Roy Blakeley's Camp on Wheels

Percy Keese Fitzhugh



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Transcriber's note

Minor punctuation errors have been corrected without notice. A few printer errors have been corrected, and they are indicated with a mouse-hover and listed at the end of this book. All other inconsistencies are as in the original. The author's spelling has been maintained.



A LITTLE DOG SCOOTED BETWEEN PEE-WEE'S LEGS.
Roy Blakeley's Camp on Wheels. Page 53

ROY BLAKELEY'S

CAMP ON WHEELS

BY

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

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TOM SLADE, BOY SCOUT, TOM SLADE WITH THE COLORS, TOM SLADE WITH THE FLYING CORPS, ROY BLAKELEY, ETC.

Illustrated by

HOWARD L. HASTINGS

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Brewster's Center	1
II	The Housing Problem	5
III	A Wide-awake Lot	11
IV	A Wild Night	17
V	Somewhere in America	21
VI	The Big B	30
VII	On To Skiddyunk	34
VIII	Labor Troubles	38
IX	Sandwiches	45
X	Scout Harris	51
XI	We Meet the Cheerful Idiot	59
XII	On the Screen	64
XIII	An Invitation	70
XIV	Pee-wee on Scouting	75
XV	To the Rescue	81
XVI	Unconditional Surrender	87
XVII	A Wild-Cat Ride	92
XVIII	The Middle of the Road	100

XIX Westy 107
XX Taking It Easy 112
XXI The Sheriff Arrives 118
XXII Railroading 123
XXIII Crazy Stuff 127
XXIV Up in the Air 132
XXV In the Dark 137
XXVI Walter Harris, Scout 144
XXVII Pots 150
XXVIII Seen in the Movies 154
XXIX Foiled 159
XXX Our Patrol "Sing" 166
XXXI Flimdunk Siding 170
XXXII Exploring 177
XXXIII Our Young Hero 181
XXXIV The Train 186
XXXV The Profiteers 190
XXXVI A Friend in Need 200
XXXVII Tenderflops and Other Flops 206
XXXVIII All Aboard 213

ROY BLAKELEY'S CAMP ON WHEELS

CHAPTER I

BREWSTER'S CENTRE

Maybe you think just because scouts go camping in the summer time, and take hikes and all that, that there's nothing to do in the winter. But I'm always going to stick up for winter, that's one sure thing.

Anyway, this story isn't exactly a winter story, it's a kind of a fall story—lightweight. Maybe after this I'll write a heavyweight winter story. Dorry Benton (he's in my patrol) says that if this story should run into the winter, I can use heavier paper for the last part of it. That fellow's crazy.

Believe *me*, there's plenty happening in the fall and in the winter; look at nutting and skating and ice-boating. Only last winter there were two big fires here in Bridgeboro and one of them was the High School. Gee whiz, what more could you want?

But the best fire I ever went to was when the Brewster's Centre railroad station burned down. That was three or four years ago, and the railroad decided that as long as there was going to be a big war in Europe, they wouldn't build a new station.

It won't do you any good to look on the map for Brewster's Centre, because you won't find it. Even with a microscope you couldn't find it. The reason you can't find it is, because it isn't there. I guess the men who made the map couldn't make a small enough dot. That's one thing I'm crazy about—maps. But I hate geography—geography and cough mixture. But I'm crazy about apple dumplings.

Anyway, you'll have to take my word for it that Brewster's Centre is four or five stations above Bridgeboro. There isn't any man named Brewster. He went out West about fifty years ago. I guess he forgot to take his centre with him. Anyway, it's up there. I guess nobody wants it.

There are about a dozen people up in Brewster's Centre who go to the city; gee, you can't blame them. So the railroad put an old passenger car on a side track up there and boarded up the under part so you couldn't see the wheels, just the same as on a lunch wagon. They partitioned off part of the inside of it for a ticket office and made a window in the boards, and the rest of the car was a waiting-room. There was a stove in the corner. It was like the Pennsylvania Station in New York, only different. They used the same old sign that used to be on the regular station and it looked funny sprawling all over the side of that car. It said:

> Buffalo 398 Mls.—BREWSTER'S CENTER—N. Y. 30 Mls.

You'd think that Brewster's Centre was the centre of the whole earth. Anyhow it showed two different ways of getting away from there. It's a wonder it didn't tell how far it is from Brewster's Centre to Paris. I guess the moon is about 'steen billion miles from Brewster's Centre. But one thing, there's a place where you get dandy ice-cream cones up there.

That's all there is to this chapter. It isn't much of a chapter, hey? But it's big enough for Brewster's Centre. It's a kind of a prologue chapter. It's like Brewster's Centre, because nothing happens in it. The only thing that ever happened up there was the fire, and that happened three or four years ago. You can't

even smell the smoke in this chapter. But just you wait and see what happens.

CHAPTER II

THE HOUSING PROBLEM

Now comes a *lapse of three years*—I got that out of the movies. Maybe if you've read all about our adventures you'll remember how my patrol, the Silver Foxes, hiked home from Temple Camp last summer. Believe me, that was some hike. The other two patrols came home later by boat. They said they had more fun without us. I should worry about *them*.

The second night after we were all home I started around to the church to troop meeting and I met Pee-wee Harris coming scout pace down through Terrace Street. He's one of the raving Ravens. He was all dolled up like a Christmas tree, with his belt axe hanging to his belt and his scout knife dangling around his neck and his compass on his wrist like a wrist watch.

I said, "You look like a hardware store. Where are you going? To chop down the North Pole?"

He said, "There's bad news waiting for us at troop meeting."

"Well, it'll have to wait till we get there," I told him; "I wouldn't go scout pace hunting for bad news."

Cracky, if that kid was on his way to the electric chair he'd go scout pace.

"We've got to give up the troop room," he said; "Doctor Warren told my mother to-day. The men are going to use it for a club."

"Good night!" I told him; "why should they use a club? We'll get out without any trouble; peace at any price."

"It's a sociable club," he said.

"Well," I told him, "I wouldn't want to get hit with a club no matter how sociable it is."

"It's going to be called the forearm club," he said.

Gee, I had to laugh. "You mean forum," I said. "What are you trying to do? Scare the life out of me with clubs and forearms?"

When we got to the troop room all the fellows were standing around, and Mr. Ellsworth, our scoutmaster, was there to tell us the worst.

He said, "Scouts, you'll all remember that this pleasant meeting place was put at our disposal by Doctor Warren to be used by us until it should be needed for other purposes." (This is just what he said, because I asked him to write it out in my troop book afterwards.) "Doctor Warren now informs me that the plans for building a new church being postponed on account of the cost of labor and materials, the use of this room practically every night in the week is imperative. Since we are not actually a part of the church, I think we should insist on relinquishing it in favor of the many church activities for which this old building is all too small.

We shall presently find another home. I am sure that every scout in this troop will join me in expressing our gratitude to Doctor Warren and his good people for their interest in us and their hospitality. I am in hopes that the room in the Public Library where the Red Cross ladies worked may be available to us. Meanwhile, we have the great scout roof over our heads—the blue heaven."

"Believe me," I said, "that great scout roof is all right, only it leaks like the dickens. Anyway, we should worry; we'll find a place."

So that night we spent taking down our pictures and all our birch bark ornaments, and packing our books and getting ready to move. We were up against the housing problem, that's what Westy Martin said.

The next day was Saturday. That's the thing I like best about school—Saturday. So I went into the city to get a new scout suit on account of my other one being all torn from our long hike from camp. I came home on the Woolworth Special, that's the 5.10 train. On the train I met Mr. John Temple. He's the man that started Temple Camp. He lives in Bridgeboro and he owns a lot of railroads and things. Anyway, he did, only the government took them. He should worry, he's going to get them back. He's head of the bank, too. Gee, I hope nobody takes that away from him. I've got fifty-seven dollars in that bank. He used to be mad at the scouts, but then he found out that he was mistaken and he went off and built Temple Camp just out of spite to himself, kind of. Whenever he sees me he's awful nice.

He said, "Well, Roy, how are the scouts getting on?"

I said: "Believe *me*, they're not getting on, they're

getting *out*. We can't use the lecture room in the church any more. If we don't get the room where the Cross Red Nurses were, I don't know where we'll meet We'll meet in the sweet by and by, I guess."

He just began to laugh and he said: "Property and real estate are hard to get just now. Rentals are pretty high."

"Gee whiz," I told him, "I wouldn't care if it was real estate or imitation estate or any other kind if there was only a room on it."

He said, laughing all the while, "Well now, I have an idea. How would this strike you? They're finishing the new station up at the Centre. What do you think of that old car for a meeting place? Just for a while, you know, till you can find a regular place somewhere. It has a stove and seats and.... How would that strike you?"

Oh, boy!

"It strikes me so hard it makes a black and blue spot," I said; "and that wouldn't be so far to go for meetings."

He said: "Oh, you wouldn't have to go up there for meetings. If I can arrange to get it for you, I'll have it brought down to Bridgeboro. I don't know where you could put it or just how you would move it away from the tracks, but it could be done."

Oh, bibbie, wasn't I excited! "We could put it in the field down by the river," I said; "oh, it would be simply great!"

Mr. Temple just laughed, and he said, "Well, don't count too much upon it. Uncle Sam has a say in all

these things nowadays. But I think perhaps I can arrange matters. The car is no use up there; it isn't of much use *anywhere*. I'm afraid the difficult part would be in moving it away from the tracks when we got it to Bridgeboro. However, we'll see."

I was so excited that when we got to Bridgeboro I stayed on the train and went on up to Brewster's Centre just to take a look at the car. As long as I was up there I thought I might as well get an ice-cream cone at that place I told you about. Then I hiked it home.

CHAPTER III

"A WIDE-AWAKE LOT"

In a couple of days I got a letter from Mr. Temple. It came from his office in New York. This is what it said:

> DEAR ROY:
>
> I have arranged with the railroad people to let you boys have the Brewster's Centre Station car. You will please accept it as a gift to your troop from myself.
>
> The freight which passes through Brewster's Centre somewhere around 10 P.M. will take it on Friday night and leave it on the siding at Bridgeboro. I am going to talk with Mr.

> Ellsworth about the means of moving it from there to a suitable location.
>
> I am informed that the new station will be opened Friday morning, so if you and your companions wish to take possession Friday afternoon, you may do so. But do not make any alterations or bother the local agent until he gives you permission to go ahead.
>
> I hope the troop will find this makeshift meeting place suitable till conditions are more favorable for finding a permanent headquarters.
>
> Best wishes to you.
>
> JOHN TEMPLE.

Oh, boy, isn't he a peach of a man? I bet we hiked up to Brewster's Centre a dozen times before Friday. I guess Pee-wee thought the station would run away. He couldn't even wait till it got down to Bridgeboro, but asked the girl ticket agent if it would be all right for him to bring some things up, and good night! he showed up Thursday afternoon with his moving picture outfit and a lot of other stuff.

On Friday morning the new station was opened. It had a nice little ticket office for the girl to read novels in. So on Friday afternoon we all went up and took the boarding away from under the car and piled it inside, because we thought we might use it again. The part that was boarded off for a ticket office was at one end, and in the other part the seats were left just the same as in a regular car. It was nice in there, especially for meetings where somebody had to talk to us, only in our troop most always everybody is

talking at once, especially Pee-wee. He talks so fast that he interrupts himself.

After we got the windows washed and the boards from underneath piled inside and the little ticket office all cleaned out, it was about six o'clock. Westy Martin (he's in my patrol) said it would be a lot of fun for some of us to stay and come down in the car.

