stuff these cushions back of you. You're all in, old man; take it easy now."

"Harry, this may be the last supper you and I'll have together."

"Like enough, if we're lucky."

“To-morrow’s the Fourth of July.”

“So it is!”

“I kind of wish we’d have a few days more of it, Harry.”

“Why? Suppose you open up that egg powder—sit still now.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Gordon; “I—I—kind of like being alone with you, Harry.”

“Same with me, Kid.”

“I hope you’ll never move away from Oakwood, Harry.”

“Not much danger of that; our house was built by my grandfather. Look here, Kid, I know what’s the matter with you—you’re just dead tired.”

“Your father might put up a new house somewhere else, like Mr. Danforth.”

“No sirree! We all think too much of the old shack; and anyway, if he did, there’d be a room for the Black Ranger, all right, no matter where it was. We’d think of a way, Kiddo.”

“I don’t know how it is, Harry, I seem to learn things from you without your teaching them to me—I just learn them.”

“Nonsense!”

“Don’t you think one fellow can learn better from another than from some one else? I mean, Harry, if you think a whole lot of a fel—a person, why, you’d learn more from him than—Now, I’ll never smoke a cigarette after what you said, Harry, and it wasn’t like a lesson at all.”

“Guess you’ll never learn much from me, old man—Hand me the saucepan, will you?”

“My father thinks I will—and anyway, I’m glad I’m in your patrol.”

“Well, the patrol wouldn’t part with G. Lord for a seagoing yacht.”

“Just the same, I’d like to be alone with you a little longer, Harry, honest, I would.—I heard Red Deer tell my father how important it is in camping to find pure water. He said fellows about the age of the older ones in our troop are liable to typhoid fever. I hope you’ll never get that, Harry.”

“Kid, you’re a great old boy.”

“Let’s feel your muscle, will you, Harry?”

Harry went over, smiling, and bent his arm slowly back and forth.

“My, you wouldn’t think a fellow as thin as you would have a muscle like that, Harry.”

Harry laughed outright, and doubling his fist, thrust it gently into the younger boy’s upturned face.

The next morning they went into Port Henry, and found the village in gala attire. It was their purpose to hire a canoe, and continue their explorations along the shore and up the smaller streams. This would be easier than mountain-climbing (of which Harry thought Gordon had had enough), and

since there was now some reason to expect to find camp along the shore, a little paddling about, as Harry said, would not go half bad.

"Port Henry's dressed up as if she was going to graduate,—hey, Kid?"

"She certainly has her pink sash on. I wonder what's up."

The town was resplendent in bunting festoons and streamers, and every store and house had its flag. The national emblem, of course, predominated, but here and there hung a triangular, purple flag showing the letters M B C in white, with an anchor beneath.

Most of the stores were closed, and there was a general air of holiday festivity among the little groups that talked excitedly here and there. The city people were in festive array. Tennis-shirted and sneaker-shod young gentlemen lolled about.

"Cracky!" said Gordon, "the shoe business must be good here."

"Yes," Harry answered. "I don't suppose there was ever a shoe box but was doomed to carry sandwiches sometime or other. There are a lot of folks here from out of town."

Presently they were reading a big poster in one of the windows:

REGATTA
MOHAWK BOAT CLUB
JULY FOURTH

WATER EVENTS AT 2 P.M. SHARP
ROWING
SWIMMING
SAILING

MUSIC BY PORT HENRY BAND
FIREWORKS IN EVENING

BASEBALL! BASEBALL!
PORT HENRY VS. PLATTSBURGH

SPECIAL
GOODWIN, THE DARING AVIATOR, WILL
FLY IN HIS AIRSHIP TO VERMONT
AND BACK, ALIGHTING ON THE GREEN

"Looks as if there were going to be some doings," said Harry.

"Not much chance of getting hold of a canoe to-day, I'm afraid," commented Gordon.

They sauntered up the main street, and could not fail to notice that several people turned and stared at them. Harry thought it was because of their rather battered and disheveled appearance. As they passed the post-office, a little crowd of city fellows called tauntingly after them.

"There's a couple of them, now," said one.

"Hurrah for the Boy Spouts!" another shouted. "Sh-h-h!" said another. "They're on the trail of a deer—don't disturb them!"

Gordon glanced back, laughing cheerfully at his own expense, and noticed that one of the fellows had a flag with the words WELDEN SCHOOL on it, and that several others wore pale blue sweaters bearing a W on the chest.

"Them chaps is goin' to win the regetty," volunteered a black-coated man near by, who looked pathetically uncomfortable in his gala attire. "They're champion experts."

"Bully for them," said Harry, cheerily.

Presently, as they passed a pleasant cottage, a woman with a battalion of small children turned in at the gate.

"Give me the key," they heard her say to one of the boys.

"I haven't got it."

"Who has?"

It appeared that none of them had.

"Well," said the woman, in despair, "we're locked out, then. I *told* you to put the key in your pocket."

"So I did."

"Well, where is it, then?"

"You told me I could leave off my jacket—it's in my jacket pocket."

The woman stood frowning.

"Could we do anything to help you?" said Harry, vaulting the low fence and standing, hat in hand, before her. Gordon followed and stood beside him.

"I'm afraid not," said she. "We're locked out; it's most exasperating. John, you'll have to run straight down to Mr. Berry's and tell him to come right up."

"Just wait a minute, please," said Harry. "Maybe we can think of some way to get in. All the windows are locked, I suppose?" He stepped out a little and saw that a window above the doorway was open. From its sill a flagpole projected.

"You can never get in there," said the woman.

"Is that a hammock hook on that tree?" Harry asked.

"Yes."

"The hammock doesn't happen to be outdoors anywhere, does it?"

The hammock was found to be behind the house, and Harry carried it to the front doorway. The hammock itself, together with its two ropes, formed a line perhaps twelve feet long, which was easily thrown over the inner end of the

pole. In a moment Harry had swung himself up to the flagpole and reaching down from it was carefully brushing off the dust which his feet had left on the flag. The woman watched him with an amused smile.

"That's one of the first things we scouts have to learn," Gordon told her, —"respect for the flag."

Presently Harry opened the front door. The woman was very profuse in her thanks.

"There's nothing to thank me for," said Harry. "You know, I used to be a burglar," he added, laughing.

"But you must come in," she said. "I'm sure you're strangers. What can I do to repay you?"

She insisted upon their following her into the cozy little sitting-room. "It was nothing at all," Harry said. "But if we might ask a favor, perhaps you'd be willing to let us clean up a bit here. My friend—well, I'm really ashamed of him—the fact is, we've been mountaineering."

Might they? Indeed they might! And they must also stay and have some lunch. No, she would hear of nothing else.

It is a scout's duty to be polite and not to gainsay a lady, so they—well, they stayed, in obedience to Section 5, Scout Law.

When they thanked her and started forth from her hospitable roof, they were quite presentable. She had insisted upon sewing several buttons on Gordon's uniform, all of which he had unearthed from various pockets, and after a sponging process, he came forth glowing and immaculate.

They had also learned something regarding the day's program. Four rowing crews were entered for a contest,—Plattsburgh, Port Henry, and a crew of boys from the Welden School who were summering at Port Henry. The Welden School was somewhere over in Vermont, or Massachusetts, she thought. Then there was also another crew "from down lake somewheres," but she guessed the Welden boys would have things their own way. She didn't care much who won "s'long's nobody got drowned."

The boys thanked her again and started for the seat of war. They found both shores lined with people as far down as they could see. Harry had hoped to get a glimpse of the racing craft and size up the contesting crews, but the dense throng surrounding the boat-house and float made this impossible.

"Come on," said he, "there's nothing doing here. Let's get down to the finish. I don't believe they'll pull more than a mile."

They started down the road which skirted the shore, working their way through a labyrinth of buckboards and three-seated stages and throngs of spectators. Overhead, the sky was cloudless, and the sun poured hotly down upon an army of parasols. Out in the lake it touched the still water with gold, and here a little motor-dory, flying the boat-club's colors, chugged about,

warning encroaching canoes off the course. It seemed to be a thankless task, for as fast as one was driven back another darted forward, until the busy, important little boat reminded one of the old woman who lived in a shoe. Down at the finish, the throng expanded into a seething mass. So close together were canoes and dories that they seemed to form a solid float. On the shore, carriages and autos were drawn up. The whole countryside had turned out in holiday attire.

Through this dense mass the boys managed, by a series of maneuvers, to reach the shore, and soon stood at a point where they had an open view up the river. The little official boat came chugging down past them, and boldly essayed the task of ordering a handsome steam yacht to get beyond the finish line.

"We're not on the course," shouted its captain.

"Yes, you are, sir," answered the official bouncer; "you'll have to get downstream."

The boys listened to this dispute, which was within a few feet of them, with a good deal of curiosity, for there is nothing so interesting as an altercation in a public place, when suddenly there was a frantic waving from the deck of the yacht.

"Why, there's Miss Crosby!" exclaimed Gordon.

They waved their caps to her, and she suddenly disappeared. Evidently, she had issued her orders, for the yacht, in utter defiance of rules and regulations, was brought alongside a neighboring pier, and the crowd, no doubt much impressed with its gorgeous appearance, for it was a glittering combination of white and brass, opened to let the two boys pass down and go aboard.

"The *idea*!" said Miss Crosby, as she greeted them. "I never *knew* such downright *tyranny*! That's the *only* thing to call it! They seem to think they *own* the lake!"

"I'm afraid it looks as if *we* thought that," said a genial voice, and the boys turned in surprise to see Mr. Danforth coming toward them with outstretched hand. "But we couldn't pass right by you. Miss Crosby said—"

"Oh, I *never* said *anything* of the kind!"

"He probably just deduced it," laughed Harry, "whatever it was."

Mr. Danforth chuckled; he had evidently heard about their "deducing." "Well," said he, cheerily, "who's going to win the race?"

"*We* don't even know the program," said Harry. "We just dropped into town."

"Still hunting?" laughed Mr. Danforth.

"Still hunting," said Harry.

"Well, well, you must take an afternoon off and explain the events to us; we've been hearing more about you from this young lady." The young lady

gave him a very severe scowl, but it did not deter him in the least. “She’s been very much interested in your trip, and we’ve been comparing notes about you. Now, here we are, met again, all hands around St. Paul’s, as you might say. By Jove, I’m sorry Pen isn’t here! Come aft and let me introduce you to our little party.”

The yacht had now steamed out of forbidden territory. Mr. Danforth led the boys to an awning-covered stretch of deck, strewn with oriental rugs and comfortable wicker chairs. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Danforth and their daughters, Miss Antoinette and her mother, and a couple of gentlemen from the city.

“Well, now,” said their host, “I don’t believe I’ll have the courage to tell Pen we saw you. You’ll have to go home with us—that’s the only way.”

“Mr. Danforth was just saying,” his wife continued, “that he wouldn’t dare tell Pen there was an aeroplane flight; but, I declare, I believe he’ll be even more disappointed at not seeing you.”

“Well, probably there won’t be any flight,” said one of the gentlemen; “there usually isn’t.”

“That’s so,” said Mr. Danforth; “the weather clerk finds it pretty hard to suit an aviator. Now there isn’t a breath stirring to-day, and the sailing race is off on account of the calm; but you just wait and see if this fellow doesn’t come out with the statement that there’s too much wind.”

“Well,” said the other gentleman, “as I understand it, an aviator sometimes means the air above—some distance up. They say the air is always in more rapid circulation up a ways. And then, there are what they call pockets of air—sometimes it’s full of those things up above when it’s calm down here.”

“Something like Gordon’s pockets, here, I suppose,” interpolated Harry; “full of all sorts of junk—gusts of wind, odds and ends of squalls, and things like that. I suppose those things would play the mischief with an aeroplane. I don’t know much about the subject myself.”

“He does, too,” said Gordon.

“Kind of atmospheric spasms,” said Mr. Danforth.

“Something like that,” answered his friend. “There’s a kind of little fan they shoot up in the air which will often give them an idea how things are up there—they’ve got to be careful.”

“No life-saving stations up there,” laughed Mr. Danforth. “Well, I just wish you could see Pen’s new model, Harry. The motor actually does go for nearly a minute. It’s the most ingenious thing I ever saw. By Jove, if the little fellow doesn’t win that contest, I believe it’ll kill him! He’s just counting the days till we get to Oakwood.”

The conversation was interrupted by the muffled sound of cheering along the shore. The yacht was brought around so that the deck aft commanded a

vista of smooth water, reflecting in long perspective its bordering rows of waiting spectators, and the party had an unobstructed view up the course. Far up the shore, flags and caps were waving, showing that the first heat had begun.

The judge's launch chugged around under the yacht's stern and out into midstream. The patrol boat, with a great deal of racket, made a final cruise driving back unruly canoes and punts. Neighboring boats which gloried in the possession of whistles, began tooting them. There was a general bustle of suspense and expectation. The cheering up the course rolled nearer like a wave. A gay little dory, containing a dozen fellows in pale blue sweaters, who were shouting a club or school yell, shot across the course, in laughing defiance of the judge, and took an advantageous position.

"Hurrah for Welden!" shouted some one.

"Those boys are going to win in a walk," called a voice under the yacht's rail. "They're college trained."

Far up the course, two slender craft shot into view. Harry took the glass from Mr. Danforth and saw that one of them was leading by more than a length. As they neared, the space between them steadily increased. He handed the glass to Miss Crosby. "The crew on the left are rowing ragged," he told her.

"They may catch up," she said excitedly. "Just *see* how they splash!"

"'Fraid not," Harry answered. "It's all over. It was won before it began."

It was certainly won long before it was finished. Amid excited cheering and frantic waving of flags, a single boat glided past the finish line. The other crew had gone to pieces up the course.

"Who are those that won?" Mr. Danforth called over the rail to one of the boats that were clustered thick under the yacht's stern.

"The college boys," some one answered. "Plattsburgh crew stopped to fish."

"I don't believe they did," said the girl, incredulously.

"No, I don't either; there isn't any good fishing up there," said Harry, soberly.

"Who ought I to cheer for?" she asked, surveying the party.

"Well, I guess those college boys are right in your line," Harry said. "They're certainly first-class oarsmen. I believe they come from somewhere over in Massachusetts, don't they? What's that their friends are waving?"

Amid much laughter, the blue-sweater crowd had hoisted a great banner above their little craft, on which was printed in charcoal:

These are our regulations,—
There's just one fate for the scout,
And the hayseeds, too,
And when we're through
They'll look like all get-out!

There were loud congratulations from the occupants of this launch to the victorious crew, whom they boisterously pulled into their craft. The two heroes, who, it was plain to see, were crack rowers, joined them in a most complicated and idiotic conglomeration of rah, rah, rahs, cisses, booms, and the usual vocabulary of victorious athletes.

But the program had taken on a new interest for Harry and Gordon, and they awaited the next heat with some suspense. To be sure, it was likely enough that a town the size of Plattsburgh would have a troop of scouts, or, for that matter, there might be a troop even in such a little village as Port Henry. But the Oakwood boys had never given this a thought, until now it appeared that a crew of scouts was to row in the second trial.

"That's a pretty good one on you boys," laughed Mr. Danforth, referring to the placard. "What scouts do they mean, anyway?"

"You've got *me*," said Harry. "I don't know; there must be a troop, or at least, a patrol, organized somewhere round here. They'll never outrow that blue-sweater crowd, I can tell you that."

"Well, that's a good taunt, anyway," Mr. Danforth laughed.

"*I* think it's *insulting*," said Miss Crosby; "and it's perfectly *dreadful* poetry."

By a series of inquiries among the jubilant throng below, the party succeeded in learning that the next heat was to be between the Port Henry boys and some boy scouts from somewhere.

The moments seemed long before the excitement along the shore told that the second pair of contestants were coming down the course. Soon they shot into view, gliding abreast, as it seemed, with the little power-boat of the referee close in their wake. Harry studied the crews with his glasses, as the rise and fall of the oars became discernible.

"They're walking along, all right," he said, handing Gordon the glass. "Can you make out their flags?"

They had left the three-quarters flag behind them, and the moving backs of the rowers and the long sweep of the oars were plainly visible. The rowing seemed mechanical—perfect. Each shell held its way wonderfully between strokes. Neither bow swerved, but they came down through the cheering, frantic crowds like two arrows. The flags, fluttering behind, afforded no hint to those at the finish line, but as the shells neared, loud shouts went up for Port Henry, and many flags were waved.

A clumsy-looking motor-boat shot out from the shore, and followed in the wake of the referee's boat, as close as it dared. It held several people, notably a man in white. The party on the yacht watched breathlessly as the oars rose dripping from the water, paused a fraction of a second in air, then plunged silently, uniformly, into the sun-flecked lake.

Far forward, far backward, leaned each crew with mathematical precision, as the shells, side by side, sped on. Then one crept forward.

"They're hitting it up," said Harry, as deafening yells rose about them.

They were close on the finish line now, one nearly half a length ahead. Cheers for Port Henry filled the air. "Come on! Row!" some one shouted.

"You're walking away from them!"

The second boat's prow was even with the forward rower of the rival shell. Then it lagged even with the second oarsman. Then it fell astern, amid a pandemonium of waving and yelling.

"It's all over," some one called.

Then a voice from the motor-boat following called, "Lengthen out!"

The cry seemed to give new courage to the pair in the second shell. Their prow again rode level with the second member of the rival crew. Again they bent forward, their oars seemed for a second glued to the boat's side, and as they rose again she shot forward. Again, and still again, the lithe forms bent, forward, back, and with each rise of the straining figures the craft leaped forward.

Now the two shells were even, their crews rowing like demons. Then again amid the shouting from both shores, the voice from the motor-boat cried, "Lengthen out!" and the shell which had regained its position darted forward again, past the other boat, and amid a bedlam of yells, the screech of whistles, and the frantic waving of a thousand handkerchiefs and flags, glided past the finish line, a half-length ahead of its rival.

In the moment of triumph, one of the victorious rowers was seen to sway, then sink forward. Harry could see it plainly—it was within a few yards of the yacht. The referee's launch chugged up; some one called to the white figure in the old motor-boat, which was also drawing near. Others paddled up with congratulations and inquiries.

"Is there a doctor ashore?" some one called.

"No need for that, sir," said the white figure in the approaching motor-boat. "I'm a doctor myself—just help me get him aboard here."

Harry clutched the rail, speechless. He knew that voice, he knew that manner, he knew the glitter of the gold spectacles; yes, and he should have recognized before the spotless suit of white duck.

It was Red Deer.