"I'll stay!" Pee-wee shouted.

"How about *you*?" Westy asked me.

I said: "We're going to have apple turnovers for dessert to-night, but I should worry, I'll stay."

Most of the fellows had to go home on account of their lessons, but I didn't have any lessons, because my teacher had to go to a lecture. That's the only thing I like about lectures. Westy always does his lessons right after school, before he goes out. Then in case he gets killed his lessons are done. He's a careful kid. Anyway, all of us hate to do lessons on Saturday, because that's scouting day.

The fellows that said they'd stay were Pee-wee Harris and Wig-Wag Weigand (they're both raving Ravens), and Connie Bennett of the Elks (he wears glasses), and Westy Martin, and dear little Roy Blakeley, that's me. I use glasses, too—when I drink ice-cream sodas. The rest of the troop went home and they said they'd all be down at the siding near the Bridgeboro Station early in the morning.

Westy had his camp outfit along and we had a lot of fun that night cooking supper in that old car. Westy and Pee-wee went up to the store and got some eggs and stuff, and I made a dandy omelet. I flopped it over all right and Connie Bennett said it would do

for a good turn, because I hadn't done any good turn that day. Pee-wee just turned around a couple of times and said that was his—he should worry.

After supper we took a little hike in the woods but we didn't stay very long, because we were afraid that freight might come along ahead of time. Safety first. When we got back we sat around on the plush seats waiting for the freight and jollying Pee-wee.

It got to be about half-past ten, but still the freight didn't come. Every little while one of us would go out and hold an ear down to the track and listen. You can hear a train about ten miles off that way.

"If it's coming at all it must be coming on tiptoe," I said.

"Or else it's wearing rubbers," Wig answered back.

"Maybe it's stalking a cow that's on the track," I said, "and has to sneak along quietly. We should worry."

Pretty soon we began getting sleepy. Pee-wee said he wasn't exactly sleepy, but he guessed he'd lie down a little while. That was the end of *him*. If there had been an earthquake it wouldn't have stirred him. The only thing that could have awakened him would have been his own voice, only he doesn't talk in his sleep.

Pretty soon Wig said it was funny how Pee-Wee could fall asleep so easy and he guessed he'd just sprawl on one of the seats and *think*. Good night! but didn't he snore while he was *thinking*. All of a sudden Westy went sliding down to the floor and I dragged him up on the seat again. He was dead to the world.

"Believe *me*," I said to Connie; "what do you know

about that? I'll laugh if that freight comes along and gives us a good bunk. Look at that trio, will you?" He just didn't answer me at all.

"G-o-o-d night!" I said to myself; "wake me early, mother dear."

All of a sudden I happened to think of something that Mr. Temple said in a speech about the scouts being such a wide-awake lot. Gee whiz, I laughed so much that I just lay down on the seat and held my sides.

That's the last that *I* remember. I guess I fainted from laughing so hard.

CHAPTER IV

A WILD NIGHT

Now I'll tell you just exactly what happened while I was lying on that seat. Charlie Chaplin came to me and he said, "General Pershing says for you to get off of that barrel." I said, "I won't get off of the barrel till I finish eating this apple." Then he said, "If you don't get off the barrel, we'll shoot the barrel out from under you."

So then General Pershing and Charlie Chaplin began wheeling a whole lot of cannons so as to make a big circle around me. And all the while Douglas Fairbanks was standing there laughing. Then they

began shooting at the barrel, and every time a cannon ball hit the barrel it would joggle and almost shake me off. Sometimes the barrel stood up on edge and then a cannon ball would knock it back again and it would go dancing every which way with me on it. I had to hang on for dear life. Pretty soon I got mad (gee whiz, you couldn't blame me) and I threw the core of the apple at General Pershing, and he began to laugh. He said, "Never hit me!"

Pretty soon the barrel got knocked over sideways and I was sprawling all over it trying to keep on top while it rolled down a hill. All the while Charlie Chaplin was running after me and trying to hook me with his cane and somebody shouted, "What does it say on the waybill? Look on the waybill!" And I could hear a sound like whistling. Then, good night! all of a sudden I went kerflop off the barrel. Just then a man shouted, "All on!" I guess he meant all *off*. Anyway, I didn't care, because I was lying in an automobile and jogging along awful nice and easy.

In the morning I was lying on the floor of the car with my arm around Connie Bennett's leg. Every one of those four fellows was dead to the world. I pushed up the shutter that had slipped down, like they always do, and looked out of the window. Right outside was a barrel. But I didn't see General Pershing. There was a big field right near, and over farther was a lake. It was a dandy lake, with woods on the opposite shore. There were big high mountains, too, all bright on top, because the sun was coming up over them.

I went out on the platform and looked up the track. I could see way far off till the tracks went to a point. The car was on a siding. Not very far off I could see

smoke curling up and I knew there must be a house there somewhere. On the other side from the lake was a store with a platform in front of it. It wasn't open yet.

I went in and washed my hands and face at the water cooler, then went out and looked again. But there wasn't anything to see, only the lake and the woods and the smoke curling up among the trees, and the store right near. I got out and looked at the side of the car. There was the big sign sprawling all over it.

> Buffalo 398 Mls.—BREWSTER'S CENTER—N. Y. 30 Mls.

That place wasn't Bridgeboro, that was one sure thing. Because, gee whiz, I know Bridgeboro when I see it. And it wasn't Brewster's Centre, either.

I went in and began shaking Pee-wee, but it wasn't any use. Then I gave Westy a good shove and I shouted at him, "Wake up, the plot grows thicker. We're somewhere, but I don't know where. We're lost, strayed or stolen. Wake up, your country needs you."

He sat up in the seat, rubbing his eyes and yawning. Then he said, kind of half asleep, "I—s—s—s—a—t—day? Wha'—we—doin'—a—a—a—here?"

I said, "It's Saturday, and we're here because we're here. But I don't know where. There's a lake and a lot of woods and some mountains."

"Le's see 'em," he said.

"Look out of the window," I told him.

He just yawned, "Where are they? Outside?"

"They're on the landscape," I told him; "come on, we'll go and stalk them before they sneak away. Get up, you lazy ..."

Just then Connie Bennett rolled over and sat up and tried to keep his eyes open while he looked out of the window.

"Wass become Bridgeboro?" he said.

"It just went out to get some rolls for breakfast," I said; "it'll be right back."

"Where are we at?" he wanted to know.

"Search *me*," I told him; "all I know is I was rolling down a hill on a barrel and Charlie Chaplin was running after me. There's the barrel out there now."

CHAPTER V

SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA

As soon as I mentioned Charlie Chaplin's name, Peewee woke up. Charlie Chaplin is one of his favorite heroes; George Washington, Napoleon, and Charlie Chaplin—and Tyler's milk chocolate.

"Where are we?" he began shouting. "There's a lake! Look at the lake! What's that lake doing here?"

"That lake has got as much right here as you have," I told him.

Of course, as soon as Pee-wee began shouting Wig Weigand woke up, and after the whole four of them were through stretching and gaping, we had a meeting of the General Staff.

I said, "Something happened in the night. The first thing for us to do is to find out where we are. We can't go home till we know where we have to go from."

"I don't care where we are," Pee-wee shouted; "the first thing is to have breakfast." Cracky, he's like all the Ravens; always thinking about eats.

"We can't eat breakfast till we know where we're eating it," I told him; "we've got to find out where we're at."

"You make me tired," he shouted; "will you answer me one question?"

"Sure, ask me an answer and I'll question you," I said.

"Are we in the Brewster's Centre Railroad Station or not?" he yelled.

"Sure we are," Westy said.

"Then we know where we are, don't we?" Pee-wee came back. "A location is a place, isn't it?"

"Yes, but where's the station?" Connie piped up.

"Pee-wee's right," I said; "we should worry about where the Brewster's Centre Station is. We're on the earth, aren't we?"

"Sure we are," Wig said.

"All right," I told him; "we don't know where the earth is, do we?"

"It's right here," Westy said.

"Yes, but where is *here*?" I shot back at him.

"Search me," Westy said.

"Just the same as if you say a place is *up*," I told him; "how high is up? Suppose the lights go out, where do they go? How do *we* know? But anyway, we know they go out."

"Sure, that's rhetoric," Pee-wee shouted.

"You mean logic," I told him. "Nobody really knows where he's at. Even the smartest man in the world doesn't know where he's at. What do *we* care? Just because the earth is in the Solar System, that doesn't say we have to tell where the Solar System is, does it? We're in the Brewster's Centre Railroad Station and the Brewster's Centre Railroad Station is somewhere in France—I mean somewhere in the Solar System. Secretary Hines has charge of the railroads—he should worry. Come on, let's get breakfast."

We only had enough stuff to last for about one meal, so we put all our money together and counted it up. We had forty-two cents, and an eraser, and a subway ticket, and a little hunk of icing from a piece of cake, and a trolley zone ticket, and two animal crackers. I dumped the money and the hunk of icing and the two animal crackers into Connie's hand (because he's our troop treasurer anyway). "Here," I told him; "food will win the war, don't waste it."

I made some coffee and then we fixed two of the seats facing each other and two of the fellows sat on one seat and two on the other with a piece of board between them.

There was a red flag on that car and I used it for an apron. Some chef, hey? The heating stove was in the little ticket office and I just passed the tin cups out through the window, and each time I called "one coffee" and slapped it down on the counter. I guess I'll be a waiter in Child's after I'm not a child any more—that's a joke. Anyway, it was lucky we had some Uneeda crackers; we needed them enough, believe *me*.

After breakfast, Westy said, "There ought to be a town somewhere around here."

"Look around and see if you can see it," I told him; "maybe it ran away when it saw us coming."

He and Connie were just going to start out looking for the town, when a man came along and went up the steps of the platform in front of the store. I guess he kept the store. He had a big straw hat on and one suspender over his left shoulder. He had a little beard like a billy goat. When he got up on the platform he stood there staring at us. Pretty soon a couple more men came and they all stood there in front of the store, staring.

"I think we're pinched," Westy said.

"I wonder how much we can buy for forty-two cents in that store," Pee-wee wanted to know.

"About forty-two cents' worth," I told him.

"That won't keep us alive for one day," he said.

"Are you thinking about lunch already?" I asked him. "You should worry about lunch. All we have to do is to send a telegram to Bridgeboro and Mr. Temple will have another freight pick us up. We can be back

there by to-night. I don't know where we are, but if we got here in one night, we can get back in one day, can't we? Anybody that knows anything about geometry can tell that. You should worry, we won't starve."

"What'll you say in the telegram?" he wanted to know.

"*Lost, strayed or stolen. Tag, you're it. Come and find us.* How would that do?" I asked him. "We'll send it in your handwriting, then they'll know who it's from."

Good night, you should have seen that kid. He jumped up on one of the seats and began shouting, "Do you think I'm a *quitter*? Do you think I'm going to send and ask anybody to take me home?"

"You're a raving Raven," Westy began, laughing.

"Do you think a raving Raven—I'm *not* a raving Raven," Pee-wee just yelled, he was so excited; "you think you're funny, don't you? Do you think I'm a big baby?"

"Not so very big," Connie said.

Pee-wee just stood there, yelling at us, "If *you* want to send word home, go ahead. You admit yourself you're somewhere—don't you?"

"Shout a little louder and they'll hear you in Bridgeboro," Wig said; "and then we won't have to wire them."

"It isn't up to us, is it?" Pee-wee yelled. "Some train or other brought us here. When they find out they made a mistake, let them take us away again. What do we care? It's none of our business. It's up to the colonel, I mean the general or whatever you call

him, of railroads. We can get along all right; we're scouts, aren't we?"

"How about school?" Westy said.

"How are they going to get the school here, all the way from Bridgeboro?" Pee-wee shouted.

"That settles it," Connie said.

"Sure it settles it," Pee-wee shouted; "and besides, Monday is Columbus Day—and Monday night, too. That's a holiday."

"There are a lot of Knights of Columbus, but there's only one Columbus Day," Westy shouted at him.

"They'll find out where we are in three days, won't they?" Pee-wee screamed. "*I* say let's stay here. *I* say let's be too proud to send for help."

"Sure, we should worry," I said.

"That's what *I* say," Connie shouted.

"Scouts don't ask for help, do they?" Pee-wee yelled at the top of his voice.

I said, "No, but believe me, scouts like to eat. I know one scout that does, anyway. What are we going to eat between now and next Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday?"

"We'll find a way," Pee-wee shouted. "Maybe they'll pick us up to-night, you can't tell. Anyway, I'm not going to be a quitter. Whenever I have to do anything I can always find a way. We can have a movie show, can't we? We can charge ten cents. We can have it to-night. You needn't sign *my* name to any telegrams."

"How can we have a movie show when there isn't any town here?" Westy wanted to know.

"We'll find the town," Pee-wee shouted; "it must be somewhere."

Connie said, "Oh, it's probably somewhere."

"Sure it is," Pee-wee hollered; "and I've got that Temple Camp film in the machine. Remember about those scouts that were lost for a week in the Maine woods? We're not as bad off as they were, are we?"

"Sure we're not," I said; "this is only the main line. Maybe it's only a branch line."

"Do you mean to tell me that scouts can't get along when they're lost on a branch line?" he wanted to know. "Scouts can do anything, can't they? If I have to do something, I just do it. If I can't do it, I do it anyway. I can find a way, all right."

"Bully for you! Hurrah for P. Harris!" we began shouting.

"Do you think I'm going to starve?" he screamed.

"Gee whiz, it never looked that way to me," I said.

"Why should we go home while we're waiting?" he yelled at us.

"Look out, you'll fall off the seat," Connie said.

"We're here because we're here, you can't deny that!" the kid fairly screeched, all the while hanging onto one of those cage things they put bundles in, so he wouldn't fall off. "And I say we just stay here until they take us back in what-do-you-call-it—triumph—and put us where we belong. This is our station. No

matter where it is, it's our station. We're good at tracking. If there's a town we'll trail it."

"If it's hiding we'll find it," I shouted; "hip, hip and a couple of hurrahs for P. Harris, scout!"

CHAPTER VI

THE BIG B

So we decided that we wouldn't send any telegrams or anything, and that we'd stay right there in Brewster's Centre Station till the railroad took us away and put us where we belonged. We said it was up to them. Westy's mother knew he had his "eats" outfit along, and I guess all our families knew about there being a stove and coal in the car. Anyway, you can bet that scouts' mothers don't worry about them when they're away. Gee whiz, my mother worries more about me when I'm home, because I always eat a lot of pie and cake when I'm home. And I'm always using the 'phone.

We all said it would be a lot of fun to camp out in that car and to just not pay any attention to what had happened. When we got home, we'd be home. We decided on some poetry that we'd send to the Bridgeboro *News* when we got back. It isn't much good, but anyway, this is it:

We started out to wander,
    We didn't mean to roam.

We're here because we're here,
And when we're home we're home.

We hope they'll come and get us,
But we're not in a hurry.
We've got forty-two cents and a movie outfit,
We should worry.

That isn't much good, is it? Anyway, we decided that the next thing to do was to find out if there was a town anywhere around. There wasn't any railroad station, that was sure. Now all the time that we were having that rumpus in the car, those men stood over there on the platform in front of that store, staring and staring and staring.

Pretty soon they all came over and the man with one suspender said, "Thar be'nt no growed-up man along o' you youngsters, be there?"

Westy told him no.

Then he looked us all over, very easy like, and he said, "Yer chorin' on the railroad?"

I said, "We're boy sprouts and this is Brewster's Centre."

He said, "Brewster's Centre? Whar?"

I said, "Right here in this car."

He just looked all around and then he said, "They haint cal'latin' on changin' the name of this here taown ter Brewster's Centre, be they?"

"'Cause that won't go here," another one of the men said. "We wuz promised a station, but we haint goin' ter have no changin' of names. The railroad folks

tried that down ter Skunk Hollow, settin' up a jim-crack station, all red shingles and fancy roof, and callin' it Ozone Valley. But they can't come any of that business up here."

"After Eb Brewster, too," the other man said; "and him crazier'n a loon."

"Hadn't ought ter be thirty mile nuther," the man with one suspender said; "that three oughter be an eight. Noow York is eighty mile on the rail."

They all stood there squinting up at the *Brewster's Centre* sign, and all of a sudden I had a thought and I whispered to the fellows, "Don't spoil the plot, it's growing thicker. Let me do the talking."

One of the men said to the others, "I alluz allowed Eb was jest talkin' crazy when he said haow he had friends amongst them big railroad maganates. But the taown haint never goin' to stand fer this, it haint."

Then I spoke up and said very sober-like, "What *used* to be the name of this town?"

The man said, "'Taint youster; *'tis*. This here taown is Ridgeboro, Noow York, and so it'll stay, by thunder!"

"Good night!" I said, and all the fellows started to laugh.

Because then I knew how it was. We must have been picked up by the wrong train—a train going the other way. And the conductor must have had *Ridgeboro* instead of *Bridgeboro* on his paper. Oh, boy, that was some bull. And just as luck would have it, the people of that place were expecting the railroad to give them a new station. I didn't know where the

old station was; I guessed there wasn't any.

Connie whispered to me, "Who do you suppose Eb Brewster is?"

"Search *me*," I told him; "but I bet he'll be tickled to death to find that the town is named after him."

CHAPTER VII

ON TO SKIDDYUNK

I didn't want him to ask us any more questions, so I said I guessed we'd go and look for the town if he would tell us where we could find it. He got kind of mad at that, because that was the town right there, and all the while we didn't know it. Gee whiz, how could *we* tell? He said some day that town would be as big as Skiddyunk and that once upon a time New York had only one store, too.

"It has one store three or four now," I said.

Then he told us that Skiddyunk was about one mile along the track and that we'd see it as soon as we got around the bend. I guess Ridgeboro was just kind of on the edge of Skiddyunk. Gee whiz, if the railroad was going to give it a station, that station ought not to be a car. A wheelbarrow would be good enough.

"I wish we had some money, I know that," Connie said, as we were walking along the ties. "That's the only thing that's worrying *me*."

"Same here," I told him, "but we're going to have a lot of fun here, believe me; I can see it coming."

"Keep your eyes peeled and see if you see a train coming," Westy said. Can you beat that fellow? Oh, but he's a reckless boy—not.

"Careful Carl," I said.

"What do you do with all the money you spend?" Connie wanted to know.

"Oh, I save it," I told him; "ask me another one."

"Who do you think Eb Brewster is?" Pee-wee piped up.

"He's the man the town is named after," I said; "good night, there's going to be some fun around this way. I'm glad I'm not the railroad."

"I bet those men will take that sign down," Wig said.

"I bet they'll put it up again, then," I told him.

"Are you going to tell them the station is for them?" Pee-wee asked me.

"A scout is truthful," I said; "why should I tell them that? I'm just going to keep still and see what happens. I may decide to name the car after Eb Brewster. I should worry. We can name it after anybody we want to name it after, can't we? Jiminetty, I'm glad we're here; we dropped in at the right place."

"One thing, I'm glad Monday's Columbus Day," Pee-wee said.

"Believe *me*" I told him, "Columbus never discovered anything like this. I could kind of read in that man's

face, the one with the suspender——"

"He didn't have the suspender on his face," Pee-wee shouted.

"Take a demerit for that, and stay after school," I told him. "I could kind of read in that man's face, that there is going to be some fun in Ridgeboro."

"A tempest in a teapot, hey?" Westy said.

"You ought to apologize to the next teapot you meet," I shot back at him. "Teapots aren't so small."

Pretty soon we got around the bend and then we could see the Skiddyunk Station. It was a regular station with a platform and everything, all fancy kind of.

"It makes the poor little Brewster's Centre Station look like a dollar and a quarter," Connie said.

I said, "I haven't seen a dollar and a quarter for so long that I can't tell, but the Brewster's Centre Station has traveled; that's what counts."

Before we got to the station we saw where tracks branched off from the tracks we were following, so we knew that all the trains that passed Skiddyunk didn't pass Ridgeboro. I guess they didn't bother with that place much. At the Skiddyunk Station we got a time table and found that only one train a day passed Ridgeboro. It didn't go much further than Ridgeboro. I guess it got sick, hey? It only went as far as Slopson. Then we asked the express agent about freight trains and he said that a freight train went

along that branch line every three days. He said there wouldn't be another one going east till Tuesday morning.

Oh, boy, weren't we glad!

"I'll miss French and civil government," Westy said.

Connie said he'd only miss history.

"I'll lose English and geography," I said; "but I won't miss them. Come on up the main street and let's see if we can find an ice-cream store."

CHAPTER VIII

LABOR TROUBLES

Skiddyunk was a nice town only, one thing, there were industrial disturbances there. Maybe you know what those are, hey? The boy that delivered the newspapers was on a strike. He was on a sympathy strike, that's what the man in the candy store told us. He was on a sympathy strike on account of the steel strikers. He read in a book that car wheels are made out of compressed paper sometimes, and as long as some of them were made out of steel, too, he decided he wouldn't deliver the papers that Saturday, on account of the newspaper being printed on paper. Gee whiz, I don't see how a paper could be printed on anything else except paper. That paper only came out twice a week, because there wasn't much news in

Skiddyunk.

As long as we only had forty-two cents we decided it was best to buy five ice-cream cones, because then we'd have only seventeen cents left and we couldn't send a telegram. Pee-wee said it was best not to have any temptation to send a telegram.

We asked the man in the candy store if he thought the people who lived in Skiddyunk would come to a movie show in Ridgeboro that night. He said they would if they knew about it, only he didn't see where we could have it there. So then we told him about our car.

He said, "Is it a movie theatre?"

"You said it," I told him; "it moves all over. Even the Strand Theatre in New York doesn't move so much. And anyway," I said, "are there any fish in that lake?"

He said if there were only as many people up there in Ridgeboro as there were fish in the lake that Ridgeboro would be as big as New York.

"Good night!" I said.

He said they just stood in a row up there waiting to be caught. He said nobody had to starve around that way, if he had a fish-hook.

I said, "I wouldn't eat a fish-hook no matter how hungry I was."

He was a nice man, that fellow in the candy store. He started to laugh and he said he guessed we wouldn't starve, because he could see we were a wide-awake lot.

"You ought to have seen us last night," Wig said; "we

reminded ourselves of Rip Van Winkle."

So then he told us it would be good for us to see Mr. Tarkin who printed the Skiddyunk *News*. First we got some fish-hooks and a ball of cord and then we had five cents left—a cent each. Never laugh at poverty. Then we went to the place where the Skiddyunk *News* was printed and asked for Mr. Tarkin. He was in a little bit of an office with papers all over the floor.