CHAPTER XIX
THE FATE OF THE BLUE SWEATERS

All this had happened amid so much confusion and excitement on the lake, that before Harry realized it the stricken oarsman had been transferred to the motor-boat, which went chugging back up the course. Then he and Gordon stared blankly at each other. Even if they had had the presence of mind to call to Dr. Brent, it is doubtful if they could have made themselves heard above the tumult.

"It was Red Deer, Harry."

"Sure it was—and that was Mac they lifted out."

"Who *is* Red Deer?" asked Miss Crosby, excitedly. "Were those *scouts* that won?"

For a moment Harry was too preoccupied to explain. "Yes, those were scouts that won," he then said abstractedly.

The clamorous shrieking of the launch containing the blue-sweater fellows brought them out of their daze. Their scoutmaster had actually appeared and disappeared before them amid excited throngs here at this remote little village. Two of their own fellow scouts had, by almost superhuman effort, won a race before their very eyes. Yes, and those were the only two fellows in the troop who could have done it—save one. And now one of them had given out, and there was the final heat still to be raced.

> "These are our regulations,—
> There's just one fate for the scout,
> And the hayseeds, too,
> And when we're through
> They'll look like *all get-out*!"

sang the college boys, triumphantly, as they chugged about. Their boisterous, confident voices were greeted with laughter and cheers from the shore. Soon, their well-trained, crack oarsmen would come down the river, walking easily away from the scout crew, with its probably crude substitute.

"I wonder how Red Deer got himself mixed up with those cracker jacks," said Harry.

"Harry, what'll they do? They can't put Nelson in—or Burt, either—it's—" Gordon looked imploringly into his friend's face.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Danforth, clapping Harry on the shoulder, "where's your voice? By Jove, that was a great victory! Why didn't you cheer? Eh?"

“He’s deducing,” said Miss Crosby.

Harry turned suddenly. “Mr. Danforth,” said he, “those fellows belong to our own troop. Hanged if I know where they came from, but I—I—just can’t stand here and see them beaten after putting up a race like that.”

The girl’s eyes were fixed intently on Harry. Gordon listened, his hand trembling on the rail. Down the course came muffled cheering, as the victorious shell, with its single oarsman, was towed back to the starting line.

Then Miss Antoinette Crosby did a strange thing. She threw her arms around Mr. Danforth’s neck, and whispered to him, concluding by saying audibly, “Please, *please*!”

That gentleman looked sharply at Harry, but said not a word. He walked across the deck, and called below:

“Captain, steam up the course as quick as you can!”

In a moment the yacht’s bow came around, and a score or more of little craft went scooting this way and that. Then her whistle sounded, dignified and melodious compared with the screeching and tooting about her, and she headed up the crowd-bordered lake.

“Where are you going, sir?” came a voice from below.

“Up the course.”

“You can’t go up the course now, sir,” came from the patrol boat. “You’ll have to stay below the finish line—you were told that before.”

“It’s a matter of great importance,” Mr. Danforth called.

“Can’t help it. Fetch her round.”

“Take her up, Captain!” ordered Mr. Danforth, firmly. “Clear out under there if you don’t want to be run into!”

“What are they trying to do?” said a man in the judge’s boat, which came chugging up. “Here, bring that craft about! None of that!”

“Ahoy there, below!” shouted Mr. Danforth’s captain. “Stand out from under if you don’t want to be run down!”

The low, deep whistle sounded again, two gasoline dories chugged frantically backward, and the big white yacht, serene and heedless, steamed majestically up the course.

“Didn’t I *tell* you he *always* has his own way?” said the girl, coming up to Harry, who still leaned dazedly over the rail. “*Now* you are going to distinguish yourself—you’ve *got* to—for *my* sake!”

“How did you know I wanted to take that fellow’s place, Miss Crosby?”

“*Stupid!*” she said. “Do you think you’re the *only* person that knows how to *deduce*?”

“I’m afraid it’s a hopeless task, Miss Crosby. I haven’t been in training, you know. I’m all tired out, and they’re a pretty skillful pair—those college chaps—then—”

"They're an *insulting, conceited* set—and their *poetry* is at-ro-cious! You've *got* to do it. You can beat them. I *know* you can!"

"Well, I guess that will help me to win, if anything can," Harry said.

"Here, Harry, my boy," said Mr. Danforth, coming up. "No time to be standing around talking with girls now. Come down in the cabin, and we'll see if we can't root out a jersey or bathing suit that'll fit you—we'll be up there in a minute."

"Isn't it *wonderful*! You've *found* them at *last!"* the girl said to Gordon when Harry had gone below. "And just to think, *I* was here to *see* you do it! And oh, I want *so* much to see him row!"

"You'll see him row, all right," said Gordon.

"He can do most *anything*, can't he?"

"Yes—but he doesn't know much about girls."

"Why, what makes you say *that*?"

"'Cause he doesn't. He doesn't know as much as I do about them."

"The *idea* of your saying *that*—he must know *lots* of girls!"

"He hasn't had as much experience with them as I have—but, honest, there's nothing he can't do—honest."

"Tell me about him, won't you? About the things he can do."

Would he!

All was excitement on the float as the yacht steamed by, headed for the pier a few yards beyond. Evidently the oarsman who had collapsed was not in a serious condition, for there was Dr. Brent talking with one of the regatta committee. And there were Walden and Charlie Greer and Swift and Waring and "Brick" Parks, crowding about him.

"Looks good to see Parks's red head, doesn't it, Kid? Don't shout, now, just wait—it'll only be a minute." It was like an inspiration to both boys to see the familiar faces.

A racing shell containing two boys waited at the float. Each had a blue sweater thrown over his shoulders. Another shell, empty, was moored hard by.

The yacht made a landing and Harry went ashore, followed by Gordon. Miss Crosby stood at the rail watching them as they went over the side.

"Remember," she said, laughing, "it's a scout's *duty* to *help others*. You see, I know the law!"

The boys hurried to the float and for a moment stood on the edge of the little crowd, unobserved.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Dr. Brent. "There isn't another oarsman I can put in. I thank you for your kindness, but I'm afraid it will have to go by default. You see, we're not prepared for this kind of thing, anyway; we've already accomplished more than I expected."

"Nothing doing?" called one of the oarsmen in the waiting shell.

"'Fraid not," answered some one in authority.

Several fellows in blue sweaters, armed with gigantic megaphones, set up a victorious howl. The Danforth yacht steamed gayly down the course.

"Humph! All over. Those Welden chaps would win in a walk, anyway," said some one near Harry. Then he heard the referee speak to Dr. Brent from his launch.

"I'm going to start this crew down the course, sir, so that I can give them the decision; you are not prepared?"

The expression rang in Harry's ears. It was the scouts' own motto.

He pressed his way through the crowd and stood, face to face, with his scoutmaster and several members of the committee.

"Yes, sir," he said quietly; "we are prepared."

You could have knocked Red Deer down with a feather. As for Walden and Charlie Greer and "Brick" Parks—you should have seen them. Vinton, the Hawks' corporal, stood gaping like an idiot. Then the sudden appearance of Gordon broke the spell and turned the whole thing into a laugh.

"Did you come up in that yacht?" asked the astonished Red Deer.

"Yes," said Harry. "We've been tramping around the country, looking for you. How's Mac—what'd he do, just faint? Hello, Burt, how's everything? Morrel, you've got your octagon staff along, haven't you?"

"Do you wish to enter this fellow?" some one asked, while the crowd clustered about.

"Will you try it, Harry?" asked the doctor.

"What do you suppose we came up in a private yacht for?" asked Gordon, who, being, as you might say, mascot of the troop, enjoyed the special privilege of "talking up" to the scoutmaster. "There's a magnet on that yacht."

"A what?" said Dr. Brent.

"Magnate, he means," said Harry.

The sudden appearance of the substitute did not seem to produce much anxiety on the part of the blue sweaters. On the contrary, they regarded his advent as affording them an opportunity of winning when they would otherwise simply have had the race without earning it. The casual glimpse they had of him gave them a good deal of amusement. He wore an ill-fitting bathing jersey, his face had the tan of a countryman, and the loose stride with which he approached the shell, followed by Pierce, was not the stride of a trained athlete. There was no objection to his rowing when it became known that he was a member of the troop.

As many of the scouts as their old boat would hold crowded in and made a bee line for the finish, Gordon among them, talking volubly.

Harry looked the shell over as he and Pierce took their places. It was quite the sort of racing craft which one might expect to find in a country boat-house.

It had two pairs of swivels, not very far from the sides, and was, indeed, little more than a narrow, attenuated skiff. Harry sat on the forward slide and for a few moments had some trouble getting Pierce's stroke. He was the last one in the world to row jealous, but try as he would to accommodate his pulling to that of his partner, he inevitably rowed him around every few strokes.

He could not fail to see that Pierce was well-nigh played out. The other shell was a full length in the lead, and gliding steadily along with a length and evenness of swing that were beautiful to see. The crowds cheered vociferously, and since both contestants were outsiders, there was no encouraging word for the second shell as it wriggled along.

Harry knew enough of pair racing to know that the forward oarsman is not free, and having his doubts about Pierce's vitality, he had wisely taken the forward slide so as to watch him. It soon became plain that he must accommodate himself to ragged and erratic work. Whenever Pierce swung short or took a slack beginning, Harry had to exert himself to correct his partner's fault and hold the course. They managed to get together in a spurt just beyond the half flag, and sent their prow up to the second rower of the rival craft. But it soon lapsed into a series of pitiable swerves, leaving them a full two lengths behind. With a coxswain, of course, they might have done better, but as it was, their progress was little better than ridiculous. The shouting along the shore had an occasional note of hooting in it.

"Let her run, Welden," some one called derisively. "It's all over."

"Those fellows came here aching for a race, and they haven't had one yet," shouted a sonorous voice.

The college boys were now more than three lengths in the lead, moving like twin pendulums, with long, uniform, supple swings. Together their oars rose, together plunged dripping, and steadily, without a tremor, their shell glided forward.

The leading shell was passing the three-quarters when Harry looked around. In his hasty glance, he saw the finish, the gay flotilla with its welcoming flags, the dense throng. He heard the premature tooting of distant launches.

"Hit her up, old man," he said; "careful, now, one—two—"

It was no use. "Where are we?" asked Pierce, breathing heavily.

"There's the three-quarters flag. Are you all in? All right, old man—don't try."

The disappointment in Harry's voice could not be disguised, and it spurred Pierce to a frantic final effort. He leaned far forward, plunged his oar, made a long, steady stroke, then before he rose, a hand stole over his own and the oar was taken from him.

"That's all right," said Harry, gently. "Sit steady, old man,—not going to

keel over, are you?"

Half-consciously, and with a feeling of utter relief, Pierce collapsed, his head hanging forward, his hands clutching the gunwale on either side.

"That's right," said Harry. "Don't lean back. I need the room. I'll splash you when I get her going."

Pierce did not know what it was all about; he did not care, but he was vaguely conscious of ecstatic cheering and of a sudden dart forward.

They were two racing oars that Harry had undertaken to manage—not a pair of sculls—which meant that there was a full two feet more length than a single arm was supposed to manipulate. He locked the oar into his own empty swivel. His lithe, slender form bent forward till it almost lay upon the prostrate figure before him. Then the quick, steady rise of his body, past the perpendicular, back till he seemed to lie prone. Then the quick, clean, firm lift of the dripping oars. Then the rapid, elastic recovery of his body, the long, well-balanced forward swing, accompanied by the straight reach of his arms.

The shell glided forward under the impetus of this human machinery. Again and again, without the variation of the fraction of an inch in any move, the long pull was taken, and greeted with frantic howls from the shore. His hair blew about his head with a kind of wild picturesqueness, his movement was like an automaton—perfect, calm, indomitable. Presently, a perfect pandemonium of yelling and screeching rang in his ears. He glanced aside and saw that his prow was even with his rival's forward slide. They were now within a few feet of the finish.

He pulled another stroke, then splashed water over Pierce's head, as he had promised.

The rival oarsmen glanced at him, surprised, apprehensive. The launch with the other blue sweaters approached as near as allowed, her occupants shouting advice vociferously to meet this new turn of affairs. Their placard was not in evidence.

Close in the rear, Harry saw the referee's launch clipping along, as if awakened to sudden and necessary activity. He was vaguely conscious of the dense, surrounding throng, of carriages and autos crowded in the road, of canoes and dories packed tight at the water's edge.

He was desperate, but calm. He knew what he wished to do. He knew enough of the sport to know that the sculler has one advantage, that of spurting. Between contesting scullers, well-matched, the spurt at the right moment usually means victory. If he could keep this position through his rival's "long stroke," then he stood a chance.

Presently, the order came. "Long stroke—hit her up!" shouted their coach from the motor-boat. They darted ahead, had their little spasm, and Harry remained exactly where he was before—his bow level with their second slide.

They were close on the finish line. The screeching was deafening.

“Hit her up, boys!” came a laughing mandate from the Welden launch. “Once more, hit her up, and let her run!”

The judge’s dory swirled about to clear the way. You would not have thought that Harry could give a longer swing nor pull a more effectual stroke than he had been doing. Yet the shell, bearing the huddled and exhausted scout and its single oarsman, darted silently forward like a streak. Its prow lay even with the prow of the rival craft now. The boys in blue sweaters yelled frantically to their crew, but their cries and orders were drowned in the tumult.

Again, and still again, the agile form swung forward. Again, and still again, the shell responded, cutting the still, sun-flecked water like a knife. Now she was half a length ahead. Then there was a sudden shake of his head as the oars dipped, and his hair flew loose. It was a sight for a painter.

Throwing all his strength into the pull, uniting in a final effort the utmost power and reach of arm and body, he swung back, his head hanging in a kind of loose abandon from the exhaustion of the stroke. And amid the frenzied cheering and clamorous waving of hats and flags, he swept past the finish line.

Just above him, as they brought the shell about, he could distinguish, amid the screeching of a score of boats, the deep, melodious whistle of the big white yacht.

CHAPTER XX
GORDON GOES UP IN THE AIR—ALSO HARRY

"Hey, Harry, come up here, will you? Gordon's having a fit."

"Honest, Harry, you ought to see him—he's wound up!"

"On the level, Harry, he's doing a hornpipe in the cabin—come on up, don't miss it!"

"Say, Harry, come up here till we get hold of you! How did you ever manage to do that, anyway? It was great! Gordon's waving the field glass round his head—we can't stop him!"

"Red Deer's waiting to get his hands on you, old man—he's got a scout smile a yard long! You ought to get a special award for that! It was great!"

"That was wonderful, Harry! You deserve a vote of thanks for licking those college fellows, but I don't see how you did it single-handed!"

The voices came from a group of scouts as they crowded at the yacht's rail. A rival group dragged him into a large, broad, dilapidated fishing-smack, furnished with a gasoline engine.

"I want all you boys to get out of that thing and come aboard here," called Mr. Danforth, seconded by the half dozen of the troop whose presence he had already secured.

Harry was literally pushed up the steps, the rest following him.

"How are you?" said Dr. Brent, grabbing him with one hand and pounding his shoulder with the other. Mr. Danforth very cheerfully pushed Dr. Brent out of the way. "Harry, my boy, how are you? It was magnificent! You're a wonder! How do you feel?"

"Fine and dandy," smiled Harry.

"You must be all played out," said Morrel. "Do you feel like a cup of coffee?"

"Do I *look* like a cup of coffee?" Harry laughed. "Where's the Kid, anyway?"

"The Kid went up in the air when you touched the finish line and hasn't come down yet. He told us all not to speak to you till he'd seen you first—didn't he, Tilford?"

"Sure, they're all crazy about you here, Harry. You've got them hypnotized. Gordon's applied for a patent on you."

"Say, Harry," said Charlie Greer, the Beavers' corporal, "we've been writing to Oakwood. Where've you been, you old tramp? Gordon says you've been doing light housekeeping on the top floor of old what's-its-name

mountain."

"Yes, I've been cooking for the Kid," Harry answered. "He's a whole famine in himself."

"Harry, those were regular rowing oars, weren't they? How did you manage 'em, anyway?"

"Yes, they were as long as a spelling lesson. I believe it was that placard those fellows had that helped me. I just couldn't stand for that. Hel-lo, Langford, old boy! Well, it's good to see your pudgy face!"

"Sh-h-h, here he comes," cried Roy Carpenter, the Hawks' patrol leader, as Gordon's head became visible above the companionway.

"Dearie me!" said Waring. "Let's get from under!"

Gordon made a dive for Harry, and grabbed him. "Come down, come down!" said he.

"Hello, Kid, down where?"

"Downstairs—she—she—"

"Go ahead, Harry boy," said John Walden, knowingly. "By *all* means, go!"

But Harry had no choice.

"I thought *I* would *wait* until you had seen your *friends*," said Miss Crosby, shaking hands with him, "to *congratulate* you for your perfectly *wonderful*—"

"Did you have a good view, Miss Crosby?"

"Saw *everything*. And your friend explained things to me. Oh, he's *such* an interesting little fellow, and he isn't a *bit* bashful, is he?"

"Well, not so you'd notice it," said Harry.

All of Mr. Danforth's party had now to congratulate him, and in the midst of it Raymond Vinton, corporal of the Hawks, appeared in the doorway of the cabin.

"Mr. Arnold," said he, with a profound air of mock deference, "Goodwin, the daring aviator, has just sent a special message aboard asking if the victor of the boat-race would like to take a little joy ride with him over to Vermont. What shall I say?"

"Oh, *isn't* that just *lovely*!" said Miss Antoinette.

"Great," answered Harry. "Things are certainly coming my way. Here, Raymond, have you met Miss Crosby? Miss Crosby, Mr. Vinton is corporal of the Hawk Patrol, such as it is, and he's great on deducing. You just waste a few minutes talking to him, won't you, while I go on deck and see if they're trying to guy me."

But they were not "guying" him. Sure enough, there in a boat at the foot of the yacht's steps sat a young man in a pair of greasy overalls. It was Goodwin's mechanic.

"Harry," said Dr. Brent, "go by all means. It's a chance not to be lost. It isn't every one who has such a dramatic opportunity of breaking his neck. And

when you return, if you do, you'll find the troop up at the float. If you are inclined to accept the poor hospitality of our humble camp after all this," he added with a humorous smile, "you'll find us waiting for you with the *Swan*."

"The how?" asked Harry.

"The *Swan*, my boy, the boat you just saw. It is ours till September first—ours and paid for. Harry, my boy, I can see by the look in your eye that you are going to call your scoutmaster down for getting the troop mixed up in this racing affair—but we couldn't resist the invitation, and your corporal, acting for you, voted to see it through. But as for the *Swan*, Harry, I will not hear one word against her."