I said, "We're boy scouts and our railroad car that we're going to use for a troop room is on a side track up at Ridgeboro, because it was brought there by mistake and we want to have a movie show in it to-night." I told him all about the whole thing, just how it happened, and I asked him if he thought the people would come.

Pee-wee piped up and said, "We have pictures of Temple Camp where we go in the summer, and they show scouts doing all kinds of things—rowing and cooking and hiking and climbing trees and eating."

Mr. Tarkin said, "And eating, eh?"

"Sure, and snoring," Pee-wee said. Cracky, I could hardly keep a straight face.

"There's a picture showing me peeling potatoes and another one where I'm stirring soup," the kid told him, "and a lot of other peachy adventures."

Mr. Tarkin said, "I should call the soup picture a *stirring* adventure. I'm afraid that potato peeling scene would be too thrilling for our simple people."

"Anyway," I said, "if we could help you on account of the strike maybe you'd be willing to help us let the

people know—maybe."

"If they don't know they can't come, can they?" Pee-wee said.

Mr. Tarkin just sat back and laughed and laughed and laughed. Jiminies, you wouldn't think he had labor troubles, the way he laughed. Then he began asking us a lot of questions about the scouts and he asked us if most of them were like Pee-wee. He said they didn't have any scouts in Skiddyunk.

After a while he kind of sobered up and he said, "I wonder if the boy scouts would make good strike-breakers?"

"Sure we would," Pee-wee shouted; "breaking things is our middle name."

"He even breaks the rules," I said.

"When there isn't anything to break, he *makes* breaks," Westy said.

Then Mr. Tarkin told us how the boy that delivered the papers was on a strike. He said it wasn't much of a sympathy strike, because nobody had any sympathy for him. He said that boy wanted a one-hour day and an hour and a half for lunch. I couldn't tell whether that man was jollying us or not. Anyway, the papers weren't delivered, that was one sure thing, and he told us that if we would deliver them for him, he'd boom our movie show, so that people would be standing up in that car.

"Believe *me*," I told him; "they *usually* stand up in the cars down our way."

Then he told us that the boy that was on a strike could deliver all the papers himself because he had a

flivver, but that he'd let all five of us do it because we had to walk and because we didn't know the streets in that town.

I said, "You leave it to us."

So then he gave us a list of all the people that had papers delivered at their houses and we made five routes. I took all the papers for Main Street and Westy took all the papers for three other streets and Connie and Wig took the rest, all except a few scattered around in different parts of town, and Pee-wee took those, because he makes a specialty of scout pace. I thought that maybe we'd have trouble about finding some places, but what did *we* care? It was early.

While we were planning all about how we'd do, Mr. Tarkin called me into the room where they did the printing and showed me a handbill he had made up. He said, "As long as you're a scout I guess you'd better write the copy for this yourself, and I'll have it set up and run off while you're getting ready to start out. Then you can slip one into every paper you deliver. How does that strike you?"

"Oh, it'll be great!" I said.

Then he said I mustn't write too much, because there wasn't much time to set it up. This is what I made up and I could have made a better one only I was in such a hurry. First I was going to take it out into the office and ask the fellows about it, but I decided I wouldn't because they were busy mapping out their routes. Anyway, I didn't want Pee-wee to know what I said about him.

ATTENTION!

Big Movie Show in Boy Scout Traveling

Theatre Opposite Store in Ridgeboro.

TO-NIGHT.

ADMISSION TEN CENTS.

See the Boy Scouts in Their Native Haunts.

Swimming, Tracking, Racing, Eating,

Diving, Stalking, Snoring!

See Scout Harris in His Stirring Soup-Stirring Feat!

ONLY TEN CENTS!

TO-NIGHT.

CHAPTER IX

SANDWICHES

When we got back from delivering the papers, Mr. Tarkin said he had a good idea but that he was afraid that maybe we wouldn't like it. He said, "Do boy scouts believe in advertising? What is your opinion of sandwiches?"

I said, "We eat 'em alive. Do you want us to advertise

some new kind of ham?"

"No, sir," he said; "I'm going to suggest a plan for advertising your movie show. Something *striking*."

Then he began laughing and he brought out a couple of big placards about as big as window-panes. They had fresh printing on them, all in great, big letters, and this is what they said:

TO-NIGHT!

Boy Scout Movie Show in Railroad

Traveling Movie Palace. One Night Only.

RIDGEBORO RIDGEBORO

TEN CENTS.

DON'T MISS IT!

He said, "Now this is a sandwich."

Pee-wee just stood there gaping at it and I said to him, "What's the matter? Do you want to eat it?"

The two big placards were tied together at the top with a rope and Mr. Tarkin slipped them over Pee-wee so that one covered the front of him and the other covered his back. You couldn't see anything but his head and his feet. Mr. Tarkin began laughing and the fellows all screamed.

"Now you're a sandwich man," Mr. Tarkin said; "you're the inside part."

"You're a hunk of cheese," I said.

"You're a sardine," Connie shouted.

Oh, boy, you should have seen Pee-wee! He just stood there looking all around him, his head sticking up from between those two big placards, while the rest of us danced around him, just hooting. Crinkums! It was the funniest thing I ever saw. Even Mr. Tarkin was laughing so hard he could hardly speak.

"Walk over to the window and back again," he said.

Honest, I can't tell you about it. I just sat on the counter and screamed. Westy had his arms folded and he was just doubled up, laughing. Pee-wee strutted around and you couldn't see any part of him, except just his head. It was as good as a circus.

"Smile and look pretty," I said.

"Our young hero," Connie giggled.

"Let's see you go scout pace," Wig said.

"Advancing stealthily," I said; "our young hero charged upon the hooting multitude and——"

"Look at him turn around," Wig laughed; "look at him try to read it. Oh, save me!"

Pee-wee was swinging around like a sailing ship in the wind and craning his neck and trying to read the printing. All of a sudden he lifted the whole thing off.

"Do you think I'd wear that thing?" he yelled. "What do you think I am?"

"If you'd just stroll up and down Main Street with that," Mr. Tarkin said; "it would attract attention ——"

"G—o—o—d *night*! You *said* it!" I just blurted out.

"I wouldn't do it!" Pee-wee shouted "Do you think I'm a dunce? Do you think I'm going to march up and down Main Street with that thing on, like a—like a scarecrow—with all you fellows laughing at me?"

"You look too sweet for anything," Westy told him.

"You think you're so smart," Pee-wee shot back; "why don't *you* do it?"

"I'm too big," Westy said; "Connie's the best looking; let *him* do it."

Connie said, "After you; sandwiches always disagreed with *me*."

"You make me tired," Pee-wee yelled; "I've seen you eat a dozen!"

"Let Roy do it," Connie said.

"I'd be tickled to death," I told him, "only I'm patrol leader and I have to be dignified."

"Well, you won't catch *me* doing it," Pee-wee shouted.

"Same here," Connie said.

"You all make me tired," I told them; "afraid of being laughed at!"

Just then Mr. Tarkin asked me to carry a bundle of paper into the printing shop in the back of the office, and as soon as I got in there I saw about a dozen or so of those placards in a big waste paper box. I asked the printing man why he had printed so many, and he said they were only proofs or kind of samples that he made while he was trying to print a good one.

"Oh, boy," I said to myself; "I'll fix that bunch."

So I went out into the office and I said, "I suppose all you crazy Indians claim to be good sports. Maybe some of you know how to be good losers. Suppose we draw lots and see who goes up and down Main Street as a sandwich man. I'll make five slips of paper and the one who draws the one with number three on it will have to go out. What do you say?"

First nobody was willing, because each fellow said that if he went out, all the other fellows would laugh at him.

"You should worry," I said; "I'll fix it so nobody laughs at anybody else—positively guaranteed."

"How can you be sure?" Pee-wee wanted to know.

"You leave it to me," I told him; "nobody will have anything on anybody else. Absolutely, positively guaranteed. If not satisfied bring your sandwich in and get it exchanged for a hunk of pie."

So then I tore five slips of paper and I put a *three* on every one of them. I knew how to handle that bunch.

"I'll draw first," Pee-wee shouted.

Good night, you should have seen that kid when he drew number three! All the fellows began kidding him and saying he was unlucky. Then came Connie, and *he* drew three, and then Wig and, oh, boy, I just can't tell you about it. Each fellow stood there staring at his little slip and I drew the last one.

"There you are," I said; "we're all stung and everybody's got the laugh on everybody else. So what's the use of laughing at all? That's logic."

"Sure it is," Pee-wee yelled; "how can anybody laugh at anybody when everybody is laughing at everybody else?"

"It can't be did," Connie said. "We're all stung, Roy too."

"You can't laugh at anybody," Pee-wee piped up, all the while hoisting those big placards up over his head, "unless the person you laugh at has got something about him that you can laugh at that nobody else has about him that anybody else can laugh at——"

"You're talking in chunks," Westy said.

"If everybody gets a prize then it isn't a prize, is it?" Pee-wee screamed.

"Sure, you can do that by long division," I told him. "Come on and let's start the parade."

CHAPTER X

SCOUT HARRIS

That was some parade! The whole five of us marched up and down Main Street looking as sober as we could, Pee-wee strutting along at the head of the line and every now and then getting his feet tangled up with the edge of the big frames, and stumbling all over himself.

"Don't laugh," I said; "every one of us is as bad as another, if not worse; keep a straight face and march in step; the public is with us."

Oh, boy, you ought to have seen the people laugh. I guess mostly they laughed because we kept such straight faces, except when Pee-wee stumbled all over himself; then we had to howl. Everybody stopped and stared at us and read the signs and laughed.

Pretty soon we passed an automobile full of girls that was standing in front of a store. They were camp-fire girls, because they had on khaki middies or whatever you call them with kind of, you know, braid things like snakes around their necks. One of them had a banner that said *Camp Smile Awhile*.

Pee-wee turned around and whispered, "Did you see that girl smile when she looked at me?"

"Smile!" I said, "that's nothing; the first time I ever saw you I laughed out loud. Keep your eyes straight ahead and look pretty—as if you were posing for animal crackers."

When we got to the corner, Pee-wee turned around and marched back, just because he wanted to pass those girls again. He made himself as tall as he could, so as he wouldn't trip over the placards. Honest, he looked just like a turtle standing up on its hind legs and waddling along and poking its head around this way and that.

"Don't laugh," he said, just as we passed the girls.

"Oh, *isn't* he just too *cute* for *anything*!" one of them said.

"Isn't he just a little dear!" another one said.

"Oh, me, oh, my," I whispered to Westy who was just in front of me. "Pee-wee's got them started. Isn't he the little heart-breaker?"

He marched back again when we got to the other corner, standing up as high as he could, so as to lift the placards and looking straight ahead of him with a sober face.

"*Oh*, I think he's just as *cute* as he can *be*," one of the girls in the auto said.

Just then a little dog came running out of one of the stores and scooted between Pee-wee's legs and *good night*, down he went, sprawling on the ground with one leg kicking through one of the big placards and his arms all mixed up in the rope.

"Watch your step," I said. I just couldn't help it.

"Where's that dog?" Pee-wee yelled, all the while trying to straighten things out and get up. "I'll—I'll ——"

"A scout is always kind to animals," Wig said; "the poor little dog was in a hurry, that was all."

"That dog was going scout pace," I said; "you should worry."

By now, Pee-wee was all tangled up with the two big placards and the rope that had held them together, and the whole business, Pee-wee, placards, rope and all, looked like a double sailor's knot having an epileptic fit. Laugh! We simply screamed.

"Get up, you're blocking the traffic," I said.

"It's got around my leg," he shouted.

"That's what you get for trying to show off," Westy told him. "Talk about your soup-stirring scene! It can't be mentioned alongside of this."

By now, Pee-wee had managed to scramble to his feet, and he stood there staring around as if he didn't know what had struck him. One of the placards was all torn and muddy and hanging by one rope and the other piece of rope was wound around his leg. Honest, I never knew that one little dog could make such a wreck.

"You look as if you'd been torpedoed," Wig said; "stand still till we brush you off. Turn around and smile and look pretty."

By that time all the girls had gotten out of the auto and were crowding around Pee-wee, brushing him off and asking him if he was hurt.

"Oh, it's *just* too *bad*," one of them said; "his nice khaki jacket is torn. I'm going to fix it. We've got needles and thread and everything right in the machine, because we're on our way to camp."

"I don't need to have it fixed," Pee-wee said; "I can fix it myself. Scouts can do everything like that."

"Yes, but they can't sew," the girl said.

"Sure, they can do everything," Pee-wee told her. "Maybe you think," he said, all the while pounding the dust out of his clothes, "maybe you think that just because I fell down—gee, that could happen to the smartest man—even—even—*Edison*——"

"Sure," I said, "lots of times Edison fell down."

"Scouts can do anything," Pee-wee said. I guess after what had happened he wanted to let those girls know that just because a scout fell down, it didn't prove he wasn't smart.

"Hurrah for P. Harris," I said.

"Oh, is *he* P. Harris?" one of the girls said; "Oh, isn't that *glorious*! Is he the one that stirs soup?"

By that I knew they must have seen one of the handbills.

"Oh, we're *all* coming to-night to see him stir it," she said; "our camp is just across the lake from Ridgeboro. Don't you think Ridgeboro is a *poky* old place? We'll canoe over. We're camping over the holiday and we call our camp, *Camp Smile Awhile*. Isn't that just a *peachy* name?"

Connie said, "I should think a girls' camp ought to be named *Camp Giggle a Lot*."

"Oh, aren't you *perfectly terrible*!" one of them said; "the *idea!* Is it ten cents to get in? Have you really got a railroad car of your *very own*? Oh, I think that's just simply *scrumptious*. I wish I were a boy."

"That's nothing," Pee-wee said; "we hike hundreds of miles. Once we got lost on a mountain—we didn't care. We were lost two days. We could have been lost three if we'd wanted to."

"Only what's the use of being extravagant?" I said.

"Once I fell down a cliff forty feet high," Pee-Wee said; "that's nothing."

"Oh, and didn't you *kill* yourself?" one of the girls wanted to know.

"Sure he did," Westy said; "but he's all right now."

"It's fine being a boy," Pee-wee said; "gee, I feel sorry for girls."

"Oh, and you can sew, too?" one of them asked him. "And cook?"

"Cook!" I said. "He used to be the chef in the Waldorf Castoria."

"Scouts have to know how to do everything," Pee-wee told her; "because suppose a scout is alone in the woods; he has to cook his dinner, doesn't he? He has to know how to do everything for himself, see? That's why I'll sew this jacket myself. That's what you call resourcefulness. A scout has to be full of that, see?"

"Oh, I think it's just *wonderful*!" the girl said.

"That's nothing," Pee-wee told her; "you can even cook moss and eat it if you're lost and hungry. Once I went two days without food."

"You mean two hours," Connie said.

"Anyway, it was *two* something or other," Pee-wee shouted.

"Most likely it was two minutes," I told the girl.

"And you came all the way out here *alone*? Oh, isn't that perfectly *adorable*! And you're going to give a show to earn money——"

"So we won't perish," Pee-wee said.

"Which?" Westy asked him.

"Perish," he said; "don't you know what perish

means?"

"And will the pictures show you doing all those things?" one of the girls wanted to know.

"Sure," Pee-wee said; "maybe you'll get some good ideas from them, only you mustn't scream when you see one of the fellows fall out of a tree into the water, because that's nothing. That's one thing scouts don't do—scream."

But believe me, that was one thing scouts did do the very next day. I did, anyway; I screamed till I had a headache.

CHAPTER XI

WE MEET THE CHEERFUL IDIOT

They said they would surely canoe across that night and take in the show and so we told them we'd see them later. Westy gave Pee-wee one of his sign placards and we marched up and down Main Street for about an hour, till we got hungry. Then we decided that as long as everybody in Skiddyunk knew about our show, we'd go back to Ridgeboro and catch some fish. Mr. Tarkin told us that as long as everybody had laughed so much and had seemed to take so much interest, he guessed our show was a safe investment and that if we needed a couple of dollars or so to carry us through, he'd let us have it. But we didn't take it, because scouts like to rely on

themselves, and we knew there were lots of fish in that lake.

When we got back to Ridgeboro, the man that owned the store came and gave us a telegram. He said a boy on horseback had brought it from the office in Skiddyunk. This is what it said:

> "Just learned of unfortunate error of freight conductor. Don't be afraid or worried. Have wired money to Skiddyunk. You can get eastern train there at three. Parents informed. Keep cool.
>
> "JOHN TEMPLE."

"Just our luck," Westy said; "we've got to go home."

"What!" Pee-wee shouted.

"*Keep cool*," I said; "that means *you*."

"Are you going to answer it?" he wanted to know.

"Absolutely, positively," I told him; "and I'm going to send it collect."

"If you think I'm going home," Pee-wee yelled, "you've got another think. A scout is not a quitter. We've got things coming our way now—do you think I'm going to admit——"

"Come on in the car and we'll make up an answer," I said, "and I'll sign it, because I'm patrol leader."

So this was the answer we made up and Westy and Connie went back to Skiddyunk with it, while the rest of us were fishing.

> "Cannot make afternoon train. Are giving big movie show in car to-night. Great

> excitement. Expect to clear thirty dollars. Will not desert car. Expect us when you see us. Good fishing. Love to all. We should worry.
>
> "ROY (S. F.)"

When Westy and Connie got back, they had fifty dollars that Mr. Temple had sent, but we decided we wouldn't use a single cent of it, just so as to show him that we could look after ourselves. Anyway, we should bother about fifty dollars, because we had a big string of perch and some catfish.

It was about the middle of the afternoon when we got the fish cooked and, believe me, we were good and hungry. After the meal was over, we were sprawling around in the car before starting to get ready for the show, when all of a sudden we heard somebody speaking outside, and then in came a little man with an awful funny face and a funny little cap on. He wore spectacles way down near the end of his nose and he was smiling and seemed awful happy, but there was something funny about his eyes. I guess he wasn't more than about thirty years old, but he looked awful funny and his eyes were bright and queer like.

He said, "How *do* you do." And then he started to shake hands with all of us. He said, "I called twice this morning, but you weren't here. And now I have found you and I'm delighted, and I suppose you wonder who I am, eh?" Then he looked all around and put his finger to his lips and said, very secret like, "My name is Ebenezer Brewster and I'm a poet. I have written a little poem to thank you boys for the great honor you have done me, in naming the village after me. Shh! There is opposition. The public is

scandalized. There is likely to be a riot. I am not appreciated—shh."

"Six or seven people wouldn't make much of a riot," I told him. "If they start any riot here, we'll put the village in the car and take it away with us."

"That's a very good idea," he said, "a *very* good idea. Did you graduate from a public school?"

I said, "No, I have my ideas made to order; they last longer."

He said, "*Much* longer, that's my idea exactly. And they fit better. Would you like to hear the poem?"

"Go ahead, shoot," Westy said.

So then he took a paper out of his pocket and read what was on it, and this was it:

"There are eleven people here,
Nine chickens and a rooster;
The village it is named for me,
I'm Ebenezer Brewster."

Connie came over and whispered to me, "Where are we, anyway? I feel like Alice in Wonderland. He's a cheerful idiot. He thinks we named this town after him. This is *some* comedy."

CHAPTER XII

ON THE SCREEN

That fellow didn't stay long and he went away very sudden like, just the same as the way he came. We told him to come to the movie show and he said he would. We decided that he was kind of crazy, but anyway, he was awful nice about it, and gee whiz, if you're happy, what's the difference whether you're crazy or not? He was happy all right, and he seemed to be mighty proud, because he thought the town was named after him. So we let him think so.

By six o'clock we had everything ready for the big show. We fixed the apparatus so that the lens cylinder stuck through the ticket window, and that way the operator (that was Pee-wee, because the machine belonged to him) could be all by himself in the ticket agent's room. We hung the screen at the other end of the car, and turned all the seats facing that way.

The man over in the store came and watched us and got friendly. I guess he knew how it was by that time, and he wasn't afraid that the name of the village was really changed. He gave us some cakes and we had cakes and fried perch for supper. They were dandy cakes, with jam in them. There were seven of them and only five fellows, but anyway, Pee-wee hadn't done any good turn that day, so he ate three. That was so none of the rest of us would get a stomachache. That's the way with Pee-wee, he's always thinking about some one else.

All the while we were eating supper, we could see smoke curling up out of the woods across the lake, and we guessed that was where the girls had their camp.

"I bet they're getting supper now," Connie said.

Pee-wee said, "Maybe some of us ought to borrow that store man's boat and row over after them, because girls can't row or paddle very well. It would be a good turn."

"*Good night*," I said; "didn't you just eat three peach cakes and call that a good turn? You should worry about the girls. Probably they know how to row and paddle better than you do."

"You make me tired," he yelled; "scouts are supposed to do things for them, and show them how to do things."

"Well, they'll see you doing enough things on the screen," I told him; "girls aren't as helpless as you think they are. Come on, help get ready."

At about half-past seven, people began coming and I could see that we were going to have a big house, I mean a big car. First an automobile full of people arrived and then a lot more who had walked from Skiddyunk. Then a couple more automobiles came and pretty soon there were a half a dozen of them parked around the car, and the seats inside the car were full. Westy stood on the platform collecting ten cents from each one and letting them through, past the screen. Oh, boy, there was some crowd.

Pretty soon the store man came over and said that as long as the weather was so warm, it would be a good idea to open the car windows and have standing room outside. So he gave us some boxes and barrels and things to put outside the windows for people to

stand on. All the people out there paid their ten cents just the same and they laughed and said it was a lot of fun. Some of them were summer people, I guess; holdovers. The girls from *Camp Smile Awhile* came over in two canoes and a rowboat.

When there wasn't space for another head to stick through a window, I got up in front of the screen and made a speech. This is what I said:

> "Ladies and gentlemen, we thank you for coming to see our show, and we hope you'll like it. I guess maybe I ought to tell you about Temple Camp, then you'll understand the pictures better.
>
> "Temple Camp is where lots of scouts go in the summer. It's near the Hudson. Maybe you've heard about all the different things that scouts learn how to do. So these pictures will show you some of those things.
>
> "Some of the things are hard, but some of them are easy, like eating and things like that. Especially desserts. So now the show will begin."

First we flashed the sentence that is in the handbook:

A SCOUT IS HANDY AND USEFUL

and then came the picture of Pee-wee with a big white apron on, standing in front of the stove in the cooking shack, stirring a big boiler full of soup. I heard one of the girls say, "Oh, *isn't* he simply too cute for *anything*!" Then we flashed another sentence that said:

A SCOUT IS SKILFUL

and then came the picture of Pee-wee standing at the kitchen table, rolling dough. Everybody applauded and the girls said it was wonderful, but that anyway, the Boy Scouts was started before the Camp-Fire Girls was, and so they had had more time to learn things. I heard one lady say it was *splendid* how scouts got to be self-reliant, on account of learning the domestic arts.