"She looks as if she might do a mile or so an hour—with the current. Is it *your* joke, Doctor?"

"I hired her from a country youth after scouring the country. If you choose to join the mockers, do so. I stand by the *Swan*, Harry, I'm afraid it's going to be a job to drag the boys off this yacht, but it's got to be done. Your friend Mr. Danforth is great!"

"They're moving to Oakwood this Fall."

"So I hear—that's fine. Well, my boy, you'd better be off for your joy ride."

It was hard for Harry to say good-by to his genial host and the party on the yacht, but he made the rounds of the cordial group, promising to see them in the Fall—at least, the Danforths and Miss Crosby, who told him that she would *surely* be in Oakwood to see little Pen win the aero contest.

With many expressions of good-will from Mr. Danforth, and a good deal of mock deference from the troop, he got into the little boat and was rowed ashore. The man in the greasy overalls led the way to a spacious green near by, around which a rope fence had been stretched. The enclosure was already lined with people. Others, more anxious to witness the flight than to examine the machine, were comfortably seated on rocks or sprawled on the grass outside. The man's greasy overalls acted as a password, and the crowd opened to let him cross the rope with Harry.

"That's the fellow," said some one, alluding to Harry, who gave no heed to the comments on himself, for his interest was fixed on the center of the field, where a perfect whirlpool of dust was rising, almost entirely obscuring the aeroplane.

"They're trying out the motor," the man explained.

"Jiminy!" said Harry. "She goes some, doesn't she?"

"Four hundred and seventy turns a minute," said the man.

"How fast will that send her?" Harry asked.

"Forty miles an hour against a brisk wind."

"How fast do you suppose that would send a small boat?"

“Now you’ve got me—they don’t have to figure so much for slip in the water. Water’s a dense medium; but the air’s thin; you’ve got to remember that. You interested in air work?”

“Why, yes,” said Harry, “but I’m not very well posted. What’s the pitch of a propeller, anyway?”

“That’s its angle—you can’t get two aviators to agree about that. Mr. Goodwin uses an eight-foot fan. You see, if we got the full benefit of those four hundred and seventy turns we could make a streak of lightning look like a snail, but you understand it’s like walking up a treadmill,—you’ve got to walk like the mischief to keep ahead of the game. Mr. Goodwin saw you win that race. Well, here we are.”

It surprised Harry a little to hear this grimy-faced, besmirched, greasy young man talk so intelligently. But the experience is not uncommon for those who interest themselves in aviation. A machinist or electrician who lays down his ordinary work to devote his skill to the conquest of the air, usually does so by reason of an ardent love of the science; and there is not a more scientific and competent set of mechanics than those who have attached themselves to successful aviators.

Goodwin, an active little man, with keen black eyes, came forward from the little group surrounding the machine to welcome Harry.

“Ah,” said he, “that was a splendid race. I congratulate you. It occurred to me that you might like to go up with me—eh?”

“Indeed, I should,” said Harry. “It was good of you to ask me.”

“Not at all, there’s an empty seat, if you’re not afraid.”

“Not much,” laughed Harry. “I’d have come a long way for this chance.”

“We haven’t got much air to stand on,” said Mr. Goodwin. “We’ll have to speed a bit, I think.”

“We won’t get arrested for speeding, anyway,” suggested Harry.

“True enough,” laughed the aviator, as he went about his machine, trying the wire bracing as one tries the strings of a harp. “If there’s anything you want to know, my boy, just fire away. These reporters have got me worked up so I’m a regular ‘Questions and Answers Column’ in a newspaper. Now’s your chance—any posers?” He glanced whimsically at Harry, who was already absorbed in an inspection of the graceful medley of wing and wire and polished struts.

The machine was a biplane of forty-two feet lateral extent, with forward stability planes similar to the Wright model. Instead of the tips of the main planes being flexible, however, which is a chief feature of the famous Wright machine, the lateral stability of the craft was controlled by hinged wings, midway between the upper and lower planes at each extremity, more after the fashion of the Van Anden device. Harry noticed the curve of the main planes,

for he had heard that here lay one of the elusive secrets of aviation and a rule which would apply as well to a boy's model as to a man-carrying craft. The cross-ribs rose rather abruptly from the front an inch or more above the forward horizontal framing, then curved evenly back. The curve of the canvas was not the arc of a circle at all, but a sort of humpback shape, cleverly designed to catch the air in front, imprison it for the fraction of a second, and pour it slowly out under the rear to make room for more. Many a stick had been steamed and bent and dried and thrown away before that ugly, but efficient, curve had been decided on.

"I must see that Pen has his planes flexed right if we have to go out and harpoon a whale to get the whalebone," thought Harry.

The strength and perfect rigidity of the machine were obtained by a multiplicity of wire braces running in every direction. There was some good reason for the presence of *every* stick and brace, for every little curve or turn. Even the canvas was laid on diagonally for the bracing effect it might have. And though the machine looked simple, considering its great responsibility, Harry could well believe that every detail of it was the result of years of study and experiment.

For the aeroplane is not a discovery, nor an invention, either, in the ordinary sense, but the combined application and the nice adjustment of a dozen worked-out principles and a hundred ingenious devices for riding the baffling and unstable air currents. Every jut and turn, every little projection, every eccentric form of wing or plane or rudder, had its scientific explanation. Yet most boys who see an aeroplane think they can go and build one. But the money which is often expended for wood and tools might better be used to purchase books containing the rudimentary facts, a knowledge of which has made the conquest of the air possible and goes far to make it safe.

Two seats, side by side, were cozily placed in the center between the upper and lower planes, with the control device near at hand, and thus every movement that a bird makes,—the flex of wing, the flap of tail, the guiding tendency of this or that little stir of throat and body,—was at the command of the operator. The telescope, the first tool of aviation, had forced the swallow and the sea-gull to yield up their secret, and here it was amid a network of frame and wire, at the service of man.

Goodwin's voice aroused Harry from his absorption. "No questions answered after the train leaves," he said. Harry felt very much at home with him already. Here was a man, unaffected, simple, offhand, competent, self-assured, and levelheaded. Nothing of the crank or the visionary,—the kind of man who helps to advance the science of aviation.

"I thought the propeller looked pretty big across the field," said Harry; "but it doesn't look so big now. That all there is to the motor,—just that that's on

the propeller?"

"That's all, but it's enough," Mr. Goodwin answered.

"It makes a whole lot of fuss, anyway."

"Right you are, and she fits like a suit of clothes. It isn't wholly a question of how much power you have, you know, but does the power fit? That's the question. See?"

"But doesn't more power mean more speed?" Harry asked.

Goodwin laughed. "No, not exactly. The motor sustains the machine in flight. Now, if there's a good big supporting wing area, why, the engine can be smaller—it's got to be, in fact."

"I'm afraid I'll have to go to the foot of the class," laughed Harry.

"So? Why? You never studied the subject? Well, see here, now, I'll give you the A B C of it and then we'll hop in. The more spread there is, the less supporting work the propeller has to do. So a powerful motor fits a small machine, and a big machine takes less power to get the same results. Now, you take Curtiss; he cuts down his planes, makes his machine small, and what's the answer? Does he get along with less power? No, he needs more. You see, it isn't a case of more power, more speed. It's having your power to *fit* your machine. The propeller is more than a propeller,—it's a sustainer as well. Stop the propeller of a boat, and the boat stands still. Stop an aero propeller, and down she comes. Propeller keeps her up and keeps her going—two jobs. If you lessen your support in one way, you must make it up in another. An aeroplane is sustained by its speed with help from its planes. Well, now, the more area you have, the less the motor has to do. You've heard aviation compared to sailing, and that's just the very thing that it isn't a bit like. Did you ever skate on thin ice? Well, there you have it. If you want to keep from going in, skate fast. Now, if you put a large motor on a large machine, you don't get a normal increase of speed, by any means. So you see, it's not a question of power—it's a question of a nice, neat fit, as you might say."

Harry remembered this later, when he saw more than one model aeroplane lurch and flutter to the ground, to the amazement and disappointment of its young maker. And when he returned to Oakwood, he remembered the words of his aviator friend, "It isn't a question of power—it's a question of nice, neat fit."

"That's a gnome motor," concluded Mr. Goodwin; "revolving type, air-cooled, saves the weight of a fly-wheel because the whole thing is a fly-wheel in itself. Is she all right, Joe? Hop in, then, my boy."

It was a moment that Harry Arnold never forgot. He would have liked to study the machine a little longer before taking flight, for every detail of it excited his keenest interest. It seemed almost incredible that this man who climbed into the seat beside him could be so offhand about so momentous a

thing as mounting and riding the invisible air, but he got in as if he were about to drive a familiar horse along a quiet country road.

Two men stood behind the main planes, steadying them, and the mechanic stood at the center, at the end of the bird-like tail, where the vertical rudders were placed.

The aviator placed one foot conveniently near a small pedal beneath him. His other foot and both of Harry's rested on a bar, which was all that kept their legs from dangling loosely over the edge of the lower plane. On the outer side of each seat rose one of the supporting struts of the plane above them, forming a convenient handle to steady oneself by.

Mr. Goodwin put his hands on either side of a wheel before him, placed like the steering gear of an automobile. Beside him was an upright lever. He wet his finger and held it up. Then he pulled out a little strip of cheesecloth and held that up. It fluttered a little to one side. "A little to the left, Joe," said he. The man at the tail pulled the machine about till it faced directly into the breeze—what little there was. Then one of the men at the end came forward and began kicking stones out of the way.

The suspense, to Harry, was delightful. Even here on the ground his position was one of openness and freedom. Below him there was nothing but the bar on which his feet rested. His position, little more than a comfortable perch, gave him a first thrill of exhilaration.

"Run her out, Joe," called the aviator.

There was a little jerk, and the machine started along the ground, gathering speed till it clipped along at a good pace. Harry saw the men at the ends of the planes pushing and steadying. Their chests were about level with the lower plane. Presently, Goodwin put his foot on a little button, and Harry nearly jumped from his seat from the sudden whir behind him. Louder and more tumultuous it grew, till it rivaled the noise of a sawmill. He saw one of the men at the plane ends reaching up. Yes, they had left the ground. The frame vibrated, sending little tremors through him. They were skimming along toward the encircling crowd.

Presently, Goodwin, holding the wheel steadily, pulled it toward him. The little pair of horizontal planes, resembling a box kite, which were situated about twelve feet in front of them, turned slightly on their axles so that Harry could not see between them now, and he was presently conscious of a backward tilt of his body. They were rising. The noise of the propeller just behind him was deafening. The whole frame was convulsed with its movement. It was plain now that every wire was needed.

Harry clasped the upright by his side and looked down. The line of spectators blurred as the machine passed over it. Then, as they mounted higher, following the tilt of the forward runner, things became clearer, until, about

three hundred feet from the ground, land and crowd took their proper perspective, and Harry saw beneath him hundreds of upturned faces.

He now felt scarcely any motion at all. When he closed his eyes, he could not have told that he was moving, save for the wind in his face. The deafening roar of the fan made questions impossible unless he yelled, and the aviator seemed too much occupied to talk.

Soon, still holding the wheel stiff, Goodwin pushed it from him, and the little planes in front twirled back to their former position, while the back of Harry's seat seemed to be pushing him forward. Now, he could look straight between these two little forward planes again, and he knew the machine was coming to an even keel. They were at a height of five hundred feet or more, heading directly across the lake. Now and then, Goodwin turned the wheel slightly, and once, as he did so, Harry glanced behind him, and could just make out, through the whirring fan, the two vertical planes at the end of the tail turning a little to right or left, like a fish's tail.

The seat was not equipped with springs, yet there was no jolting; indeed, there was no sense of motion at all, except for the wind, and the terrific straining and vibration of every part of the machine. Yet the boats in the lake beneath them receded, and in a little while they were above the Vermont shore.

Now, again, the forward planes turned slightly and the greater spreads of canvas followed them obediently upward, till Harry reclined against the back of his seat as in a steamer chair. When they came to an even keel again he realized that this had been done to clear the tree-tops on a hill well in from the Vermont shore. The absence of all sense of rapid motion continually tempted him to release his hold of the supporting bar, only to grasp it again whenever he looked at the tiny specks below, and at the lake winding its way like a river on a map.

Now, for the first time, the operator placed his hand on the lever, still holding the wheel stiff with the other hand. The hinged planes, out at the end between the main planes, rose on the right-hand side and sank on the left-hand side simultaneously. There was a sense of sudden lift, the left end of the craft rose higher, higher, till the machine swung full to the left. There was no jolting, only a delightful consciousness of being swept around. Now, again, the crowd on the New York side was clear to view. Again the lake, with its tiny, screeching boats, stretched below them. When they were almost above the field whence they had started, the vibration became less furious, the propeller slowed down, stopped. A grateful silence prevailed.

"Anything wrong?" asked Harry, apprehensively.

"No, indeed," said his companion.

The machine coasted slowly, easily, downward, held stable by the lever control, with an ever so slight declining of the forward planes. Harry did not

know when they touched the ground. When he alighted, he saw the tracks of the wheels for fully fifty feet behind. And it was only in that way that he was able to determine where the aeroplane had left the unstable and invisible currents of sustaining air for the homely but reliable support of good old Mother Earth.

"Look at him," said Goodwin, with a grin, as he climbed out.

"It's easy to tell he's one of those scouts we hear so much about," laughed a reporter who stood near. "First thing he does is to go back and study the tracks!"

CHAPTER XXI
MAKING THE GLIDER

"Now, you see, Harry, if I hadn't stopped to do that good turn for Miss Leslie, and missed the train, you wouldn't have had a ride in an aeroplane," said Gordon, as he hitched up his stocking and settled himself comfortably in the boat for the voyage to camp. "And you fellows would have lost the boat-race, too."

"We don't appreciate what a blessing G. Lord really is," said John Walden, Hawk.

"And he wouldn't have met Miss Crosby, either," continued Gordon.

"He ought to be very thankful to you," said Tom Langford, Beaver.

"That's the great thing about having a good-turn specialist always right on hand," said Vinton, the Hawks' corporal. "When things are kind of slow, he just up and does a good turn, and presto! there's something doing for everybody! Why wouldn't it be a good idea, Red Deer, to have a 'good turn' badge? We have the marksman's badge, and the trackers' badge, and so on."

"We might suggest that to headquarters," smiled Dr. Brent.

"Well, anyway, Red Deer," said Gordon, "here's a sticker for you. Suppose you have your choice of doing a good turn or being prepared, now which should you do?"

Red Deer pondered a moment. "Well, you see, Gordon, if you do a good turn, that includes being prepared; you *are* prepared—to do the good turn. See? But if you just keep your mind on being prepared, and don't think about good turns, why, then, the good turn often gets left. Technically, doing a good turn necessitates being prepared. You see, when a scout is a good-turn specialist, as you are, that really carries everything else with it. Of course, it is a nice question that you propound, and scouts might differ about it. Lawyers can never agree as to the law, you know—"

"That's just what Mr. Danforth said," interrupted Gordon.

"But if I were you," continued Dr. Brent, smiling whimsically, "I should go right on and carry out your regular policy—good turns first—then trust to luck."

"And the best turn you ever did," said Brick Parks, "was to come up and find us, Kid. The camp wasn't complete without you."

"Well, anyway," said Gordon, "we're all lopsided."

"What's that?" said Dr. Brent, puzzled.

Gordon hitched up his stocking, and launched forth with a complete

account of his great discovery, with the result that Dr. Brent, who was steering, had to give the wheel to George Conway, until he was sufficiently recovered to take it in charge again.

Half of the troop had gone on afoot, and by taking a short cut across country reached camp first. The boat made its way to a point about two miles north of the village, then up a stream for half a mile, and there in a grove of silver birches was the Oakwood Scouts camp.

"Well, here's the needle in the haystack, Gordon," laughed Dr. Brent, stepping out.

"By the way, Kiddo," said Harry, as they joined the group ashore, "you were telling me of a way to find a needle in a haystack, the night before we started; you fix a magnet to the end of a long stick—"

"And then poke the stick in here and there," continued Gordon, "and pretty soon you'll find the needle sticking to the magnet; but of course there are other ways, and I thought if we didn't find the troop one way we'd find them another. One way is, you—you—sit around on the haystack and—well—you just—pretty soon, you know, you've found the needle."

"And that's the way you found the troop," laughed the doctor.

"Yes," said Gordon.

"Have an apple, Kid?" said Morrel, pointing to a basket.

"Sure!" said Gordon.

The camp-fire burned late that night, for Gordon Lord recounted their adventures. It was an unabridged version and held the boys spellbound till midnight. It was in vain that Harry tried to modify this or that detail which reflected credit on himself, and it was in vain that Red Deer looked ruefully at his watch when one or other of the party added fuel to the already imposing blaze. Being a wise scoutmaster, he saw that Gordon's enthusiasm, like the measles, must run its little course, and the sooner it was over the better.

"Now," said Gordon, finally, "it's time to discuss our attack on Fort Ticonderoga and—"

But here Red Deer put his foot down, and the discussion was put over until the next day.

That night Gordon and Harry slept in their own tent, with their own patrol, under the Beavers' banner. And they slept hard. But Dr. Brent, alone in his little tepee, broke the rules unseen, and sat up until the wee hours of the morning. The week they had spent in camp had not been an idle one, and he had in a good-sized wallet various papers and memoranda which would mean promotion and awards upon their return to Oakwood.

For one thing, Brick Parks, in spite of his red head, had succeeded in getting near enough to a variety of birds and woods creatures to shoot them with his camera, which is the only way a scout shoots except in case of need.

He needed only to develop his films and make prints, and the stalker's badge would be his.

Then there was Howard Brent, the doctor's nephew, who had at last, after a terrific struggle, mastered the Morse code, and would, so the camp gossip said, cease to be a tenderfoot before the summer was over.

Matthew Reed would glory in the marksmanship badge, if he kept up his crack target work, and Dan Swift and Johnnie Walden would wear the first-class badge before another camping season.

To these memoranda Dr. Brent added the letter from Mr. Wade, which recommended Gordon for the medal given for saving or helping to save life, and Harry for the signaler's badge. On the back of this letter he made a memorandum of his own, about the saving of little Penfield Danforth's life. Then he wrote a letter to Mr. Lord, and turned in for the night.

The idea of attacking old Ticonderoga, and winding up with a great laugh on the genial, but skeptical, Mr. Wade, took the Oakwood boys by storm, to say nothing of Red Deer, who was having the time of his life among them. He was a man of about thirty-five, was Red Deer, whose great recreation was getting among the boys, and he had organized the Oakwood troop quite as much for his own pleasure as for theirs. None of the boys could beat Red Deer when it came to roughing it He could take off his neat gold spectacles, fold them up, lay aside, his spotless white duck coat, and show you some fencing that was beautiful to see. Whenever he methodically and carefully removed those precious gold specs, and said, "Hold these a minute, Ben," or "Harry," as the case might be, the boys knew there was going to be "something doing."

Whenever Gordon was about to undertake one of his unusual feats, it was his mischievous habit to put his two hands up to his ears, making the funny little twirl as if to remove a pair of spectacles, and by this sign the boys knew that something remarkable was about to take place. The doctor, who saw everything, had seen this, and it amused him greatly.

Whenever Dr. Brent's trim little runabout stopped before a residence in Oakwood, you might be sure of seeing a boy or two sitting comfortably beside him, for one or several of them were always about him; and the little Red Cross on the front of his white automobile might appropriately have had placed beside it the full badge of the scouts. What is more, Red Deer had the Master-at-Arms badge, for he was not going to be handing out honors and earn none for himself, and his wrestling and jiu jitsu were the envy of his two patrols. In baseball, he played a very heady game at "first," and his skyscrapers were famous.

For Harry Arnold, Dr. Brent had an unbounded esteem, and since it was one of his pet theories that laughter was a great medicine, he took frequent doses of it at the hands of Gordon Lord. In short, Red Deer was a true sport,

and the proposition to go up the lake about the middle of August to repeat the historic assault on the old fort touched him in a susceptible spot. “We’ll do that,” said he, rubbing his glasses with a spotless handkerchief. “Harry, you’ll be Ethan Allen. Don’t argue now—I appoint you—I’ll make other appointments later.”

But there was a full month before this plan could be carried through, and judging from all appearances there was much to occupy the time. For one thing, Gordon was going to pull himself up to the first-class rank this summer, which means that his activities are worth watching.

Harry was full of aviation. His meeting with Penfield had kindled an already existing spark, and his flight with Mr. Goodwin had fanned it to a flame. Now here, to cap the climax, were Howard Brent, Matthew Reed, and Ben McConnell, or Mac, of the Hawks, and Tom Langford of his own patrol, with a good store of pliable, selected willow which they had gathered for the manufacture of their models to be entered in the Oakwood contest that Fall. But not a word did Harry say to them of the wonderful combination motor which Penfield was going to spring on the multitude, for he was not going to lessen the boy’s glory a particle. Meanwhile, the others worked away on their models, introducing rudders and so forth, of any shape and size, to suit their fancies.

One day, about a week after his arrival, Harry came in from one of his rambles (for he was fond of going off alone at times), and squatted on a rock under the cooking lean-to, where several of the boys were binding their frames with coarse linen thread.

“What’s the matter, old chap—blues?” asked Mac, with an end of thread in his mouth.

Harry laughed, for, oddly, it was a question often asked him.

“Where’s G. Lord, Esquire?” asked Matthew Reed.

“Don’t know,” said Harry. “He’s after his first-class badge these days. How’s that old balloon silk shelter you had last year, Howard?”

“Why, it hasn’t written me lately. It was a little under the weather when we camped last season.”

“That a joke, Howard?” said Mac.

“Well, you remember it rained, and the shel—”

“Kill him, if he tries to explain it,” piped up Tom Langford.

“Why, what’s up?” asked Howard.

“I was thinking we might make a glider,” Harry answered. “Red Deer’s talking of having us throw a bridge up, Baden-Powell fashion—over that chasm. A glider would be more sport, and help us over, too.”

“You’ve surely got the aeroplane bee in your bonnet, Harry,” said Mac.

“Well, how about it?” said Harry.

“Looks good to me,” said Langford. “Where would we get the stuff?”

“Now you’re talking,” said Harry. “Has this aero club any financial backing?”

“If you mean, is this aero club able to launch a glider—”

“That meant for another joke?” asked Mac, picking up a stone.

“The answer is, Yes, several of them. The question is, we have one Beaver in the club already; could we stand for another?”

“Of course, it would be an advertisement to have Harry Arnold a member.”

“Let up on that,” said Harry. “Do you want to build one, or don’t you?”

“Surely we do,” said Mac, becoming serious.

“Well, then,” said Harry, “we’ll need four sticks,—spruce sticks would be best,—twenty feet long, and we’ll need Howard’s old piece of balloon-silk, if we’re going to go up against the wind—”

“The first thing is to go up against the doctor,” said Matthew.

So Red Deer was taken into their councils. The upshot of it was that Howard Brent, Matthew Reed, Mac, Tom Langford, and Harry spent the rest of the morning with Dr. Brent making and criticising little diagrams on one of the doctor’s prescription pads.

“I think,” said Red Deer, at length, “that that is about all you’ll need; the cross-ribs that are left over we can use for splints, in case of broken arms and legs—they’ll come in very handy.”

The five boys went into Port Henry in the boat that afternoon in search of a sawmill or lumberyard.

“When G. Lord hears of this taking place in his absence, he’ll explode,” said Tom, as they chugged up the lake.

Their first business was to send a telegram for Howard Brent’s old balloon-silk shelter, which would, with piecing, amply cover the two planes.

“What would you say if I sent for my old wheel?” asked Mac. The suggestion was received with acclaim, for an old bicycle is a perfect treasure house of fittings, wire bars, and various odds and ends useful to the ingenious amateur mechanic. So Mac, with much adding and eliminating and changing of words, finally succeeded in concocting a satisfactory message to his father.

“Better underline the word ‘old,’ Mac,” said Harry, quietly, “or he may send your new one.”

McConnell dutifully obeyed, while the operator grinned. Then, realizing what he had done, Mac proceeded to administer suitable chastisement on Harry.

“Do you think your father can make out your handwriting?” Tom asked innocently, as they went out; “that was a pretty hasty scrawl.”

Mac could hear the operator snicker. “I’ll put a hasty scrawl on your face, Tommy,” he said.

At the mill they bought and had trimmed four spruce sticks about twenty feet long and an inch square. These were considerably thinner than the corresponding timbers of Goodwin's machine, but they were the best that could be procured.

"And they're six feet longer than you said, Harry," said Howard Brent.

"Well, never mind that," Harry answered.

"Might as well have them cut down to the length we want."

"No," said Harry, "leave them this size."

"Twenty feet is long enough for any glider," said Langford, eyeing him shrewdly. "I know what *you're* up to. You expect to put a motor in her."

"We'll see how she goes first," said Harry.

Besides the four long strips, they managed to root out, with the help of the mill foreman, a couple of dozen strips four feet long and three-quarters of an inch in thickness. Some of these would be used for the horizontal struts, or cross-bars, and some for the upright stanchions. None were according to the regular specifications for a glider, but they were not so far out of the way as to destroy the chance of success and safety; and, as the boys agreed, they "ought to take what they could get and be thankful." For one thing, the uprights should have been round and highly polished to lessen their resistance to the air, but the boys had to be satisfied with having the edges smoothed off with a few runs of a hand plane.

Up to this point in their negotiations, the mill foreman had exercised his resources to satisfy their peculiar wants, though his manner was not encouraging. But when Mac asked for about forty or so strips, four feet long and thin enough to steam and curve, he could contain himself no longer.

"Ye ain't buildin' a hen-coop, then?" he asked.

"No, not a hen-coop," said Harry.

"Huh. Thought ye was. Well, ye can't use them long strips for a boat."

"You have one more guess," said Harry.

"How's that?"

"We're building an airship," said Harry; "that is, a glider—for gliding."

The man stared at them, amazed.

"Well, you'll all break your necks," said he.

But he condescended to tell them that Marty Forbes might have what they wanted down at his boat-yard. So they sought out Marty, who, on hearing their wishes, was still more discouraging. He had prophesied, he said, that half the boys would go crazy after seeing Goodwin fly, and he guessed he was about right. But he was willing to be a party to their rashness to the extent of selling them some thin strips, which he agreed to steam and curve according to Harry's directions. So Harry cut a piece of stiff wire to the proper length and bent it as a pattern. "There, that's a parabolic curve," he said.

“Paregoric?” said Marty.

“No, parabolic.”

Since the matter is important, and since every boy is interested in aeronautics, you may as well know, once for all, that this is the curve which does the trick:

So don’t waste your time stretching barrel hoops, but cut a wooden pattern, bend your sticks over it, tie them down, then steam them thoroughly.

If the boys had been in the city, they could easily have bought the necessary fittings and bearings; but the hardware resources of Port Henry were limited to one side of the grocery and a rival establishment at the blacksmith’s. They managed to secure, however, a large box half full of little wrought-iron right-angle braces with screw-holes, a good stock of nails, screws, glue, sandpaper, spar varnish, and several rolls of heavy wire.

As for tools, a small chest of handy utensils, pliers, hammer, file, and so forth, had been brought from the city (Red Deer’s surgical outfit, the boys called it), and to this stock they added an extra hammer and a saw.

It was a merry company that started down the lake with this cargo of lumber and other necessities, the result of a half-day’s shopping. Another trip would be made several days later for the bicycle and balloon-silk shelter, when the ribs would also be ready, according to Marty.

“There’s one thing I don’t understand about aeroplanes,” said Matthew Reed, who was at the tiller.

“Only one thing?” asked Tom.

“Well, I don’t mean exactly that.”

“No, we understand,” said Mac. “There might be two or three things.”

“Oh, let up on that,” said Matthew, annoyed. “The Wrights say that every feature of the aeroplane is taken from nature. I suppose they mean from birds. Now, Brick Parks has got snapshots of a couple of dozen birds; he’s after the stalker’s badge, you know, and not a single one of them has a screw propeller.”

“Slap him on the wrist for that, will you, Howard!” called Harry, who was tending the engine.

“Well, you can laugh, but that’s true. Show me a screw propeller in nature, and I’ll—”

“If you’ll promise to be good, I’ll tell you where you can find one,” said Harry. “Did you ever notice the seed pod of an ash tree? Well, you just look at

one the next time you get a chance, and watch how it comes to the ground. It's a little propeller, all right, and it lets the seed down to the ground as easily as Goodwin landed. You just watch how it revolves."

"That's the kind of thing he finds out when he goes off in the woods by himself," said Mac. "Harry, you've got us all backed right off the boards. No wonder Miss—"

"When are we going to start building this thing?" Harry asked hastily.

"Right off—why not?"

"Suits me."

They were all so interested in the proposed glider and in getting the stuff from the boat that Harry did not at first notice Gordon among several boys who came down to the shore.

"Looks like business, hey?" called one.

"Bet your life!" said Harry. "How much do you think the whole business cost us?"

"How much?"

"Seven dollars, all told."

"Cheap enough."

"Here, take this box, will you, Ray?" called Matthew, handing out the hardware.

"Haul those sticks out, Raymond," Harry said. Then, suddenly espying Gordon, "Hello, Kiddo," he called cheerily. "Here, grab this bundle, and make yourself useful."

To his astonishment, Gordon turned on his heel and went up the path to the tents. Harry watched him, surprised. The others were too busy to notice. They carried their material to a part of the grove where the trees were sparse, but close enough to afford some shelter. Here they smoothed off a strip of already flat ground and partially sheltered it with Harry's tenting. Then they sat about, discussing the best way of going to work in the morning. One by one, other members of the troop wandered over, squatted here and there, and contributed suggestions and advice, till Charlie Greer, who was cooking that week, called them in with the welcome sound of his tin horn.

It was the boys' custom (originating with themselves) to stand at their places till Red Deer took his rustic seat. He sat at the head of the long, narrow board, one patrol occupying each side, the patrol leaders at his right and left hand. The soft evening breeze caught the fresh scent of the woods and wafted it among the merry, hungry campers. The stream which tumbled in a little cascade over rocks a short distance farther up its course, was their accompaniment.

After the early supper, and just before sunset, they gathered about the flagpole and sang the song of the beautiful emblem that fluttered above them.

Then Red Deer asked if any one had in mind anything which he had done or said that day which he would like to undo or unsay. It was his custom to ask this. One or two had, but the matters need not be told here. Red Deer never thought of them or mentioned them again, so why should I spread them broadcast? After that, the flag was lowered.

Before camp-fire, Gordon went off to a large rock on the top of a neighboring hill, to get a photo printing-frame which he had left there for exposure. It was a peculiar hill. It looked as if some giant might have sliced an ordinary hill in half, at its very summit, leaving one long slope, terminating at a sheer precipice. On the brink of the precipice stood this solitary, sun-bleached rock and one lonely tree. Below was an expanse of thinly wooded marshy land, enclosing a pond. And out of this pond, through reeds and dank undergrowth, a green, scummy stream wound its sluggish way into Lake Champlain. To look down from the precipice, one might almost imagine that he was gazing upon a tropical landscape.

On the rock where Gordon was accustomed to leave his printing frame were graven the initials "G. L.," for he seldom identified himself with any place without carving his initials somewhere about; and so completely had he taken possession of this sun-scorched hill that the troop had dubbed it "Kid's Perch."

Harry saw him plodding up the hill, and went after him.

"Hello, old man," he said, as he came up to the rock.

"Hello," said Gordon, coldly.

Harry stood for a moment, half-puzzled, half-amused. Then he stepped up, slapping him on the shoulder in his familiar way. Gordon turned resentfully.

"What's the matter, Kid?" Harry asked, his voice serious and full of feeling.

"I'm not bothering *you*, am I?" said Gordon.

"No, Kid, but what's the matter? Can't you tell me?"

"The matter is I don't want to be followed—now are you satisfied?"

"No, Kid, I'm not. I want to know what's the matter, old boy. I can't go down to camp-fire with things this way—you can't, either."

"Oh, yes, I can. Besides, I guess you can get along all right. You seem to have plenty of other fellows."

"Kid, old boy," said Harry, beginning to see where the trouble lay, "don't talk like that. You know, as sure as you're standing there, that I—Why, old man, you don't forget that week we spent together, do you?"

"You didn't have any one else, then. Everybody knows it's easy to play me for a good thing." He turned to his printing-frame.

Harry watched him.

"Did it print all right, old man?" he asked, almost humbly.

Gordon, ignoring the question, started down the hill, but Harry caught up with him. “Wait a minute, Kid,” said he. “I don’t want Red Deer to know about this. Wait, just a minute, please. You know, we can’t always stick together, here in camp. Naturally, I’m interested in some things and you’re interested in others—photographing, for instance. And I’ve got the aeroplane craze now. I’ll get over it, you know, just as you got over the mumps. Would you have gone to the village with us, if we’d waited? They all say I’ll break my neck yet. Won’t you help us make the glider, Kid? Come ahead.”

“That all you’ve got to say?” said Gordon.

“No, I want you to say that things are all right. I know we haven’t seen much of each other this week, but you know how it is, Kid. I was thinking, coming up the hill,” he added, in a pathetic attempt to arouse the younger boy’s interest, “that your suction-pad—you know, the one you invented—would be great if there were a ledge on that precipice—”

“Oh, give us a rest,” said Gordon. “There’s Langford and Reed waiting for you, down there.”

“Kid,” said Harry, putting his hand on Gordon’s shoulder, “do you remember—”

“Take your hand off me,” cried Gordon, turning.

“You don’t mean that, Kid.”

“It’ll be time enough to crawl,” said Gordon, “when I ask you to.”

“I don’t want to crawl, old man,—or we’ll call it crawling, if you like,—I don’t care. I just want to be friends. Come on, old Black Ranger.”

But Gordon had started down the hill, and Harry stood still, watching him.

The next was a busy day for the aero club, working on the glider. When the troop assembled under the flag at sunset—the several parties of stalkers, trackers, fishers, home from their chosen haunts—and Red Deer asked the usual question, if any had done or said a thing that he would like to undo or unsay, Harry looked wistfully, almost imploringly, toward a certain round head, with a scout hat perched upon the back of it. But the owner of the round head neither spoke nor stirred.

CHAPTER XXII
HARRY FINDS A WAY

The next day the work was at a standstill, for they had gone as far as they could without the ribs and the covering. So the aero club separated, Mac and Tom joining Nelson Pierce for a day of fishing. Most of the troop went down to the lake with Red Deer for a "soak." Harry sat on the ground near camp all the morning, his back against a huge tree, and his knees drawn up by way of a writing desk. Here he used up page after page of a writing tablet, making a variety of diagrams, only to crunch up each leaf and stuff it into one or other of his pockets.

No one was about except Charlie Greer, cook, and Johnnie Walden, cookee, who were busy in the lean-to. When Harry finally ambled over toward them, he was stiff from his long sitting. Out of the fifty or so sheets of paper he had used, there were only six that he saw fit to save. The rest he pulled out from his various pockets.

"I'm a human waste basket, Charlie," said he. "Here, burn these up, will you?"

"Figuring out your glider?" Charlie asked.

Harry creased a sheet of paper into an arrowy form and shot it through the trees. "Look at that go, will you, Charlie?" He went and picked it up and brought it to Charlie to burn. Then he wandered off, his hands in his trousers pockets. He passed Morrel, who was on sentinel duty at the edge of the grove.

"What's the matter, old man?" said Morrel. "You look lonesome."

"Come on down to the village," said Harry. He knew Morrel couldn't go, but he asked to be sociable.

In Port Henry, he jumped upon the bench in Marty's boat-yard. "Got those paregoric ribs ready?" said he.

Marty looked at him suspiciously, as if he were beginning to see through some involved swindling game. "Thought you was comin' down in yer boat to-morrer."

"So we are, but I'm in a hurry to see one of them."

"Well, there they be," said Marty, with lofty contempt. "You're daft if you go into this aeroplane business."

"I know it," said Harry, "but I can't help it; I was born that way. Can I take one of these along?"

"Guess that'll be all right," drawled Marty.

When the other boys returned from their various occupations they found

Harry squatted near the unfinished glider, contemplating with critical gaze the solitary rib, which he had fastened in place.

The work, so far, consisted of two rectangular frames, each twenty-four by three feet, and joined at the corners by the right-angle braces, fastened with screws. The fact that these frames were four feet longer than the regulation trial glider would seem to indicate a sneaking intention on Harry's part to install motive power sometime or other; but if he ever did, it is not a part of this story.

Besides the end pieces, four other cross-bars, or struts, had been fastened between the beams at even intervals, except that in one of the frames the two nearest the center were only two feet apart. This would be the under plane, and the space in the center being left uncovered, the passenger might pass his arms over these center cross-bars, hanging by his armpits. The lateral balance of the glider would thus be controlled by the sideways swinging of his legs, and its coasting inclination—that is, the tilting upward or downward of its air-cutting surfaces—by his sliding backward or forward on these central struts.