Oh, bibbie, I just had to laugh, because that was the one thing that Pee-wee didn't know anything about at all—cooking. The only thing that kid knew about domestic arts, was eating. He was a good ice-box inspector and pantry-shelf sleuth. He could track a jar of jam to its dim retreat, but when it came to cooking—*good night*! The only reason we had him in those pictures was because he was so small and looked so funny.

The next sentence we flashed said:

A SCOUT IS QUICK

and the picture showed Pee-wee flopping a wheat cake and catching it in the frying pan again. Honest, when we were trying to get that picture up at Temple Camp, the whole floor was covered with wheat cakes and there was one on Pee-wee's head like a Happy Hooligan cap. But the audience didn't know that. There are lots of things you don't see in the movies. It takes about twenty wheat cakes to get a good picture of Scout Harris flopping one.

The regular cook wasn't there the day we got that picture.

CHAPTER XIII

AN INVITATION

That was the comedy sketch and Pee-wee was so puffed up over his screen success that he could hardly work the machine. I guess he felt as if he were a regular Douglas Fairbanks.

"Did you hear what those girls were saying?" he whispered to me behind the screen. "Did you hear what the one with the red sweater was saying? About a scout being so resourceful? Did you hear her?"

"Oh, you've got the town eating out of your hand," I told him; "you're a regular Mary Picklefoot. You're such a swell cook you ought to cook for Cook's Tours."

"Did you hear what one of them said about how I rolled the rolling pin?" he whispered.

"She said you were the finest roller she ever saw," I said, in an undertone; "shh, you've got them going. There's no use trying to stand up against the Boy Scouts of America."

"Didn't I tell them scouts have to be resourceful?" he whispered "Did they notice how I flopped it?"

"They said you were the floppiest flopper they ever saw," I told him. "Go ahead and give them some deep stuff."

So then we reeled off some pictures of good stunts at Temple Camp. One showed scouts doing fancy diving from the springboard, and there were a couple

showing the races on the lake. The people seemed to like them a lot. Some of the pictures had Pee-wee in them and then there was a lot of applause. There was one showing the forest fire near camp; it was the best of all and everybody said so.

After the show, when the people were going, they all said it was fine and asked us a lot of questions about Temple Camp and scouting. Pee-wee got down off the car and stood around with his sleeves still rolled up and his jacket off, and everybody talked to him. Believe me, he was a walking advertisement for the scouts. I heard him telling one man that scouts had to have plenty of initials.

The man said, "What?"

"Initials," Pee-wee told him; "it means starting to do things of your own accord, see?"

The man laughed and he said, "Oh, you mean *initiative*." He said Pee-wee was worth ten cents not counting the movie show.

After most everyone else had gone, the girls all crowded around Pee-wee before they went back to their canoes. Oh, you should have seen that kid! The girl in the red sweater said, "My name is Grace Bentley and my friends want me to tell you what a perfectly *lovely* time we've had. And we think it's just *wonderful* how boy scouts are so, you know, what you may call it——"

"Sure," Pee-wee said; "resourceful, that's what you mean."

She said, "But you must remember that the Camp-fire Girls are new and we'll catch up to you yet."

"Oh, sure," Pee-wee said; "you'll catch up with us. All you have to do is try. First I couldn't learn scout pace. Gee, don't get discouraged. If you want to do a thing just make up your mind that you'll do it. And if you can't do it, do it anyway."

Gee, the rest of us just stood there trying to keep from screaming, while Pee-wee stood in the center of that crowd of girls, looking about as big as a toadstool, and giving them a scout lecture.

"All you have to do is try," he said; "did you notice where I was diving from the springboard?"

"Oh, I thought it was just *dandy*," a girl said.

"That was nothing," Pee-wee told her; "it looks hard, but that's nothing. There's no such word as fail; that's a what d'ye call it, a maxwell."

"You mean a Ford," Connie said.

"He means a Pierce-Arrow," Westy shouted.

"He means a maxim, don't you?" the girl named Grace said. "And I think it's a perfectly *splendid* maxim."

"That's nothing," Pee-wee piped up; "I know a lot of maxims. I've got a collection of them."

"He catches them in the woods," I said.

"Don't you get discouraged," Pee-wee shouted.

"No, we won't," Grace said; "and don't you mind them, either. They're just teasing you. And we want to ask you if you'll do us a favor—a good turn. Will you?"

"*Sure* I will," he said, very manly; "what is it?"

"We want you to *promise* to come over to *Camp Smile Awhile* to-morrow and cook dinner for us. And we want to ask all the rest of you boys to come, too. We're just a lot of *greenhorns* about cooking; isn't it *shameful* to have to admit it? But we've got everything over there, food and utensils, and you can make us up a *feast* and we'll spend the afternoon visiting. Say you will. Will you?"

G—o—o—d night! I laughed so hard I nearly fell off my feet. *Oh, boy*, you should have seen Pee-wee's face. You just ought to have seen it.

CHAPTER XIV

PEE-WEE ON SCOUTING

"Absolutely, positively," I said; "he'll be there at ten-thirty. Do you want him to bring references?"

"We should say *not*," Grace Bentley said; "the *idea*! What we saw in the pictures was reference enough."

Good night, you should have seen Pee-wee's face. He just stood there, gazing about as if he were in a trance.

One of the girls said, "Won't it be *adorable*! We're going to have chicken."

"Cooking chicken is his favorite indoor sport," Westy said. "How do you like your roast chicken; fried or stewed? It's all the same to him."

I took out my scout note-book and made believe to write things down. "We'll just make up the menu," I said.

All of a sudden Pee-wee came out of his trance and shouted, "You mean me?"

"Menu," I said; "yes, they mean you." Then I said, "Would you like to have the fried potatoes stewed, or would you prefer to have them mashed with the skins on?"

One of the girls said to Pee-wee, "Don't you mind him, he's just *too* silly."

"Do you prefer your fried eggs in the shells, or would you like them roasted in ice-water? It doesn't make any difference to him," Connie said.

"Don't you pay any attention to them," Grace Bentley said to Pee-wee; "some of us will come over in the boat for you to-morrow morning, and when the dinner is ready, we want all of you to come, won't you?"

"Sure, we'll hike around the shore," I said, "and get up good appetites. We'll be there at about twelve-sixty. We'll come around the longest way, so we'll get good and hungry."

"Oh, that will be just *lovely*," they said, "and we'll have a perfectly scrumptious time. Do you like pie? We've got a whole big jar full of mince meat."

"You have to be careful about mince pie," Pee-wee said; "it's better, maybe, not to eat mince pie."

"Who's a coward?" Westy piped up. "Do you think a scout is afraid of a piece of mince pie?"

"Oh, it will be just *dear*," another one of the girls said, and then they all crowded around Pee-wee and began saying, "You'll *surely* be ready, won't you? We'll come over for you at ten o'clock. And we'll have everything ready for you. We've got lots of flour and seasoning——"

I said, "What kind of seasoning; summer or winter?"

They told Pee-wee not to mind us, and that we probably wouldn't stop talking till our mouths were busy doing something else.

"What—what—time did you say you'd come?" he began stammering.

"At ten o'clock, and you'll be ready, won't you?"

"I—ye—yes," he stammered out.

"Positively?" Grace Bentley said.

"You—you can—you know, you never—kind of—maybe—you never can be sure of anything," he blurted out.

"But say you'll *surely* come," she hammered at him. "Will you?"

He said, "I guess—sure—yop." And he looked all around as if he was going to start to run.

"Absolutely, positively guaranteed," I told them; "a scout can be *trusted*."

So then we helped them off with their boat and their canoes, and they started across the lake in the dark. We said we'd paddle them over and then hike back through the woods, but they wouldn't let us, because there wasn't room enough and anyway, they said

they wanted to show us that there were some things girls could do. They rowed and paddled pretty good, too; I have to admit it.

Pee-wee didn't go down to the shore with the rest of us, but just stood where he was, like a statue. He was in a kind of a trance, I guess.

As we came near him, Westy said, "Of course, they don't row very well, or paddle either, but they're *trying*. All they have to do is to *try*."

"Oh, sure," I said; "if you can't do a thing, just go ahead and do it anyway. You have to be resourceful. You have to have plenty of *initials*."

"Now you take making dressing for roast chicken, for instance," Connie said; "all you have to do is to know how. It's a cinch."

"And if you don't know how," I said; "do it anyway. It's as easy as pie."

"Oh, pie's a cinch," Wig said.

"Those girls will learn," I said; "they shouldn't get discouraged."

"They should be pitied, not blamed," Westy said.

All of a sudden Pee-wee exploded. He sounded like a munition factory going up. "You think you're smart, all of you, don't you!" he hollered.

"A scout is smart," Westy said.

"A scout can do anything," I said.

"He is resourceful—it's in the handbook," Wig said, very sober like.

"It's in the handbook—it's in the handbook—it's in the handbook," Pee-wee fairly yelled, "that a scout has to be——"

"Helpful," I said; "he has to be helpful to women."

"You make me sick!" he fairly shrieked.

"You'll be the one to make *us* sick," Westy put in.

"Do you think I'm going to do that?" he fairly screamed; "do you think—do you think—do you think——"

"Three strikes out," Connie shouted.

"Do you think I'm a *fool*?" Pee-wee finished.

"*A scout's honor is to be trusted*," I said; (that's scout law number one) "*if he were to violate his honor*——"

"You make me tired," Pee-wee yelled; "a scout has got to be *cautious*—it says so—he's got to leap—I mean look—he's, he's got to consider others—just because somebody that ought to know how to do a thing that he doesn't know how to do asks somebody to do something that the other person won't learn to do if the other person does it for him, because that isn't being resourceful, if somebody else does that thing for you, and so the other person doesn't learn how to do it himself—do you mean—do you mean to tell me —that that's being a good scout?"

"Sure it is," I told him; "it's just the same as if a person that wants to do something, doesn't do it because if he does, he won't. Why then, how could the other person do something that somebody else wanted another person not to do——"

"You'd have to have a crowbar," Westy said.

"Pee-wee's right and we're wrong, as he usually is," Connie shouted.

CHAPTER XV

TO THE RESCUE

We made the plush seats up into beds that night and, oh, didn't we sleep, with the breeze blowing in through the windows! It was dandy.

In the morning none of us said anything about dinner. That was funny, because most always that's the principal thing we talk about on Sunday mornings, especially at Temple Camp. Once Wig said that he guessed the hike around the lake through the woods would make us good and hungry, and I noticed Pee-wee didn't say anything. He was so still you could hear the silence.

Along about ten o'clock we saw the boat coming over. Two of the girls were in it, and each of them was rowing with one oar. The boat went swirling around in circles.

"That's what they call the waltz stroke, I guess," Connie said; "they'd get along better if they had some dreamy music."

Westy gave me a sly wink and said, "If you can't do a thing, do it anyway."

Pee-wee stood on the shore with a scowl on his face

watching them. The girls were Grace Bentley and another one they called Pug Peters. They have awful funny nicknames for each other, girls do. They flopped against shore about fifty feet from where they intended to land, and they giggled as if they thought it was a lot of fun.

"This boat reminds me of a balky horse," Pug Peters said.

"It reminds me of a pin wheel," I told her.

"Oh, you needn't talk," she said; "you started to go about five miles south and you landed eighty miles west—in your old car."