Thus, in this simple form of glider, the weight of the operator's body takes the place of complicated stability planes and rudders, and all that is needed to maintain a level keel is a level head.

"That rib looks lonesome there, Harry," said Tom Langford.

"Well, it will have to stick it out alone to-night," Harry answered.

"Looks like a fence that's fallen down, doesn't it?" said Howard.

They spent some time screwing on more of the right-angle braces, for though they lacked many of the fittings usually recommended for such work, they had an abundance of these braces. They served very well to hold all corners firmly and rigidly together, although of course absolute rigidity of such open framing could only be secured by a thorough system of taut wire trussing.

"Guess she won't fly away to-night," said Tom Langford. "Come on down and clean up for supper. I say, it makes me sad to see that lonely rib there."

The next day they went into Port Henry with the Swan, and got the bicycle, the silk shelter, and the rest of the ribs. There were forty-one, all told. They were curved to perfection, and the boys were vociferous in their thanks to Marty. On the way back, one of them slipped into the water.

"Floating rib," said Matthew Reed. "I knew a man once who had a floating rib."

"Joke," said Mac.

"Well, people do have such things as floating ribs," protested Matthew; "ask Dr. Brent."

"Very clever," said Tom Langford. "Let's all laugh."

"Hope you choke," grunted Matthew.

The next day the ribs were fastened in place, and these, of course, had a

bracing effect on the frame. On the upper plane there were twenty-one ribs, placed at even spaces across the frame. On the lower, one rib was omitted in the center, where there would be no cloth covering on account of the open space required to hold the passenger. Thus the ribs were something over a foot apart. Since the frames were only three feet wide and the ribs four feet long, it followed that they had to project a foot over one edge, and this of course must be the back, or after, edge. The front or abruptly curved end of each rib was brought flush with the long beam and screwed down to it with a long, flatheaded screw. Then where it crossed the after beam it was also screwed down. They were careful to see that each one was correctly squared with the long bars, so that the ribs, when placed, were parallel with each other.

When their work was finished, the boys squatted about, surveying the result of their labor and commenting on the scientific and shipshape appearance it was beginning to assume. The curved ribs had transformed the fencelike frames into two graceful pieces of lattice, with a sort of aerial, buoyant aspect that immediately suggested the aeroplane. Up to this point the work might have been intended for any one of a dozen purposes. Not so now.

"She's going to be all right," said Mac. "Where'll we try her out—down the hill?"

"We'd better try her on the level first," said Harry.

"Certainly, we'll do everything on the level," ventured Matthew.

"Matty," said Tom, "if you don't stop making these jokes—"

"I can't seem to satisfy you fellows," said Matthew. "That wasn't such a bad one—"

"Wouldn't it be a good idea," asked Howard, innocently, "to put the covering on before we try her out?"

"Mightn't be a bad scheme," said Harry.

"You know most of them are covered," Howard said; "they say it helps them to rise."

Two sonorous blasts of Charlie Greer's tin horn put an end to the conversation. Near the lean-to the trunk of a young tree had been felled and rested horizontally in the forks of two others. From this hung a line of seventeen towels, rough dry, but spotless, each one bearing a scout's initials. The cookee laundered these every sunny day, by Red Deer's orders. In process of preparation for supper, Harry reached the rack before the others, and came upon Gordon giving his round face a few final rubs.

"Hello, Kid," he said cheerily.

"Hello," Gordon answered.

"Thought we'd see you over yonder to-day. She's beginning to look quite shipshape, Kid. Come on over in the morning and take a look. Guess we'll get her finished to-morrow, if Mat doesn't stop to chin too much. Been stalking to-

day?" But there was no answer; and when Harry's face emerged from its towel, Gordon had disappeared.

It developed from camp-fire talk that night that Gordon had been stalking with that indefatigable stalker, Brick Parks. Parks, after long and patient effort, had managed to get a first-class snapshot of a hawk, for it was his public-spirited wish that the Hawk Patrol, of which he was a member, should have some sort of representation of their patron bird, produced by his own hand. And the idea had fired Gordon with enthusiasm, so that for the last two days he had been haunting the stream, armed with his trusty little "Brownie," in the hope of bringing its deadly focus on a real live beaver.

Under ordinary circumstances, he would have consulted his patrol leader about this, and if he had he might have directed his search more wisely; but as it was, he was going to triumph over the entire patrol, he was going to do them a magnificent good turn, he was going benevolently to donate eight photographs of a beaver, one for each member, and Arnold, when he received his, would feel the sting of a remorseful conscience, and that would serve him right.

"Any beavers to-day?" asked the doctor, as he took his customary seat amongst them.

"No, sir," said Gordon.

"I should think that land under the precipice might have a beaver," the doctor suggested, "near the pond, I mean. I believe you'll find them pretty scarce, though, Gordon. A muskrat wouldn't do?"

"Of course not," said Gordon. "We're not muskrats."

"Well, a muskrat is a kind of a small beaver," protested the doctor, cautiously.

"Just the thing," said Tilford Morrel, Hawk. "He's a kind of small beaver, aren't you, Kid?"

The talk turned to the all-important topic of the glider, and Red Deer fell a victim to the ruse which was practiced on him nearly every night, that of getting him interested in some absorbing topic just before eleven o'clock. Then, at about twelve, he would rise with great alacrity, saying that the hour was outrageous, but that he had only himself to blame.

In the morning came the most difficult part of the work, especially difficult since they were in the woods and had not the proper material for what they had to do. This was to fasten the two planes, one above the other, by means of the upright stanchions. If they had been in the city, their stanchions would have been round, and it would have been a simple matter to procure brass sockets for the ends to rest in. As it was, Mac suggested buying twelve ordinary brooms, which would have cost them about five dollars. Harry improved on this by suggesting hickory rake-handles, which can be purchased separately for

twenty cents each in any country store. But since they had no round sockets, square stanchions would, on the whole, be best.

"Besides," said Tom, "I wouldn't have the nerve to walk into that store and ask for twelve rake-handles. Every merchant prince in town thinks we're a pack of lunatics, as it is. Marty Forbes pities us. So does the telegraph operator. When I asked for piano wire, those two fellows in the hardware store looked at each other and winked. Come on, let's get busy with the square stanchions."

"That's right," said Matthew, "have the stanchions on the square if we mean to use the machine on the level, then—"

Mac walked grimly up to him and shook a chisel in his face. "Matthew, the day has just started; you are forgiven this once, but don't let it happen again. Now, you remember!"

"Come on, messmates," said Walden, tightening his belt; "are we going to get through to-night?"

"Indeed we are!" said Harry.

They placed one of the four-foot stanchions in the corner of the frame, held it upright, and screwed it on by means of the right-angle, wrought-iron braces. They used two of the braces, one flange of each screwed to a side of the upright, the other two flanges screwed one along the long beam, the other along the end cross-bar. When they had done this, the stanchion stood plumb upright and solid. If you do not care to pay fancy prices for brass stanchion sockets, do not let the books frighten you into doing so. These little wrought-iron braces, with screws to match, will do very well, and square stanchions are not half bad.

They put a stanchion wherever there was a cross-bar end. Now came the job of lifting the other frame and placing it on the stanchion-tops. When this had been secured, the whole frame was not as steady as they wished. But they contemplated their handiwork with admiring comments. It looked for all the world like Goodwin's biplane.

Now it was time to lay violent hands on Mac's old bicycle, and the boys went at it as if it were a cold turkey the day after Thanksgiving. Their object was to furnish the glider with wheels, placing them to the rear near the ends of the lower plane, so that the legs of the operator might form a third wheel, in a sense, relieving him of much of the strain of a sudden alighting. They remembered the wheels on Goodwin's machine, and they had not stopped to reflect that in a light-weight glider their room might be better than their company. It fell to Harry to discover a better use for the old wheels.

"Here's a way to truss her up good and tight," said he. "We don't need these wheels—she's as light as a feather. And here's a way to pull the wiring taut. That's very necessary. Why, Goodwin walked around his machine trying

all the wires, and they sounded like harp strings, they were so tight."

If you have a bicycle, you must have noticed that one end of the spoke is threaded and screws into a little turnable socket. They filed off each one, leaving the threaded end and its socket on the spoke. Then they cut the spokes a few inches from the sockets, and bent the other ends into the shape of a hook eye. Now, they took a strand of wire, bound it firmly to one corner of the frame, drew it loosely to an opposite corner, and cut it in the middle. One severed end they bound to the threaded socket, the other to the eyelet they had made in the spoke. The spoke was then screwed into its socket, and by this operation the wire was pulled taut. It sang and vibrated when they tried it with their fingers.

"Hurrah! How's that for trussing!" exclaimed Howard Brent.

"We can screw these wires so tight she won't give a particle," shouted Tom. "Good for you, Harry!"

The idea was a good one, for since absolute rigidity of the long planes is imperative, it follows that the trussing and bracing by wire must be perfectly tight—tighter than any pair of hands can draw it. It was a particularly happy notion in this case, as it permitted of the glider's being easily taken apart.

Several of the boys now got between the two planes, being careful not to step on the ribs, and began trussing. They wired each section separately, stretching a wire from each corner to the diagonally opposite corner,—that is, from the lower end of the back stanchion to the upper end of the next forward stanchion, and so on.

"Reminds you of that game you play with string,—cat in the cradle—doesn't it?" said Matthew. That was as near as he dared approach to a joke.

"Yes, dearie," said Mac.

They had to be careful that no wires should span the open space to be occupied by the passenger. As each wire was fixed in place, it was tightened by turning the little bicycle-spoke socket, and it was a never failing delight to the boys to spring these wires and listen with satisfaction to the long vibration which told how tightly they pulled the frame together and held it rigid.

When the trussing was finished, Mac stepped into the operator's place, grasped the cross-bars, and lifted the machine. It tilted to one side, then to the other, but did not sag.

"A couple of you hold up the ends," said Mac, "while I hang in the middle, and see if it holds stiff."

Two boys did so, but the long frame did not give, nor was there any sound of straining.

"She's what G. Lord would call a James Dandy," said Tom.

"She's a lalapazuza!" Howard shouted, throwing his cap in the air.

"All we have to do now is to fit on her silk dress," said Harry.

This was quickly done. They cut the silk into strips wide enough to span two rib-spaces. Each strip was turned under the forward bar, which was smeared with glue, then tacked with copper tacks and pulled tightly to the after bar, where it was also fastened. The edges of the strips met at every second rib, where glue was also smeared and the overlapping edges tacked down.

"There was some kind of a thin moulding running along over the ribs on Goodwin's machine," said Harry, thoughtfully.

"Harry, was there anything about Goodwin's machine that you didn't see?" asked Mac. "Your beautiful gray eyes are certainly wonders for seeing things."

Harry, ignoring the compliment, departed, and presently reappeared with a felt duffel bag.

"That's mine," said Matthew Reed. "What are you going to do with that?"

"I'm going to attach it," said Harry.

"Attach it to what?"

"Attach it in the interest of science. Now, Matthew, don't cut up and be naughty at the last minute. You know you have two of these."

Matthew subsided, under a storm of references to his lack of public spirit, and the felt bag was cut into long, narrow strips, slightly wider than the ribs, and tacked along over them.

The lower plane was covered in the same way, except that the two-foot space between the central struts was left free of rib and covering, to accommodate the passenger's body. Thus a boy could step into this space (always watchful not to step on the flanking silk) and, stooping, take the struts in his two hands and lift the complete frame.

"She's did!" shouted Tom Langford, throwing a tack-hammer into the air.

They stood about, eying the completed glider admiringly. There it stood, its ends resting on two logs, graceful, aerial, but strong, its taut copper wiring crossing and recrossing between the curved surfaces and glittering in the declining sunlight. They surveyed it from every angle, with enthusiastic comments. From the rear, the slight uniform curve of the silk to the rib summits, with the outline of the ribs showing at even intervals beneath the tight-drawn cloth, was beautiful. They looked from end to end, through a long vista of slanting wires. Howard Brent stepped on the middle of one of the lower bars and jumped ever so slightly. There was no spring. The bar, one inch in diameter, held rigid like a bar of steel.

"You wouldn't think you could balance that sideways by holding it in the center, would you?" said Mac.

"Balancing sideways is what they call 'lateral stability,' Mr. McConnell," said Tom. "If we're going to do this, we want to do it right, as Master G. Lord says about our proposed assault on Fort Ticonderoga."

"I agree with G. Lord," said Tom. "If we're going to be Green Mountain

boys, we ought to roll our r's and talk like them and carry rusty swords and worn-out guns. G. Lord has the right idea."

"That's what Red Deer calls entering into the spirit of a thing," said Matthew; "and that's G. Lord's specialty, all right. He wouldn't stand for 'balancing sideways.' It would have to be 'lateral stability' for him."

"I've missed him over here," said Mac. "Wonder why he hasn't been around?"

"Oh, he won't bother us much till he uses up those three films he bought."

Harry said nothing, but he realized keenly that his pleasure in building the glider and in the anticipation of using it had been sadly marred.

They rounded the struts which the passenger was to hold, and bound them with felt so that the hands and armpits might not chafe. Then they gave the whole thing, covering and all, a coat of varnish. This would not only fill up the weave of the silk, making it air tight, but stiffen it as well; and the varnishing of the stanchions in particular would cause them more easily to deflect the air. As a precaution against a sudden rise of wind, the four corners were anchored to the earth by ropes and stakes and the apparatus was left to dry over night. In case of rain it might be brought into one of the tents.

That night at camp-fire some one rashly tried to introduce the subject of Myer signaling, only to be put down by a veritable storm of aeronautic talk.

"Now," said Red Deer, "I've waited till this glider was finished to make a remark. Is the coast clear for about five minutes? All right, then. Now, you understand that I'm on a vacation. It wouldn't be fair to ask me to set broken joints and bind up wounds, would it?"

"Certainly not," laughed several, seeing the diplomatic trend of his talk.

"Well, now, I want you to begin on level ground. Be satisfied with gliding a few feet or so close to the ground. You'll find old terra firma a pretty good friend. Then, when you've got the hang of it, try it on the hillside if you wish. There isn't so very much slope, especially down toward the foot. But get the hang of it first. That's the way the Wrights did. Understand, Harry?"

The next morning they tried it out in a near-by field, and came in to dinner enthusiastic over their success. Mac took his place in the center, holding the felted struts in his hands and letting his arms hang straight down. Thus the lower plane was about two feet from the ground. Harry and Tom steadied the ends. The glider was faced directly into the breeze and Mac started to run. The first thing he knew, his feet had left the ground. Then one of the ends sank, scraped the field, and he was down again.

"If you hadn't looked around to see if I was still holding on, that wouldn't have happened," said Tom. "Try it again."

"As soon as your feet leave the ground," said Harry, "stick them forward a little. That will tilt the forward edge up—not too much, though."

The next start was better. As soon as Mac's legs were clear of the ground, he projected them slightly, which kept the glider from coming down. And now instinct—the same instinct which enables a bicyclist to right his tilting wheel by just the exact degree of motion—came to his aid. The slightest movement had a controlling effect on these far-spreading wings. He slid his hands four or five inches backward, throwing the cutting edge of the long planes up. Thus the glider, scooping the air under its curved surfaces, rose. Also instinct seemed to tell him when it was about to cant, and he inclined his body sideways, accordingly. The sensation of feeling the long planes obey this slight move was delightful. But it was too soon for instinct to be attuned to all the subtle little calls upon it, and presently, leaning too far forward, that delicate and stubborn thing known as the center of gravity shifted, and the glider came coasting to the ground. He had risen about twelve feet and glided about forty.

Next Harry tried it and did still better, starting with more power after a longer initial run. It was a very easy thing to learn how to do. One after another the boys tried it, with a trifling mishap now and then. Bert Waring glided fifty-one feet from the rising point, which was the record until Red Deer took off his gold specs and handed them to Roy Carpenter.

"Get from under!" said Matthew Reed.

"Move those trees out of the way," said Langford.

"Will you be back to-night, Doctor?" asked Mac.

Red Deer made a very scientific flight, doing a sort of scenic-railway curve, almost alighting, then up again. His lateral balancing was admirable. He got up as high as thirteen or fourteen feet, and tacked three feet on to Waring's record.

"By Jove, that's splendid sport, isn't it?" said he, as he alighted.

"Let's try it down the slope now," said Roy Carpenter.

They took it up to within about twenty-five feet of the precipice. That was as far as Red Deer would allow it to be carried.

"That's far enough," he called, as he came up after them. "I want you to be careful never to go nearer the top than this. If any wind should catch you and take you over the brink, it would be all up."

"It would be all *down*," said Matthew.

"I hate to think what it would mean, boys," said the scoutmaster, earnestly. "Try it down the slope all you want to, but don't go nearer than this to the precipice. If one of you should by any chance go over, you'd crash down a hundred feet."

"We wouldn't think of trying a glide off there," laughed Vinton. "At least, not for mine."

"I know you wouldn't," said the doctor. "You're not fools enough for that. But what I mean is, don't back up that far to take a runner. You see, while

you're facing down into the wind, if a sudden gust should come, you can never tell, you know, it might catch the machine a certain way and topple you right down. You've got a good long slope here. Don't go nearer than this now, will you?"

"Don't worry, Doctor," said Mac.

"Well, I want you all to promise me. I've got to go down now and make up a report for the local council, and I want to be able to banish this from my mind. Do you all promise? Do you promise, Harry?"

"Why me, in particular?" Harry laughed.

"No reason, only I happened to notice you standing there."

Harry stood among the others, his hands in his pockets. "Of course, I promise," said he.

Red Deer watched the first flight. It carried Carpenter, the Hawks' patrol leader, over one hundred feet down the slope, skimming the ground. Then the scoutmaster, apparently satisfied, went down to his tent. Presently, Nelson Pierce literally leaped into fame. He had been watching the manipulations of the others shrewdly, and now, with the benefit of what he had seen and a theory or two of his own, he took a good run and, balancing carefully, brought the forward edges up to a sharp angle. The downward slope of the hill and the upward coasting of the glider soon left at least thirty feet of space below him.

"Oh me, oh my!" shouted Howard Brent, as they ran down to be in at the finish.

Nelson, maintaining his lateral balance by careful inclinations of his body to right and left, cut his way upward at a slight angle, with never a tremor of the planes, extending his momentum by holding a stiff, steady angle, until, about one hundred and fifty feet from the start and fifty feet from the ground, the attraction of gravitation began to assert itself and drew the glider and its passenger earthward. But the attraction of gravitation cannot have its own way with a glider going against the wind, and Nelson coasted easily down not so very far from the foot of the hill.

"That was fine!" said Bert.