"Scouts aren't afraid of long distances," I told her; "they don't bother with little five-mile runs."

"Is he ready?" Grace Bentley asked.

"A scout is always ready," Westy told her; "that's his middle name."

"And we're not going to let him row, either," Pug Peters said.

"Aren't you afraid he'll get dizzy?" I said. "Remember his little head is full of recipes; two heaping teaspoonfuls to a half cup of milk——"

"Never you mind, Walter," she called to Pee-wee (because that's his real name), "you just get right in."

Oh, boy! Laugh! I just sat down on the bank and began to roar. Pee-wee didn't care anything about rowing. He didn't care about anything, I guess. He was in a state of cromo, or whatever you call it. He just got in and sat down in the stern seat as if he was going to be executed.

"Aren't you going to show them how to row?" Connie called out, as the girls stood up in the boat, each with an oar, trying to push off.

But Pee-wee wasn't going to show them anything.

"We'll show *him* we can do something," they said.

Pretty soon they got off and the last we saw of Pee-wee he was sitting like a nice little boy scout in the stern of the boat. Every time the boat swerved around in a circle, we could see his face, all sober and scowling. The boat went every which way, one girl giving a long pull and the other breaking her stroke and almost losing her oar. But what cared they, yo, ho? Sometimes the boat seemed to be coming back to us, and then we could see Scout Harris sitting there with his knees together, looking fierce and terrible, like Billikins with a grouch. The rowing wasn't much of a joke to him.

We allowed about an hour and a half for hiking around through the woods. We didn't think it would take that long, but we knew the land was low and we guessed that the lake might run into marshes. Safety first. But we found a trail in the woods and it was easy going. So the way it happened, we got to *Camp Smile Awhile* a little before twelve instead of at one. It was lucky for *Camp Smile Awhile* that reinforcements reached the bloody scene in time to save the day—I mean the dinner.

The first thing we saw was a good-sized tent and the next—oh, *Christopher Columbus*, what a sight! Talk about the West Front!

There were girls sitting all around on the ground, simply screaming. Close to the fireplace, that was made out of stones, stood Pee-wee with a great big white apron on that went right down to his feet.

"It—it—would have been all right if I hadn't tripped," we heard him say; "that could happen——"

"Look at him," I said to the fellows; "only look at him. He looks like the end of a perfect day."

All over his hair was yellow stuff, and there was flour on his face and all over his stockings and shoes. There were big black smootches on his face, too. He had a can in one hand and a girls' curling iron in the other and a big greasy frying pan under one arm.

We were about a hundred feet off, among the trees, and we just stood there staring and trying not to scream.

"This is terrible," Westy said; "what do you suppose happened?"

"What's he doing with the curling iron?" Wig whispered.

I just leaned against a tree and shook and shook till my head ached.

I said, "I don't know what he's doing with the curling iron, but I think—wait a minute till I can speak—oh, oh, oh—I *think* he tripped over the apron while he was trying to flop an omelet and the omelet came down on his head. Don't speak to me!"

"He's suffering from shell shock or something," Connie said.

"Not shell shock, *omelet* shock," I told him; "this is—

gh—gh—astly. I wonder what became of the ch—ch—ch—icken!"

CHAPTER XVI

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Then we all marched in, just as if nothing had happened—you know, kind of careless like.

Westy said, "Good morning, it's a beautiful afternoon this evening. Is dinner ready?"

The girls just couldn't speak, they were laughing so hard. Two of them were trying to pluck the feathers out of a couple of chickens, and by that I knew the worst hadn't happened. But they weren't paying much attention to their work; they were just bending backward and forward and screaming.

"L—l—look at him!" Grace Bentley just blurted out; "it's too *excruciating*!"

I said, "Pee-wee, don't ever quote the handbook to me again. '*A scout is kind.*' You have deliberately murdered that poor omelet. Don't ever say you don't believe in frightfulness."

"You make me tired!" he yelled. "Didn't you tell me the way to flip—flop—didn't you say to catch—didn't you say to toss—graceful——"

"I said to toss it up gracefully," I told him, "and to let

it turn over in the air and then to catch it *inside* the pan. But tell me this, *please*, so I can die in peace; what are you doing with the curling iron?"

"He was going to open—he was going to open—a—a—can," the girl they called Billie said, all the while trying not to laugh; "oh, dear me!"

"He wanted us to cut the chicken up to fr—fr—fr—fr—*fry*!" Grace Bentley screamed.

"Oh, he's a regular cut-up," Connie told her.

"He sm—sm—*ashed* the potatoes so they—oh, just look at them!" one of the others managed to blurt out.

The kettle full of mashed potatoes looked as if a bomb had fallen into it; there were gobs of mashed potatoes all around on the trees and ground for about ten feet. It looked like a snowstorm.

"He flavored the onions with mosquito dope—cit—citronella," Pug Peters shrieked.

"Sure," Wig said; "a scout is resourceful."

"You all make me tired!" Pee-wee yelled; "how can you flip when you trip——"

"Walter," I said, very gentle and kind like, "take off your apron and ask for an armistice. It's your only hope; unconditional surrender. Here, give me the frying pan; look at the grease all down your leg, you're a sight."

I began gathering up the gobs of omelet from his head and his shoulders, while the girls sat on the ground all around and just laughed and laughed. Honest, I thought Pug Peters would have a fit, she

laughed so hard. Grace Bentley nearly had hysterics.

"How can you—tell me this——?" Pee-wee yelled; "how can you trip—flip—if you flop—I mean trip—you make me sick. That could happen——"

"Sure, it could happen to Edison," I said; "you should worry. Get your apron off and your face washed before some of us die."

Poor kid, he was a wreck. We washed him up and brushed and cleaned his suit the best we could and collected all the odds and ends of omelet. Westy wanted to try to fit them together like a picture puzzle. That omelet looked like the map of Europe after the war. But one thing, the chickens were saved. In another ten minutes, I suppose, odds and ends of chicken would have been flying in the air.

Pug Peters said she was sorry, because she had been wanting to eat some of that omelet to see how it tasted. She said it had maple syrup in it. *Good night!* Grace Bentley told us there was peppermint extract in it, too. Anyway, it had an awful death.

From all we heard, about the only thing Pee-wee didn't use for flavoring was fountain pen ink. There was a bottle of glue there and I don't know how he happened to miss that. The mashed potatoes were flavored with strawberry, but they weren't so bad. The onions had a funny taste, too; kind of like pineapple. He had made some fried muffins, the same way that I usually did, and Westy and Connie and I had a good game of one o'cat with one of them. Westy knocked a home run and even that didn't break it.

As soon as the girls could manage to talk straight,

they got busy plucking the chickens and we cut them up and fried them. Pee-wee retired from his strenuous career of cook and just sat by and watched us. He didn't say much. A scout knows when to keep still.

Maybe you think we didn't have a good dinner, but mm-*mmm*, that chicken was good. We boiled some more onions and added them to the others, so the pineapple flavoring wasn't so strong, and I flopped some flapjacks. I can make a flapjack do three summersaults and catch it. We ate the muffins, too, even though they were hard, because scouts are supposed not to be scared of things that are hard. They tasted sweet kind of, like marshmallows, and we decided that Scout Harris had used powdered sugar by mistake, instead of flour. Anyway, he said powdered sugar and flour looked alike. Especially we thought that was what he had done, because the sugar can had flour in it, and we put flour in our coffee. But anyway, it wasn't coffee. It was Indian meal. We should worry.

The girls were awful nice and I guess they were glad of everything that happened, because it made so much fun. Pee-wee didn't lose his pull with them, anyway, that was sure. They said he was *just simply excruciating*. Pug Peters said that anyway, the principal thing was for a scout to know how to eat, and Pee-wee didn't fall down there, you can bet.

A scout is hungry.

CHAPTER XVII

A WILD-CAT RIDE

Now you'd think that after what happened, our young hero, P. Harris, wouldn't go hunting for any more glory for a couple of days. But late that very afternoon, he performed one of his most famous feats. It was an accident, but anyway, he scooped up all the credit. That's always the way it is with Pee-wee; things go his way, and then all of a sudden, zip goes the fillum, he's a boy hero.

After dinner that afternoon, we took a walk through the woods with the girls and helped them get some birch-bark, because they wanted to make birch-bark ornaments. It's dandy taking walks on Sundays. We got some hickory nuts, too. I said we'd climb the trees, because girls couldn't do things like that and scouts could climb. I said, "A scout is a monkey."

"Girls can do lots of things, too," Pee-wee piped up, oh, so nice and gallant; "do you mean to tell me girls aren't monkeys—too?"

"Don't, you'll start my head aching again," I told him.

"Oh, you said we were monkeys," Pug Peters said; "you're perfectly *horrid*."

"I mean, because on account of climbing," he said; "because they know how to climb. I mean, *you* know, the ones that know how to climb——"

"Baboons," Westy said.

"Sure," Pee-wee piped up; "*No*, not baboons, you make me sick!"

"We accept your apology," I told him.

Every time Pee-wee opens his mouth he puts his foot in it—and then blames somebody else.

Late in the afternoon we left the girls at their camp. We said we'd come over to see them next day—that was Columbus Day. But the way it happened, we didn't see them again until a long time afterwards, and that's going to be in another story. So if you like girls, you'd better be sure to get the next story. Gee whiz, I used to make fun of girls, but anyway, I like them a lot. Pee-wee says they're so kind of hospital; he means hospitable. And I'll always remember *Camp Smile Awhile*, you can bet. Because we had more than a good smile there; we had a good laugh. Girls are all right.

Then we hiked along the woods' path that led around the lake, back to Ridgeboro. Our car looked mighty nice and cosy, you can bet, as we came along.

"We're having a mighty good time here," Connie said; "I'll be sorry when we have to drag ourselves away."

"We don't have to drag ourselves away," I told him; "all we have to do is to sit still and be dragged away."

"This is the life," Westy said.

Connie said, "Sure, life on the rails; it's got life on the ocean wave beaten a hundred ways. When do you suppose they'll pick us up?"

"Tuesday morning is the first freight," I told him. "There's a passenger train to-morrow night, but it doesn't stop here, see?" And I showed him the time table.

"We should worry," I said; "we've got nearly twenty

dollars from the movie show. I've got Mr. Temple's fifty sealed up in an envelope; we're supposed to forget that. Guess I might as well keep the time table, hey?"

"I bet it's fun living on the railroad," Wig said.

"I'd like to be a brakeman," Pee-wee shouted.

"That would be a good job for you," I told him; "you make so many breaks. I think you ought to be cook on a dining car."

"It's dangerous working on a railroad," Connie said; "lots of men lose their lives; sometimes they lose their hands or their fingers, too."

"If you lose your life, what's the use of keeping your fingers?" Westy said.

"Sure," I said; "they would only be a nuisance."

"But I mean it," Connie said; "I heard that. If a man works on a railroad long enough he gets killed."

"If he lives long enough he dies," I said.

"There's a large percentage of mortality," Connie said.

"A large which of whatness?" I asked him; "stand up and speak clearly so all the class can hear."

"All right," he said; "it's true."

"It's all right if you have your private car," Wig said. "All you have to do is to sit back and take it easy."

"Sure, if you're in your private car it's all right," Connie said.

By that time we had come to the car and Pee-wee was the first one to go up the steps. Now I don't know whether maybe it was because we had been talking about railroading that Pee-wee thought he'd play brakeman, but anyway, like the crazy kid he was, as soon as he was on the platform he grabbed the wheel that's connected with the brake and turned it out of its ratchet and twirled it around, shouting, "All aboard! All aboard!"