"How was the weather up there, Nel?" asked Morrel.

Harry tried it after that and made a good flight; but he tried a spectacular rise, throwing his edges up to forty-five degrees, and consequently didn't go so far.

Instead of blowing his horn, Charlie Greer, wearing his apron, came up to see the show and summon them to supper. They made him get in and, amid loud cheering, he made a magnificent flight of eight feet.

"Great, Charlie!" shouted Vinton.

"Charles, you're a winner!" said Mac.

"Guess everybody's tried it now," said Walden.

"Where's Kid Lord?" piped up Tom.

"Here comes Brick Parks. Hey, Brick, where's the Kid, anyway?"

"Stalking," said Parks. "Let's try that thing, will you?"

"Too late to-night, Bricky, old boy, but you can take a picture of it."

"Sun's too low," said Parks.

They anchored the machine with ropes and stakes about twenty-five feet from the cliff, meaning to resume their operations after supper.

The excitement of the trials over, Harry was miserable. He knew that Gordon, in his heart, would have liked to try the glider, and that it was just boyish pique that kept him away. He drew a mental picture of Gordon trudging alone in the woods, his trusty little camera under his arm, in hopeless quest of a beaver. He was sorry he hadn't made other overtures and told him that there was next to no chance of finding a beaver short of many miles to the west. He told himself that he should have been more in earnest when he spoke to Gordon, less independent, though it is hard to see how he could have said or done more. The more he thought, the more he blamed himself. He thought of something he would say to Gordon when he saw him. He would go up to him and say, "Can't we find a way, Kid?" and that would surely catch him.

But he did not see Gordon, for Gordon did not appear at supper. Such things often happened, and Red Deer was not anxious, only annoyed. Brick Parks said that he and Gordon had separated down the stream, Gordon wishing to follow the water.

He thought his quest of the elusive beaver might have taken him through that dank place below the hill.

"I bet he gets one," said Vinton. Harry shook his head.

But Gordon's absence did not interrupt the air talk, though Harry had little to say.

"You see, boys," said Red Deer, as they ate, "the great thing is to glide *into* the wind. If you do the other thing, you take your life into your hands."

Of course, the question of installing motive power was discussed, and Morrel caused a great laugh by his suggestion to purchase the *Swan* and use its engine for the glider. "We could make the propeller with a couple of canoe paddles," suggested Vinton.

After the colors were down and the anthem had been sung, it was too late for gliding, for the dusk was lowering rapidly. It was decided to leave the glider where it was, at least till after camp-fire, to see if the night bade fair to be clear. Harry said he would go up and see if the stakes were secure, for the breeze was freshening up. He went up the hill in the dusk, feeling wretchedly unhappy and kicking stones to right and left, as he walked. They saw his slender figure silhouetted against the gray sky.

"Anything the matter with him?" some one asked.

"No, surely not—why?"

"Seems kind of quiet, that's all."

Harry looked at the stakes, pressed one a little farther down with his foot, and then went up and sat on the rock, looking admiringly at the graceful framework. There, beside him on the rock, were crudely graven the initials "G. L." Gordon's failure to show up at supper had amused him a little, it was so characteristic of him. He thought of the night he had waited under Dibble Mountain and how Gordon had communicated with him through the darkness. He looked down upon the dank stretch of land below him, under the cliff. The wind was blowing, as it had blown all day, up the hill. It was quite brisk, and he had to pull his hat down tight to keep it from blowing off. It was just right for gliding down the slope. Its direction could be plainly seen even in the land below (despite the windbreak of hill), where the reeds all leaned away from the cliff.

As he watched the bending reeds, he noticed something which aroused his interest. It looked like some one standing in the midst of them. Then he realized that the figure must be kneeling, for it did not rise as high as the surrounding growths. What with the dusk, the distance, and the swaying of the reeds about it, he could only see it intermittently and indistinctly. But surely there was some one there, kneeling or stooping. He looked closer, concentrated his gaze, and shuddered, as a dreadful thought came to him.

The figure was neither kneeling nor stooping. Nor was it standing. While he gazed, leveling all the strength of his vision upon it, a gust of wind blew his hat off, over the precipice, and the same gust blew the distant reeds far down, showing the figure clearly. He saw a spasmodic motion of an arm, grasping the reeds. It seemed to have no legs. It was nothing but the upper part of a person's body, with two arms swinging frantically. Now the swampy growths stood upright and the figure was concealed. Presently they swayed again, far over, seeming to change color as they bent. And there was the figure—lower than before, its arms clutching the reeds. As Harry watched, he was sure that he could see it sinking, slowly. Then the stump of head and chest and spreading arms was hidden in the reeds and swampy grass.

He knew now what it meant. There must be quicksand there, and the wretched person was being slowly drawn down to his death. A terrible fear gripped him. Parks had said that Gordon was going down there after a beaver!

He lost not one second's time. Always cool, always level-headed, he was so now. And since he was not in a panic, neither work nor time was wasted. He ran down the slope to the glider, cut the ropes which held it, brought it around facing the cliff, got into it, and came up to the edge. He knew that what he was about to do had never been done but once, and that once was when the famous Lilienthal went crashing to his death. He was not going into the wind, he was

going *with* it. But he gave not a thought to his own peril, he had to get out there at all costs.

He waited for a gust of wind to part the reeds and swamp grass and show him the spot for which he should aim. Presently it came, and almost simultaneously a frightful shriek from below reached his ears. Shuddering, he fixed his eyes on the spot, grasped the handle struts, lifted the machine, and plunged from the cliff.

The instant he was off, he lowered himself until his armpits caught the struts, thus giving his body a longer and freer play. And that happened which always happens in such cases. A gust of wind caught the glider behind and threw it around. By luck, or instinct, or both, Harry had the plane on an even keel and was ready to counteract the lurch. If it had been at either angle, it would have crashed to the ground. As it was, he kept his equilibrium by keeping his head. And he had now the full pendulum length of his body to control his balance.

His object was to coast down. But his position in the air was most precarious, for he had not the sustaining power of the wind blowing against him. On the contrary, coming from behind, it continually upset his steering and balancing calculations, tilting his planes this way and that, and once almost turning the machine over. Once he found himself facing the cliff and sailing straight toward it, till by a series of sudden jerks of his body he managed to haul the glider about. The wind died for a few moments, and free from its diverting and dangerous influence, he brought his forward edges slightly downward and the machine coasted obediently. If the calm would hold for just a few minutes, he thought desperately, he might make a safe landing. And it did hold, just as the moon had come out once before to help this boy who knew how to help himself.

Down from the turmoil of choppy, rebounding air, out from lurching and spinning like a top, came the glider, the long pendulum of Harry’s body hanging loosely in it, now bending this way, now that, now forward, now back, in assured and masterful control; and, obedient to the indomitable will and skill and courage that held it as with a tight rein, it coasted easily downward, straight for the spot he was aiming for. It had reared, it had lurched, it had turned. And now, like the horse that recognizes that it has met its master, it meekly obeyed. If the back wind held off for just a moment more, he might be in time. And the back wind, being a true sport, did hold off, just to see how this lithe, slender boy would manage it.

The glider came to earth, pulling the tall swamp grass like a great comb, and settled its broad area upon the treacherous quicksand. Harry had drawn himself up and stood, stooping, between the long planes, looking this way and that, and calling. The thought that he might be too late almost unnerved him. In

his descent, he had seen nothing of the figure, but had headed for a tree which stood near by. And his alighting had been accurate, for not two feet from the plane he now saw the head, with two arms above it. Evidently the lateral resistance of the arms had been lost through weakness, for they were almost perpendicular.

Grasping one of the stanchions with one hand, he leaned over and seized the sinking figure by the collar. Then, grasping as much of its clothing as he could in his hand, he pulled with all his might and main. He succeeded in lifting the boy the least bit. Then he separated one of the guy wires and with it lashed himself to the stanchion. Leaning over, and exerting all the strength of both arms, he succeeded in slowly raising the buried body. It was a terrific tussle, but he had made up his mind to do it, and he did it.

A few minutes later, panting, exhausted, almost on the verge of collapse himself, he was kneeling over the prostrate form which lay on the lower plane, and wiping the mud from its face. The eyes looked up, staring, terrified, into his.

"Who—what is it?" said the voice, weakly, half consciously.

"It's just Harry, Kid—I found a way, that's all."

“HE LEANED OVER AND SEIZED THE SINKING FIGURE BY THE COLLAR.”

CHAPTER XXIII
HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

"It's going to be a great day," observed Mac. "What was it the history book said, Gordon? 'The day of their departure dawned brisk and fair'?"

"Yes," said Gordon.

"Didn't it say something about every soul being scared? Surely it did."

"It said every soul was prepared," corrected Gordon, with dignity.

"Well, Ethan Allen and his crowd hadn't anything on us," Mac answered.

Indeed they had not, to judge from appearances, for nearly everything which had constituted the camp and made it homelike had been loaded into the gallant *Swan*, which rocked gently at its moorings. The glider, after a triumphant career of record making and breaking, had been taken apart, first submissively posing for innumerable snapshots. There was talk of awarding to the graceful flier a gnome motor, some time or other, and it was agreed that meanwhile if any enterprising shopkeeper in Oakwood cared to exhibit it "as the glider in which Harry Arnold had—"

"Sh-h-h, here he comes," said one of the scouts, in an undertone; "he'd be wild if he heard you proposing that."

"You're not going to trust this precious cargo to Morrel, are you, Doctor?" said Harry.

"I thought I'd let Howard go along with him to tend the engine. Morrel can steer."

"If you want her to go to the left, Til," said Harry, soberly, "you just pull on this rope, and for the right—"

"Think you can remember that, Til?" said Roy Carpenter.

"You fellows make me tired," grumbled Tilford Morrel.

The *Swan*, on her last voyage under scout auspices, went majestically down the stream into the broad expanse of the lake, and headed for Port Henry. Here she waited for the rest of the troop, and then the greater part of their camp property was sent on to Oakwood to herald their approach. But they kept enough for bivouac camping, in case they should decide to tramp as far as Albany before taking the train.

If you were to search to-day for the spot where the Oakwood boys camped all summer, you would find no distinguishing mark, no defacing of ground or tree, no unsightly can or battered paper box,—nothing unless, perchance, the initials "G. L." obscurely graven here and there. Thus the scout comes and goes, and none shall be the wiser,—except, perhaps, another scout to whose

observant eyes a wisp of grass may hold a meaning, and who sees where others see not.

Their camping paraphernalia reduced to a minimum, the Oakwood troop crowded into the *Swan*, a borrowed dory accommodating the overflow, and crossed the lake at Port Henry, landing at Chimney Point. From here they could look across the narrow channel formed by the Crown Point peninsula, and see the ruins of the famous old fortress on the end of the clumsy thumb of land. The sight of it fired Gordon with enthusiasm.

"Oh, it's going to be great!" he cried. "Can we get down opposite Ticonderoga to-night, Red Deer?"

"If you're good," said Mac.

At Chimney Point they returned the *Swan* to its rightful owner, who agreed to row the borrowed dory across to its owner, and then they started southward along the Vermont shore.

It was, as Mac had observed, a great day. A brisk breeze rippled the waters of the lake, and rustled musically among the leaves.

"Well, who's going to be Ethan Allen?" asked Red Deer. "Here we are, a couple of miles down the line, and don't know yet who's leader. Harry, this beautiful historic revival is yours, so I guess you're old Ethan."

"No, that's Kid's job," laughed Harry, putting his arm over Gordon's shoulder as they tramped along.

"G. Lord, or no one," shouted Mac.

"G. Lord for mine!" added Brick Parks.

"If Kid Lord isn't Ethan Allen, I won't play," shouted John Walden.

Gordon grinned from ear to ear. "All right, only you'll have to be Seth Warner, Harry."

"If you think I'm going to turn around and lead this outfit back to Crown Point in order to play Seth Warner, you'll have to think again, my fraptious boy. If Ethan Allen Lord leads us forth to victory this night, I think that will be about enough. Have you got the speech all pat?"

"'In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!'" shouted Gordon, striking an attitude.

"Great!" said Charlie Greer.

"Did you notice how I rolled my r's?" asked Gordon.

"We certainly did—you're the only original!"

"That's nothing. I can do it even better than that."

Harry, smiling, walked over to Vinton, who was carrying several staves and a fishing-rod wound up in a piece of light tenting. Fumbling in this bundle, he pulled out a battered, rusty sword.

"Here you are, old man," he said, handing it to Gordon. "You want to do it right, you know."

"Where'd he get that?" asked Langford, surprised.

"Don't ask me," said Dan Swift.

"Oh, cracky, where'd you get it, Harry?" Gordon cried.

"Oh, cracky, I just happened to see it in Port Henry when we were making the glider," laughed Harry.

Gordon grew sober.

"Now you're the genuine, warranted article," said Harry, falling back and walking with the scoutmaster.

"How did you happen to buy that, Harry?" Dr. Brent asked in a low voice.

"Oh, I just happened to see it in the blacksmith's. I *thought* it would hit him in the right spot."

Red Deer made no comment. He knew Harry.

In a few minutes Gordon fell behind, and he and Harry walked together.

"Harry, it's a James Dandy! I—I don't see how you happened to think to buy it."

"Oh, I just happened to be in Berry's getting some steel bent."

"Then it was when—while—during—"

"Yes, it was when, while, during," said Harry; "and you're supposed to wave it over your head just the minute you clap your eyes on Mr. E. C. Wade—see?"

"Oh, but it'll be great!" said Gordon.

A day's tramp southward along the Vermont shore brought them opposite Ticonderoga about dusk. Far inland, when the view was unobstructed, they could see the hazy outline of the Green Mountains, and across on the New York side, Harry pointed out the frowning, shaggy head of old Bulwagga, and farther on, the less forbidding height of Dibble Mountain, from whose summit they had seen the smoke which lured them northward only to find a heap of ashes.

"But you found us just the same, didn't you, Harry?" said Mac.

"Did you think he wouldn't?" said Gordon, contemptuously. (It was noticeable that he did not say *we*; he said *he*.) "He found you right at the biological moment, too."

"Psychological," corrected Red Deer, smiling.

"He's all right, is Harry boy," said Charlie Greer.

"So's G. Lord," said some one else.

"Harry," said the doctor, "this is private land we're coming to. Guess we'll have to make a long detour. It wouldn't do for a party of scouts to be caught trespassing."

To the doctor's surprise, however, Harry vaulted the low fence, apparently oblivious of the sign which said, "Positively No Trespassing." "Come ahead," said he, looking back.

“Isn’t he the bold thing?” said Nelson Pierce.

A man came down through the grounds with a menacing aspect. “Don’t yez know how to read plain English?” he shouted.

“No, but I can understand plain Irish,” said Harry. “Hello, Pat, how are you?”

The man uttered a laugh to crack the heavens. “Sure, and ’tis yourself, is it? And Oi’m that glad to see ye!”

“Are we pinched?” laughed Harry.

“Ye are that, the whole Wild West crew of yez! Fetch yer friends in here till I have thim fined ten dollars each. Did yez have yer supper yit? ’Tis a lie, ye didn’t—come into the house.”

Gordon was already at Harry’s side, and the rest followed.

“Where’s the folks?” asked Harry.

“Gone. The place is closed up an’ I’m left here to kape it open. The sarvants went to Oakwood to tidy up a bit a week ago, and the Mister and Missus went this morning with Master Penfield. It’s a ghrand place they’ve there, Mister Arnold. Me and the old woman goes down with our bandbox in the tourin’ car with Jimmie, Mister Roger’s man, this day week, praise be, for ’tis as slow as mud here now.”

“How are they? All well?” asked Harry.

“All well, and waitin’ to get their two hands on ye—specially the girrls, forbye a letter ye sint Master Penfield. Sure, he made a raid on the establishment. Two fancy hats, no less, must Miss Marjorie hand over, and there’s not so much as a wicker chair left in the house. Come up and set down in wan o’ thim—the whole o’ yez!”

“Was the aeroplane a success?” Gordon asked.

“Faith, why should it not be, with the ind of a tin-dollar fountain pen into it, and poor Mr. Danforth, him writin’ with the stub of a lead pencil? It kin carry three passengers, seventeen-year-locusts, would ye believe it, and it wint acrost the lake!”

“Fine!” said Harry.

The place seemed indeed deserted, with Mr. Danforth’s genial face not in evidence. But Pat and his good wife proved very cordial and hospitable substitutes. Pat protested that if Mr. Danforth were to hear of their passing the house without accepting its entertainment, he, Pat, would be peremptorily discharged and denounced every day thereafter. So they dined luxuriously under the trees on the beautiful lawn, on a variety of dainty and toothsome odds and ends from the still well-stocked larder.

After dark they went on down the shore, with many acknowledgments to the hearty chauffeur, who seemed to have a full measure of the genuine Danforth hospitality. “I was chauffeur here long befoor there was anny

autimobiles, or befoor they'd the place at all," he told them, as they left; "and he's the ghrand man, but I can't larrn him to manage a boat."

At nine o'clock that night, the Oakwood scouts sprawled on the grassy, sloping shore, just opposite old Fort Ticonderoga. A mile or so behind the fort lay the sleeping village. Behind the waiting scouts rose the historic Mount Independence; and across the lake there glimmered a quivering yellow band, the light of a camp-fire just beyond the fort.

"Wonder what time they'll turn in?" said Roy Carpenter. "Christopher, but that light looks cheerful!"

The old fort, partially restored, lay at the end of a roundish cape projecting from the New York shore, and here the water flowed through the narrowest channel in all the lake's broadening and narrowing path. It was a spot forever associated with the good old War of Independence. Right here, where the Oakwood scouts now waited for the light to die, had the redoubtable Allen given his boisterous followers a final harangue, generously offering to release any one who lacked the courage to follow him across.

The boys had not been able to secure a boat anywhere in the vicinity, and here they were handicapped in a way that Ethan Allen had not been. For that intrepid leader had, to tell the truth, "attached" all the boats along the shore—in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress. This, of course, the new Green Mountain Boys could not very well do; so Harry suggested reconnoitering alone, bringing back, if possible, one of the enemy's canoes. The proposition was one after Ethan Allen's own heart. They rigged a makeshift raft by lashing together three logs which lay on a ruined pier near by, and spent an hour fashioning a rough sculling oar with a scout staff and a piece of narrow board.

After the fire had died sufficiently to convince them that the Albany troop had gone to bed, Harry boarded the raft, and managed to work his way across the channel, which was here about one third of a mile across. He kept well clear of the illuminated area, and crawled cautiously up the sloping shore, testing the ground before each step. It was almost pitch dark, but on the little eminence, a hundred feet or so from the shore, a black, irregular bulk could be seen, behind which was a fast-dying light. Undoubtedly that was where they spent the evenings. And he felt equally certain that they slept within the fortress walls. He crept up the hill. There was not a sound. He listened, and suddenly became conscious of voices, speaking in an undertone. Then, two figures, walking together, emerged from the darkness, crossed the band of dying light, and were engulfed again in the night. He followed them by their voices. He could not hear what they were saying, but presently one spoke in a louder tone, from which he gathered that they had separated. He crept closer until he was within earshot of steady footfalls. These he followed, silently,

stealthily, clutching every stone and brittle twig between his toes. Soon a figure took hazy outline against the background of less black water. It seemed to be headed for the shore.

Harry undid the knot of his scarf and took it off, crunching the soft fabric into a wad. Then he stole forward, and with simultaneous movements threw one arm about the walking figure and with the other hand stuffed the wadded scarf into its mouth and held it in. Then, tripping the boy by a dextrous movement of his foot, he let him gently to the ground. As the sentinel was taken completely by surprise, it was all done in a second.

"Hello, Atwell, you Laughing Hyena," he whispered. "It's your old college chum, Harry Arnold,—don't get scared now; here, look at me," and he struck a match, holding it near his face. "You're supposed to be gagged—see? There's a great game on for to-night. We're going to take the fort and have the laugh on Mr. Wade. I'm going to take this wad out of your mouth, but understand you're supposed to be gagged—you mustn't do or say a thing—understand?"

Atwell nodded, and the gag was removed. "You're a wonder, Arnold," said he. "My, but you had me scared for a minute!"

"Don't tell me a thing," interrupted Harry. "You're gagged and you can't talk. I'm going to tie this scarf round your neck, and that'll mean you're out of the game—you're a gagged sentinel—see? Don't spoil it now, will you?"

He felt sure that the gag about Atwell's neck would be as effectual as one in his mouth, and he wasted no more time on that bitter enemy, for there was another sentinel to be looked after. This turned out to be none other than the redoubtable Frankie, who was easy game. Harry gagged him with his handkerchief, marched him down to Atwell, who was sitting on a rock, and left him to recover from his fright and to receive from his fellow-sentinel a more complete explanation.

"Remember, you're out of the game, Frank," whispered Harry, as he started down toward the shore. In half an hour he was back among his own troop with a canoe. There were other canoes, but he had managed to find only one paddle.

"One canoe's all we want, anyway, Harry," said Gordon, laughing gleefully over his report of the gagged sentinels; "because the day must be just breaking when we enter the fort and we must go in small boat-loads to stretch the time out."

Between one and two o'clock in the morning, they began their desperate and hazardous move against King George's proud minions, as Gordon called them.

"Say, Atwell's an awful nice fellow for a redcoat," said Harry, as the first three scouts, Vinton, Carpenter, and Brent, were pushed off with many reminders of the need of absolutely silent paddling.

“I have naught but contempt for him, and for that redcoat tyrant, Wade, as well,” said Gordon.

“Ay, let us think of the cruel Stamp Act to-night, and the Boston Massacre, and—and—a few other things,” said Red Deer. “Colonel Gordon Allen speaks what is in all our hearts!”

“You’ll like Mr. Wade, Red Deer,” said Harry. “He’s great. His troop thinks the world of him.”

“His tinseled uniform was paid for by poor colonial farmers and honest pioneers,” said Gordon, fiercely.

“On the level?” said George Conway.

“He wore a golf suit the last time I saw him,” said Harry.

“Now, Harry, I can see you’re going to spoil it all. The first thing you’ll do, you’ll go and shake hands with him before—”

“Never!” said Harry. “Shake the hand that—er—something or other—mm—squeezes—pinches—er—an unjust tax—er—”

“That’s rotten, Harry!” said Brick Parks.

“Awful,” commented Red Deer.

“That tramples on our unavailable rights,” growled Gordon.

“Inalienable rights, sure—that’s what his hand tramples on—if it tramples at all.”

“I meant his foot,” said Gordon.

“Well, then, I won’t shake his foot, either,” said Harry.

They sat close to the shore, and listened for the sound of the returning canoe.

“Guess they’re pinched,” suggested Bert.

But soon the canoe glided silently shoreward with the faintest ripple.

“Where did you land them?” Harry asked Roy, who brought the canoe back.

“Just in the shadow of the fortress. They’re playing mumbly-peg with the gagged sentinels.”

“What’s that?” said Gordon.

“Never fear,” said Roy. “’Tis not so. Goodman Brent and Goodman Vinton are playing mumbly-peg with each other near the shore. We heard the gagged sentinels talking together a few paces off.”

“Chewing the rag,” ventured Matthew Reed.

“Now, don’t begin that, Matty,” said Harry. “You’ve been so good up to now.”

“Who goes next?” Red Deer asked.

“Goodman Walden, Goodman Morrel—”

“Better send Morrel with the last load, Kid,” said Harry. “He’ll be sure to talk when he gets over.”

“Don’t call me Kid! Is that what you call respect for your leader?”

There was no need for hurry, for they did not wish to land the last boat-load until dawn and they preferred to make a number of trips rather than crowd the canoe. “For,” as Gordon said, quoting Mr. Wade, “this thing must be going on right under his very nose all night.”

So they went over in small lots and did the whole job in eight trips, having met with no mishap and made no sound which could possibly have been heard within the fort. The day was just breaking. The two gagged sentinels, faithfully silent, came down to the shore and stood meekly watching the group.

“Hello, Kid Lord,” ventured Frankie, in a cautious whisper.

Gordon gave him a scathing look. “Follow, my brave fellows,” said he.

“Did you hear that?” said Brick Parks.

“Come on, follow,” said Mac.

Gordon, with the gigantic, rusty sword thrown over his shoulder like a musket, trudged up the slope, his gallant company following after, and Red Deer, smiling and cleaning his gold specs, bringing up the rear. It was a formidable array. There, on the summit of the grassy height, stood the old fort, rather small and unforbidding to have such a bloody, but glorious, history. For many years, it had been no more than a roofless ruin, but the partial restoration had been studious and faithful, on the outside, at least. Yes, it was, in all essentials, the same old fort that Montcalm had held against the British in the bloody French and Indian War, that Ethan Allen had taken, and that General Burgoyne had retaken.

The great portal stood open, and the intrepid leader marched boldly in. The first gray light of morning coming through the score of port-holes showed the forms of the occupants, each patrol sleeping in a separate corner of the enclosure. Here was a slight divergence from historic truth, for Captain Delaplace had slept upstairs. But there was no upstairs now, and Mr. Wade reposed comfortably on a balsam mattress among the Ravens. But was not the feat already accomplished? Had not the sentinels been overpowered and gagged? And had not the brave Green Mountain Boys crossed the lake in small boat-loads under the very nose of the haughty Delaplace?

“Go and poke him with your sword, Kid,” whispered Howard Brent.

“Better tickle him,” said Mac. “Jumping jiminies, how those redcoats can snore!”

“Ahem,” said Gordon, gruffly, not knowing exactly how to proceed.

“You’ll wake the wrong one,” suggested Red Deer; “better give the captain a poke, Gordon.”

So Gordon stepped up and prodded the Albany scoutmaster with his sword. Mr. Wade immediately sat up, rubbing his eyes. “That you, Frank?” said he, sleepily. “You—is it?”

“Come down—er—I mean, get—rise up—you crawling tyrant’s minion!” shouted Gordon. “I demand the surrender of this fort!”

“There must be some mistake,” said Mr. Wade, rising sleepily and rubbing his eyes. “We have permission to camp here.”

“We scorn the warrant of King George!” Gordon answered, “and denounce your commission—and—er—don’t we?” he ended, turning to Harry.

“Sure we do,” said Harry.

By this time nearly every scout was sitting up, staring. Mr. Wade was beginning to smile.

“I demand the surrender of this fort, Captain Delaplace Wade,” said Gordon, waving the old sword, “in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress! Here I stand with near a score of sturdy Green Mountain patriots at my back. Your sentinels lie gagged. We have come thither—I mean hither—in one of your own canoes!”

“It’s a bum canoe, too,” said Mac.

“Silence, Goodman Mac,” said Gordon.

“We have come here in the name of Liberty, under the very shadow of your—er—wait a minute—your—er—unguarded walls. Do you admit that you were talking through your hat that night at camp-fire?”

Mr. Wade gave one look at Dr. Brent, who was nearly bursting with laughter. Then he went over to a corner, picked up a scout staff and handed it respectfully to Gordon. “I surrender,” said he, laughing, “but not unconditionally. The brave Green Mountain Boys must become our guests.”

In a minute all was laughing pandemonium, and introductions were as thick in the old fortress as bullets in the days of the gallant Montcalm. Red Deer and the tyrant Wade chatted in a way to suggest downright treason on the part of one or the other. Al Wilson, Atwell, and Brownell hobnobbed with Ethan Allen, as if he were a long-lost brother. Frankie and Giant George followed Harry Arnold about, so that it looked suspiciously as if Harry would turn Tory before the day was over. Walter Lee displayed his new canoe to Harry in a way to suggest that the two might have held some treasonable intercourse in times past. But worst of all, and enough to make old King George turn in his royal grave, what did the Green Mountain Boys do but agree to remain with the proud redcoats for several days and then join them in a canoe trip up the beautiful Lake George!

The redcoat Wade’s surrender was complete. He admitted that they had done just what he had said could not be done, and that, so far as the transporting of the company and the overpowering of the sentinels were concerned, it was true to history, as nearly as history could be relied upon, when it couldn’t agree with itself.

If we were to follow these thirty-odd boys as their flotilla of canoes glided

up the placid bosom of the beautiful lake on their homeward way, there would be no space for the one or two incidents which have yet to be told. The two troops parted at the head of the lake, where the Oakwood boys took the train for New York.

While they were bidding good-by to the Albany scouts, with many plans for a joint camp the next summer, Frankie confided a dark secret in Harry's ear. "Atwell and Brownell sent me into the lean-to for the bottle of citronella the other night, the mosquitoes were so thick."

"Yes? They say it's great stuff to rub on your face," answered Harry.

"Of course, it was dark," said Frankie.

"Was, hey?" said Harry, carelessly.

"I brought them out a bottle of ink," Frankie concluded. "They didn't find it out till after they'd used it."

CHAPTER XXIV
MR. DANFORTH HAS HIS WAY

At Albany a boy boarded the train with a huge basket of sandwiches, each neatly wrapped in paraffin paper, and Red Deer successfully negotiated with him for his entire stock. As a scout never throws papers about wantonly, either indoors or out, it fell out that these papers were held by their various possessors until Gordon conceived the notion of gathering them up.

"What you up to now, Kid?" asked Tom Langford, as Gordon stopped at his seat.

"Tickets, please," said Gordon, grabbing the paraffin paper and passing on.

"Playing conductor, Gordon?" Dr. Brent asked cheerfully, as Gordon passed.

But it turned out that this was Gordon's first maneuver in the direction of one of his own particular, genuine, original good turns (for not even Black Wolf himself, with all respect to him, could stand up with G. Lord in this particular phase of boy scouting). He hoped that no one but himself would remember the law which had just gone into effect in the State of New Jersey, prohibiting the public drinking-cup in railroad trains and elsewhere, and he made no answer to the jocular remarks of the boys, as he carefully folded the papers and tucked them away in his pocket.

When they reached New York and boarded the Oakwood train, there was the usual cooler filled with ice-cold water, but no glass. The day was very warm, and only one or two of the passengers carried drinking-cups. Then Gordon, in his element, went through the car, deftly rolling his paraffin papers into little cornucopias, and handing them with a word of explanation to the astonished passengers.

"I never even knew there was such a law," remarked one old gentleman, to his companion.

"They're a wide-awake lot—those Boy Scouts," his friend replied.

"Thank you so very much," said a young lady, taking the makeshift cup. "I'm dreadfully thirsty, too—you're a public benefactor."

"Let me fill it for you," said Gordon, grinning delightedly. As he handed it to her, the train pulled into Oakwood, and before he had refilled it for her to enjoy a second draught, every member of the troop had left the car, and the train was puffing out of the station.

"Hurry up, my boy, train's starting," the old gentleman called cheerily after him; "you'll have to jump."

"That's nothing," Gordon answered, as he swung off.

Thus it was that Master Gordon Lord, Scout, missed his train by stopping to do a good turn, when he started away, and almost missed his station by doing another one, when he came home. The good turns had not lessened his pleasure in the least; one of them had opened the way for a variety of adventures, and, as he later remarked to a gentleman representing the National Council, who was visiting Oakwood, and to whom he had "recounted his adventures," "The more you do of them, the more fun you have, and oh, cracky, I'm glad I met Miss Leslie that first morning!"

The mention of the national councilman leads us, by a short cut, to an important event, but in order to get to it we must take a running jump over another one.

It was a great day when a score or more of youthful inventors and a very fair audience of adults besides gathered on the golf links of the Oakwood Field Club to see the trials for the aviation cup which the *Oakwood News* had offered. The golfers stopped their play in honor of the occasion, and the contestants on the tennis courts laid down their racquets and wandered over to the field. Even so grouchy a character as old Cobb, the club steward, had to leave his accustomed duties and loiter out to the field as if he really didn't care what was going on, but just happened to be ambling in that direction. His half-interested manner deceived no one, and his arrival was hailed by a score of voices:

"Don't let yourself get excited, Mr. Cobb."

"This is what Mr. Cobb has been counting on for a month."

"Give Mr. Cobb a front seat."

"Goin' to have an air race with those things?" Cobb finally condescended to grumble, though he knew perfectly what was afoot.

"No, we're going to have a swimming match," said a High School boy.

"Humph," said Cobb.

Mr. Carson, the manual-training teacher in the High School, was on hand with half a dozen boys whose aeroplanes had been entered, and a good many more, whose aeroplanes were not entered, but whose lungs were in good condition to cheer. Will Garret, son of a local architect, was there with a perfect model of the Van Anden machine. Howard Brent, Matthew Reed, Ben McConnell, and Tom Langford had each entered a model. The local Y. M. C. A. had its aviators too, who had brought their several machines.

There was one other contestant, besides. He sat in a big touring-car which was drawn up among several other vehicles,—an odd, pale little fellow, all nerves and excitement. He lived in the great stone mansion on the hill, and he was not very well known in Oakwood yet. He seemed a very little boy to live

in such a big house and to sit in such a big car.

"There are some dandy ones there," he said to the burly chauffeur, who sat beside him.

"There's none of 'em has flown acrost Lake Champlain, at all," the loyal chauffeur answered. "Has there, Mister Arrnold?"

Harry, who sat on the long step of the car, looked up and laughed. He had gone about the field in his quiet way looking at the dainty little models, some of which were masterpieces of clever construction. He had handled Will Garret's silver-painted flier and praised it. He had sized up the graceful monoplanes made under Mr. Carson's competent direction. Then he had walked over to the auto and ruefully examined the little aeroplane that Penfield held. It was not very well finished. The sticks of the motor base were held together with the cap of a fountain pen, by way of a ferrule, and Harry recognized various other results of his own suggestions. The alarm works were bound rather far forward, and several strands of live, red elastic hung slack between the little striking bar and the propeller, which was in the rear. The clockwork power was communicated to the propeller by a flat-linked brass chain. This whole mechanism was mounted beneath two planes, monoplane fashion, thirty-eight inches long and ten inches in width.

Harry examined it closely. The fact is, he was anxious. He could not bear to think of Penfield's disappointment, but he feared that, after all, this novel device would prove impracticable.

Suddenly, the Oakwood band, which had been playing, stopped and the voice of Billy Carter, the club's gardener, rose above the buzz of conversation.

"Hurrah for Billy Carter!" shouted a dozen boys.

It took Billy a few minutes to down the testimonials to his own popularity, and then he made his announcement.

"The first contestant for the *Oakwood News* Aviation Cup is Henry Archer, flying model of Santos-Dumont's monoplane, *La Demoiselle*."

Archer stepped up to the chalk-line, winding his propeller. Holding his machine steady, and pointing it slightly upward, he sent it forward. It lurched and fluttered to the ground. He picked it up and disappeared into the laughing crowd. There was no need to measure his flight.

"Matthew Reed, of 1st Oakwood Troop, Boy Scouts," shouted Billy, consulting a memorandum, "flying miniature reproduction of Antoinette model."

For a moment the cry of the Hawks and the hand-clap of the Beavers filled the air. Matthew wound his propeller till the elastic band was knotted, then let it fly. Amid much cheering it sailed about one hundred feet, then fluttered down. The distance was officially marked at 92½ feet. Then came a Bleriot model; then a Cody biplane, which looked as if it had been fashioned from a

box kite. Both fell short of Matthew's record. Then Tom Langford stepped up with his little willow-framed, silk-covered, swallow-tailed affair, and sent it gliding over the course. It crept upward at a gentle angle, never swerving, exhausted its power in air and coasted easily downward.

"Two hundred and ten feet," called Billy, and referred to his paper.

"William Ormond, of Oakwood High School, flying monoplane of his own design, clockwork power."

The boy stepped up to the line, winding his motor. The graceful little craft darted forward, its propeller spinning. Its flight was steady and its descent slow. It dropped about two hundred and eighteen feet from the line.

"They can't beat that," some one said.

"That's very ingenious," remarked another.

"William Garret, of Oakwood High School, flying modified reproduction of Van Anden biplane."

William stepped up, holding high in air the neatest model that had been shown. Its frame was of dowel sticks, its covering made from a silk umbrella, and the contrast of the black silk and the silver-painted frame gave it a unique and attractive appearance. It was trussed up with a veritable network of fine wiring, and its planes were flexed to perfection with the pliant ribs of a lady's fan. Its two propellers, red and highly polished, shone in the bright sunlight. It was whispered about that William's father had had something to do with this, and the little craft looked well worthy of a skilled and practiced hand. Gordon walked over to the touring-car and sat on the step beside Harry.

"Looks pretty slick, doesn't she, Kid?" said Harry.

And she went "pretty slick," too. When both propellers had been wound tight, the beautiful little model was started on its aerial excursion. For fully one hundred and fifty feet it cut its way upward and onward, amid loud cheering. Harry watched it critically. Its long strands of elastic band, fully two feet in length, extended its power over a longer interval of time than that of any craft thus far. And its rigidity and proportions gave it wonderful buoyancy. It had passed the alighting place of every previous flier when, glittering in the sunlight, its propellers slowing down and its elastics hanging slack, it coasted downward at a long angle. Its course had been straight as an arrow, and it had covered four hundred and one feet.

Following came several crank devices, none of which made much of a showing. Then Announcer Billy seemed to be puzzling over his schedule.

"What's the matter, Billy?" the boys called.

"Struck a snag, Billy?"

"Try hard, Billy—there you go!"

"Master Penfield Danforth, of the 1st Oakwood Troop, Boy Scouts, flying the—a—model of his own design—propelled by the Cham—the Cham—"

“Once more, Billy—three strikes out!”

“—the Champastic—Torsubber—Pen—Pen—”

“Penwiper,” some one suggested.

“—the Pen—alarm—motive system,” Billy concluded triumphantly, amid much cheering and laughter.

“What kind of a wrinkle is this?” some one asked.

Harry grabbed the aeroplane, as Penfield got down, and taking a bottle from his pocket, doused the spring and wheels with kerosene oil. “Trot over, Pen, old boy,” he said. “Good luck to you!”

The little fellow, smiling nervously, carried the dripping model over to the line. The crowd eyed him and his odd-looking monoplane with good-natured indulgence. One or two taunts were heard, but most of the spectators laughed amiably.

“What’s that, an ice-wagon?” said Garret, who stood near the line, holding his own trim little craft. “Keep still, Garret!” said another boy.

“Let her go!” said another.

Any one could see that the hand which held the machine was trembling nervously. The boy looked back toward the touring car for Harry, who smiled back reassuringly. He would not for the world have had Penfield know that he felt any doubt.

The little monoplane darted from Pen’s hand, silently. He watched it intently as it rose, plowing its way forward. At a distance of, perhaps, two hundred feet its propeller slowed down.

“That’s better than I thought,” some one said.

For the fraction of a second it fluttered and its rear end settled, as if to sink. Then a strange thing happened. There was a sudden clicking sound in the air, and the crude little monoplane darted forward and upward, making a bee line for the cupola of the clubhouse. Up it went, shaking, but rising steadily. The crowd was too dumfounded to cheer. It cleared the cupola and disappeared. And when Billy, followed by a score or more of curious and excited spectators, picked it up more than six hundred feet from the starting point, it began to buzz spasmodically, as if it had forgotten all about its aerial mission and were bent on waking some tired sleeper.

“What under the sun is that, anyway?” asked a gentleman, pushing his way into the crowd. “I never saw such a thing in my life!”

“It’s guaranteed to go for ten minutes if you don’t get up and stop it,” answered Penfield. “It came out of a patent alarm clock.”

When Penfield went home that day, he proudly bore in his hands the silver cup.

“Harry,” said Dr. Brent, as they wandered from the field, “I believe you’re more excited than when you won the boat-race—you’re all worked up.”

"Oh, no, I'm not," said Harry, smiling.

"I bet Harry goes in his blue shirt," said Mac, a week later. "You'd better trot up the hill, G. Lord, and use your influence with him. Tell him Miss Crosby went up in the Danforth's auto from the 3:30."

"That wouldn't faze him," said Morrel.

"I bet he doesn't show up at all," suggested Tom. "He's afraid somebody will offer him a prize."

"Honest, I wish I were like that fellow," said Matthew Reed, earnestly. "He isn't afraid of anything in the world except being praised."

"He looked like a regular coward when Red Deer was telling Mr. Wade about the glider feat," commented Roy.

"Kid says it took Mr. Danforth about five minutes to size him up."

"It took him only one minute," corrected Gordon.

"He'll kill us when he hears of that letter we all signed."

"Well," concluded Roy, "as Red Deer says, he was just born that way; he can't help it."

"It's great to have a character like that," Mac added. "Everybody seems to catch a little of it."

"He's all to the good, is Harry boy."

"Only he doesn't know much about maidens," said Gordon.

"Well, I guess I'll toddle over home and fix up," said Matthew. "See you to-night."

It was a large audience that gathered in the Town Hall to see and hear the well-known gentleman representing the National Scout Council, whose visit to Oakwood had been duly heralded in the Oakwood press. But they were not gathered wholly to hear him, either, for Oakwood was proud of its scout troop. The wholesome, cheery, chivalrous, khaki-clad boys who flitted about her shaded streets were a part of her local charm. If there is any one who is not attracted by Boy Scouts, he must be either blind or crazy. They have made the scout smile epidemic. Quietly they come and go, picking up your parcel for you, or opening the shop door for you to pass in or out. In Oakwood they had planted flowers along the public way. They had raised a flagpole on the green. They had made tall baskets and placed them at intervals along the streets for scraps of paper and other refuse. Not a resident of the town but had paused, smiling, in his walks abroad and listened to their bugle or patrol calls in the neighboring woods. Not a lady but had seen some slouch hat, cocked jauntily up at the side, pulled quickly off in deference to her as she passed.

No wonder a line of autos stood outside the Town Hall that night. No wonder the Field Club dance had been postponed till the little flurry blew over.

The troop sat on the stage, one patrol occupying each side, with chairs in

the center for the scoutmaster and the members of the local council. The corporal of each patrol held its banner on the end of a scout staff. On two pedestals in the background were mounted a stuffed hawk and a beaver—the gifts of Mr. Lord. On a rustic, rough-hewn board, suspended above the center of the stage by ropes tied in the standard knots which every scout must know, was printed the scouts' motto,

BE PREPARED

Most of the boys had already taken their seats when Harry came quietly in and dropped into the chair reserved for the Beavers' patrol leader, next to Corporal Greer, who held the banner staff. He actually wore his khaki suit.

"Doesn't he look fine?" said Tom Langford, in an audible whisper.

"Su—perb!" answered Charlie, turning.

"Harry, your beautiful, willowy form—"

"Keep still, will you!" said Harry.

"Say, Harry boy," said George Conway, leaning forward, "do look at those girls in the second row! Do, please look, Harry, they simply can't take their eyes off you!"

"Go on, Harry, look," Bert Waring urged.

The Hawk Patrol smiled significantly, across the stage, and Mac opened his eyes and drew a long breath in pantomimic admiration, which was not wholly lost on the audience. It was fortunate for Harry that Red Deer and the local council came on at this critical and embarrassing juncture, escorting the gentleman from headquarters. Both patrols rose, making the full salute. Then some one in the audience called, "Three cheers for Dr. Brent!" The doctor stood, smiling and wiping his gold spectacles, while three cheers were given that made the rafters ring, the troop doing their full share. Then both patrols took their seats.

"I thank you all, heartily," said Dr. Brent, "scouts and audience alike, and if I could make a speech I would, but I am not prepared—" At this, the whole house laughed and applauded.

"It may seem strange for a scoutmaster to have to stand up and make such a confession, but you will admit that I am not wholly deficient in the scout law, and that I, at least, know how to smile and look pleasant." (Roars of laughter.)

"Ladies and gentlemen, and fellow-scouts, I have had the time of my life —" (He put on his gold specs and immediately took them off again.) "I have had *my* reward—the privilege of being with these splendid boys all summer." (Applause.) "There is nothing coming to me." (Voice, "That's all you know about it!") "I would rather have these boys for friends—I would rather have them believe in me—than to have the friendship of the most influential man in the United States." (Voice, "You've got your wish, Doctor!") "I would rather

have seen and heard what I have seen and heard this summer than to have my college training." (Cheers for Red Deer.) "But I am not here to talk. You will be glad to know that three of our troop, Daniel Swift, John Walden, and Gordon Lord, are to be enrolled as first-class scouts, and Howard Brent as second-class scout. We are also glad to welcome Penfield Danforth into the ranks of the tenderfeet. You may be slightly interested to know that I myself have won the archery badge." (Voice, "Bully for you, Doc!") "And that Matthew Reed, our troop jester," (laughter) "is to wear the badge for marksmanship. I could win this badge myself if I tried." (Laughter and applause.) "You all know Brick—er—I mean, Winfield Parks. He has used up every photographic film in upper New York and he has a snapshot menagerie. We are going to give him the stalker's badge to keep him quiet." (Applause.) "You all know Ki—that is, Gordon Lord. He is good to take three times a day, after meals, especially if you have the blues." (Broad scout smile from Gordon.) "I have been authorized by the committee of awards of the National Scout Council to tender to Gordon Lord the bronze medal. This medal is given for helping to save or preserve life. Those of you who have read the history of our troop's summer, as printed in the local press, know of the circumstances which led to this award, and it is not necessary for me to rehearse the details of how this boy discovered an injured fellow-scout, bleeding and unconscious, in a ditch, bandaged his wounds in the darkness of night, and sent him aid. If he had not discovered the boy and sent help to him, the injured scout would have died—there is little doubt of that. I am glad, Gordon," he said, "that you have passed the first-class tests, for it makes the awarding of this badge possible. Come here, my boy."

Gordon never looked quainter, more original, more jaunty, than when he stepped forward to receive the badge. There was not a person in the hall but smiled to see his round head cocked sideways and looking up at Red Deer. He wore a brand-new scout suit in honor of the occasion, and as he waited he gave his stocking just the suggestion of a hitch, which brought down the house.

As the audience burst into applause and laughter, Gordon joining in charming bewilderment at the great hit he was making, the national councilman beckoned to him and cordially shook his hand. He was so delightfully confused when he went to take his seat that he marched plunk into the Hawk Patrol, to the great amusement of the Beavers opposite. It was too late to correct his mistake; the Hawks hung on to him and there he sat wedged between Mac and Tilford Morrel, who glared triumphantly at their brother scouts across the stage.

Then Red Deer introduced the gentleman representing the award committee of the National Council. He was a very well-known man, and the Oakwood people greeted him enthusiastically.

“Ladies and gentlemen, and scouts,” he said, “the sight of this genial audience watching and applauding these fine boys and their beloved scoutmaster was worth coming a long way to see. It is easy to understand why they worship him and why he is proud of them—why you are all proud of the scouts and their leader. I thank you for giving me such a welcome, but I am not here to make a speech. Rather, will I speak to you in the words of others, for I bring back to you words which have come to us from your own town. And I am to perform a duty which cannot be performed by your scoutmaster. It is a duty which I am not accustomed to, as it has only twice been performed before in this country. The National Council is in receipt of a letter signed by all you boys save one,” he went on, turning to the troop, “but the action which you requested had been already decided upon. You are acquainted with Mr. E. C. Wade, scoutmaster of the 1st Albany Troop.” (Applause from the boys.) “A letter of similar purport was received from him, signed by every member of his three patrols.” (“Vile redcoats!” Mac whispered in Gordon’s ear.)

Harry looked about, puzzled. Charlie Greer pounded him on the knee, and winked across at the Hawks’ corporal.

The little flurry of excitement among the troop was abruptly ended by the councilman’s next words. “A complaint has been received against one of your number,” said he. A dead silence prevailed. Even Red Deer took off his glasses and stared. Then he smiled.

“The National Council is in receipt of a letter signed by a name which cannot be ignored, a name which is widely known in the realm of commercial enterprise and of public charity. It appears that one member of your troop has occasioned this gentleman a considerable annoyance.” You could have heard a pin drop, as he unfolded a typewritten letter and read:

> “Gentlemen:
>
> “On the 29th day of June, of this year, a boy of your organization—Harry Arnold by name—living in Oakwood, N. J., rescued my little son from drowning in Lake Champlain. He appeared to deprecate his performance and refused a trifling reminder of my gratitude on the ground of some law which he says governs your members. I understand that this same code of by-laws requires strict obedience to superiors. Will you kindly correct what, I am sure, must be an erroneous conception of his duty in this particular matter, and have the proper authorities instruct him that it is his duty to accept the trifling gift which I offered. I will add that the gift was not of money.
>
> “The saving of my son’s life and his subsequent acquaintance with his rescuer has brought great happiness into a rather frail little

life, which has not escaped the notice of two anxious parents, and the whole occurrence has directed my interest to the organization which can produce or at least bring such boys to the front. It has been the greatest pleasure of my summer sojourn in the country to fall in with this boy, to watch his activities, and to talk with him (to say nothing of his interesting companion). He is in all ways a splendid, noble boy, and it is gratifying to think what a man such a boy will make.

"It has occurred to me that many of the companies of scouts in this part of the country are less favored by fortune than the troop to which this boy belongs, and that they lack the advantages which a rural life affords. The country where these Oakwood boys have spent their summer is healthful and historic. If the gentlemen interested in your very worthy enterprise are disposed to accept some testimonial of my good wishes and interest, I should be pleased to talk with them as to the idea of erecting a pavilion with grounds and all camping facilities, suitably endowed, where troops of these less fortunate Boy Scouts may camp.

"I shall be glad to arrange some plan by which a summer outing, transportation, etc., included, might be made feasible for many companies of boys where the same is not possible now, and I should like the name of this particular boy to be identified in some way with it.

"Awaiting your views upon the matter, I beg to remain,

"Very sincerely yours,

"R. E. Danforth."

Every eye was upon Harry as the gentleman refolded the letter, and he was blushing scarlet. Charlie Greer, sitting next him, patted his shoulder, saying, "You'll have to stick it out, old man." Harry's nervous, embarrassed glance caught Gordon among the Hawks opposite, who was grinning with delight and satisfaction. Then the audience broke into applause, and some enterprising enthusiast called for Mr. Danforth. This started the ball rolling. They dragged him down the aisle to the stage. Red Deer was there to haul him up, aided by the sturdy warriors of the local council. He emerged from the tumult into the center of the stage, somewhat the worse for his experience and rather abashed to be brought into such prominent notice, but with a genial smile on his wrinkled face. They tried to make him speak, but he laughed and shook his head. So they ordered him into one of the vacant chairs among the local councilmen. And there he sat, with a genial twinkle in his shrewd eyes, his scanty gray locks shining under the electric lights.

Then the speaker asked Harry Arnold to stand. It looked for a moment as if

there were going to be no response—a kind of awkward suspense. Then he rose, holding the back of his chair with one hand, as if he would resume his seat the first minute he got a chance. Roy Carpenter, leader of the Hawks, made a motion and every member of both patrols rose. This was too much for Harry. In a kind of daze he saw the councilman holding a small plush box. He saw the Hawk Patrol opposite, standing with their hands raised in the full salute. He caught the glitter of Red Deer's spectacles. He saw Mr. Danforth smiling at him. He felt a hand on his shoulder from behind. "Brace up, Harry boy," whispered Tom Langford; "it's only a minute."

"Come here, my boy," he heard, and stepped forward reluctantly, standing before the speaker with a kind of bewildered, startled expression, with one hand against his hip in an attitude that was characteristic of him.

"My boy, you have heard this gentleman's letter. It is said of him that he is very good at reading character. That letter was answered, others were passed, and his generous, big-hearted offer has been accepted. A great good turn has been done to the Boy Scout organization. In summers to come, many poorer boys will enjoy the freedom of the open woods; many troops from the heat and turmoil of the great cities will be taken to the beautiful country whence you have lately returned, to track and stalk and study nature; and they must thank not only this kindly gentleman, but you who gave him the incentive.

"He has asked you to receive a gift at his hands in grateful acknowledgment of a deed of heroism. This you saw fit to decline. We have told him that your own will must govern this case. There is no reason why you should not, under the peculiar circumstances, accept his gift, my boy. Your scoutmaster hopes that you will do so. I hope you will do so. But we cannot order you to accept. Perhaps you have some friend, learned in the scout law, who will influence you." (Side glances at Gordon from the troop.)

"There sits among your patrol now the boy whose life you saved. Among those other boys" (indicating the Hawks) "there sits another boy whose life you saved at imminent hazard of your own. I will not embarrass you by rehearsing the circumstances. Your whole summer has been filled with exhibitions of resource, with credit and honor. Your fellow-scouts have asked that you be awarded the highest honor we can give you. There is an award, my boy, the highest possible award for service and heroism, which may be granted to a scout who has saved life at the greatest risk to himself.

"I have come here, Arnold, to award to you this medal, the Golden Cross. It is the highest testimonial you may win, the highest that any scout may win."

As he spoke, a white ribbon glittered in his hand. This he pinned on Harry's right breast. It formed a spotless, snowy background for a golden cross with the full badge of the scouts superimposed upon it.

Red Deer stepped forward and grasped Harry's hand. And it was plain to

see why the boy had stood slightly turned from the audience, for his eyes glistened. He shook hands with them all as they crowded about, delighting to honor him, but he was too overcome to speak. Brick Parks pushed Swift and Waring aside, landing a cordial pound on Harry's shoulder. Gordon worked his way in and grabbed both his hands.

"Come with me just a minute, my boy," said Mr. Danforth. He put his arm over Harry's shoulder, and guided him through the throng and out of the building. "I want you to see my daughters. I saw them go out—to escape the crowd, I suppose—oh, yes, here they are." He led the way to a big red touring-car, where a familiar voice greeted Harry.

"I suppose he deduced that we were waiting out here. Oh, I want to congratulate you—do let me see it!" He handed the medal to her, and it was passed about and examined by all the occupants of the auto. "It's no more than you deserve" Miss Crosby said, and added, whispering: "You will accept the boat, won't you? Oh, please do!"

"Perhaps I'll walk up to-morrow and we'll fight it out on the tennis court," said Harry.

"Oh, yes, do come, and bring your sister. I want so much to meet her. But you must take the boat." She lowered her voice and glanced about, as if to communicate some dark secret. "You might as well give in right now, you are no match for Mr. Danforth—he's a perfect ghoul for thinking up ways of doing things and getting the best of people!"

During this conversation, Gordon, with terrific exertion and with the full strength of his two arms, was keeping half a dozen scouts from approaching the car. "Can't you see he's talking to a maiden?" said he.

Among the autos was a comfortable surrey, with two stamping, impatient black horses. It belonged at the old family mansion on the hill, for the Arnolds had kept their horses, which looked odd among all the paint and brass glitter of the autos. Into this vehicle Harry jumped. His mother and father sat in front, and beside him on the rear seat was his sister, a girl of fifteen, who threw her arms impulsively about his neck as the horses started.

"What's the matter?" said Harry.

"Nothing. Can't I kiss you if I want to?"

"Certainly—seen anything of Gordon?"

"He was standing guard near that auto a minute ago."

"Hey, Kid!" Harry shouted back. "Coming up?"

A small figure darted out from the crowd and after the carriage. Some one called, "It's going too fast for you, Kid," and the boy answered, "That's nothing." Presently two hands grabbed the back seat and the small figure came tumbling in between brother and sister.

The loud, hollow hand-clap of the Beavers, mingled with the piercing cry

of the Hawks, sounded vociferously from the hall entrance, as the team of blacks, trotting briskly, disappeared around a turn of the road.

[The end of *Along the Mohawk Trail* by Percy Keese Fitzhugh]