"Let that thing alone," I said, as the rest of us passed into the car.

"There isn't any spark in it," he shouted. Crinkums, that kid is crazy.

He followed us into the car and we all sprawled down into seats, because we were good and tired.

Westy said, "Oh, boy, it's good to sit down. I wonder if our friend Eb Brewster was here. Next stop is the Land of Nod. I don't want any supper."

"*G—o—o—d night!*" Connie said; "I'll be hanged if we're not moving."

Just then, I looked out and saw the closed up store sneaking slowly away.



WIG AND I GRABBED THE WHEEL AND TURNED IT AS FAST AS WE COULD.
Ray Blakeley's Camp on Wheels. Page 97

"Bye-bye, Ridgeboro," Wig shouted; "see you later."

By now the car was moving along at a pretty good clip. The store was 'way behind us and we were rolling sweetly down a grade into a kind of jungle of

bushes and tree stumps.

"Good night!" I said; "The plot grows thicker. Where are we at?"

We fell all over each other getting out to the platform, and Wig and I grabbed the wheel and turned it as fast as we could, tightening up the chain.

"I thought you said it didn't have any spark in it," I said to Pee-wee.

"I—I *thought* it didn't," he blurted out; "where are we going?"

"Ask me something easy," I said; "get out of the way. Grab hold of this, Westy, and pull for all you're worth."

We had the chain tight now and it was only a case of pulling the brakes tight against the wheels, but, oh, boy, that takes some strength. We were rolling along an old pair of rails that were buried under grass and bushes and sometimes we couldn't even see them. It was a regular jungle. I guess maybe they used to back freight cars down there after lumber. But it must have been a long time ago, because the stumps were old and the place was all overgrown. Anyway, that track that we had been left on was more than just a switch siding, that was sure.

First I didn't mind so much, because things like that are all in the game, and I thought it would be easy to stop the car. There was hardly any grade at all where the train had left us, that was sure, but it doesn't take much of a grade to start things moving on tracks. I guess that's why they always tighten the brakes when they leave a car. And if there's one person that knows how to start things, it's Pee-wee. That's his favorite

recreation.

Anyway, now we saw that we were in a pretty bad fix. The grade was good and steep now and we were moving pretty fast, and no matter how hard we pulled on the wheel, it didn't seem to make the car slow down. I have to admit I was getting a little scared. I guess the other fellows were, too.

"Maybe the thick brush will slow us down," Westy said; "it's awful thick, ahead."

"Not when we've got a start like this," I told him; "we're just cutting it all to pieces."

"Maybe one of us could jump off and put a log on the track," Pee-wee said.

"Yes, and what would happen to the car, and us maybe?" Connie asked him. "You've done mischief enough for one day. *Look ahead there!*"

Jumping Christopher! There, about a hundred feet in front of us was a road crossing the tracks and a little further, beyond the road, was some water. I guess it was an arm of the lake. Anyway, the tracks ran right downhill to the very edge of it. The car was going too fast for us to jump off now.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

Nearer and nearer we rolled, all the while yanking for dear life on the wheel. All of a sudden I had a thought.

"Run through to the back platform and if the wheel there is loose, tighten up that one, too. Quick!" I said.

Connie and Westy ran pell-mell through the car and I heard the jangling of the chain there and I could hear Connie say, "Quick! Pull hard—*harder*!"

Then, after a few seconds the car began slowing down.

"Pull with all your might," I said to the fellows with me; "you fellows, too," I called out; "she's letting up; pull—*hard*!"

The car kept slowing down.

"*Yank! Hard!*" Connie called through to us, "and hold on. Brace your feet."

The car moved slower, slower; then stopped.

"Kick the ratchet-pin in—hurry up!" somebody said, and I pushed it into place with my foot.

"All right, let go."

The car was standing right square across the road, but anyway, that was better than being in the water. Any port in a storm, hey?

I guess our nerves were all pretty much unstrung, anyway, I know my hands were good and sore.

"I thought we were goners," Westy said; "this is a nice place to stop. It's good they don't have any traffic cops here."

"I should worry where we stop," I said; "it's better than the lake. We stopped here because we stopped here. I never knew that Brewster's Centre had so much pep in it. This old station will go up in the air next. What do you say we get an anchor?"

"Where are we?" Pee-wee piped up.

"We're *here,* that's all I can tell you," I said.

"If you want to know where *here* is, look in the geography."

"We're neither here nor there," Westy said; "look at my hands, they're all blisters."

"Where do we go from here?" Connie wanted to know.

"I guess we take a southwesterly course and flow into the sink," I told him.

"Brewster's Centre ran away from home," Wig said. "Lost, strayed or stolen. We don't know where we are; we're in the middle of the road. Just like we said before, we're here, because we're here."

We all sat down on the steps of the platform and Wig started singing:

"Oh, there was the Duke of Yorkshire,
He had ten thousand men;
He marched them up the hill,
And he marched them down again.
And when they're up, they're up,
And when they're down, they're
down;
And when they're only half way up,
They're neither up nor down."

Pretty soon, while we were sitting there, we all started to make up words to the same tune, and after a while this is what we got to singing:

"Oh, there was young Pee-wee Harris
(Cook),
That ran a movie show.
He loosed the brake of a station-car,
To see where he would go.
And when he'd roll, he'd roll,
And when he'd stop, he'd stop.
And he stopped right in the middle of
the road,
Where there wasn't any traffic cop."

"Suppose an automobile should come along," Connie said.

"That's a very good idea," I told him; "suppose one should."

Westy was sitting up on the top step and he said, "Oh, Sister Anne, Sister Anne, I think I can see one scooting along through the woods, the other side of the lake."

"Let it scoot," I said; "the only way it can get past here is to do a couple of double flops like Pee-wee's omelet."

"It can't get around on account of the woods," Pee-wee said.

"Right the first time, as usual," I told him. "*Over the top* is the only way. I hope it's a high-grade car, because a low-grade car could never get over such a high place."

"We had a narrow escape," Wig said

"If the machine doesn't stop, we'll stop it," Connie put in.

"Sure," I said, "we have a good argument."

"Brewster's Centre is getting to be a famous name," Westy said.

Connie said, "Sure, we're getting to be known in all the highways and byways—especially the highways. What do you say we give a movie show right here?"

"Vetoed," I told him.

We sat on the platform steps talking and jollying each other; what did we care? Be it ever so much in the wrong place, there's no place like home. Maybe you've read stories about boys running away from home for adventures, but our home was a good sport, it went with us. It had a good name, too, Brewster's Centre. Because it was right plunk in the center of the road.

Pretty soon Westy shouted, "Here comes the car. See it? You can see it right through the trees. It's green and red."

"It'll be black and blue if it tries to get past here," Wig said.

It was a great big touring car and its bright brass lights and trimmings were all shiny on account of the sun setting and shining right on them. It came rolling along, about fifty miles an hour, out from the woods, and then even faster as it hit it up along the straight road. Oh, boy, didn't it just eat up the miles!

I guess it must have been getting over the ground at about sixty per, when it began slowing down and stopped about a dozen yards from our car. Oh,

bibbie, that was some peachy machine.

There were two young fellows in it, and I could see that they were pretty tough looking. Both of them wore sweaters and one had on one of those peaked caps like tough fellows in the movies always wear. They waited just a minute and spoke to each other very excited like. Then they both looked around, back along the road.

Next, the fellow with the cap jumped down in a big hurry and looked back along the road, better than he could do in the car. He seemed awful kind of scared and excited. He came over toward us, walking kind of sideways, you know, tough.

He said, "What's the matter here? Why don't they move this car? Yez are blockin' up the road, yez are. Where's the en-jine?"

I wasn't scared of him. I said, "The en-jine is having a nap. Don't talk so loud or you'll wake it up."

"Yez are a pretty fresh lot, ain't yez?" he said. "Where's the men belongin' ter this she-bang, anyway? Yez is blockin' traffic." Then he looked up the road again and said to the other fellow: "Don't see nuthin' of 'em, do yer? Keep your eyes peeled." He seemed awful nervous and in a hurry.

Just then I noticed Westy get up and step down off the car. "Get them inside if you can," Westy whispered as he passed me.

I didn't know for the life of me what he meant. But there's something about Westy, he's awful kind of thoughtful. Maybe you've read how a scout is supposed to be observant. Well, that's Westy all over.

CHAPTER XIX

WESTY

I said to the fellow, "The railroad hasn't got anything to do with this car; it belongs to us. And you can bet we weren't thinking about where it stopped, either. It's better to be here than in the lake."

He just shouted to the other fellow, "Come here, hurry up!" Then he craned his neck and looked back along the road. The other fellow got down from the auto in a hurry and came to the car, looking behind him all the while.

One thing, I could see that those fellows were scared and in a terrible hurry, and I decided that probably they had stolen the machine. I thought that, not only because they were always looking back, because they might have expected to be chased just for speeding, but because they were so tough looking. Anyway, they were pretty low-grade fellows to be in such a high-grade car, that was one sure thing. Besides, I knew that the fellow that was running that car wasn't the regular chauffeur, because the regular chauffeur of a car always kind of slides out very easy without rubbing against the steering gear. One thing sure, you can always tell if a man is used to running a car, especially some particular car.

Both fellows were on the platform now, and the one that came first said, "What yez doin' here; blockin' the road?"

I guess I shouldn't have told them anything, but I said, "We rolled down from near the store up there and it was lucky we managed to stop right here, or we'd have been in the lake. It's no easy job managing those brakes."

"No?" he said, kind of funny, and then looked at the other fellow.

Then they both went inside and I could see one of them looked out of the window up the road, while the other threw his cap on the floor and put on Connie's scout hat that was hanging in the car. He whispered to the other fellow and then the other fellow turned around and grabbed Wig's hat off his head and put it on his own head.

"Run her down, that's the only thing," one of them said; "and blamed quick about it, too. You kids git off'er this car if you don't want to be drowned."

I saw what they were going to do. They went out on the other platform and kicked the ratchet out and let the wheel spin. But the car didn't move. Then they came through to do the same thing to the other one. They were going to start the car and jump off. I knew it would start right away, because the grade was so steep. I stood right there in the aisle, blocking their way and I said:

"This car belongs to us and you're not going to run it into the lake. Maybe you heard of Mr. John Temple; he gave it to us. If you start it, you won't be able to stop it. Maybe it's worth more than that auto for all you know. Anyway, it is to us, and you're not going to run it into the lake—you're not."

He just swore and hit me in the face and I went

staggering against one of the seats. Everything went all whizzing around and for a couple of seconds my head buzzed so that I couldn't stand up straight. But even still I wasn't scared of him and I followed them and the other fellows out onto the other platform.

"Git off the car, all of yez," I heard one of them say.

My head was buzzing and I felt awful cold and queer like, but I had sense enough to notice Westy sitting there on the railing of the platform, dangling his legs. I guess he must have been waiting there. As long as I live, I'll never forget how calm and quiet he was, and not scared of them at all. I was so dizzy from the crack on the head that fellow gave me, that I had to hold on to the railing and Westy looked as if he were shaking as he sat on it. But it was only because I was dizzy. I saw the two fellows grab the wheel and Connie and Pee-wee and Wig jump off the car. But Westy didn't move, only sat there swinging his legs and kind of smiling at those two.

"You're a couple of big cowards, that's what you are," he said; "to hit a fellow his size. And you're a couple of crazy fools, too. That's what you are; a couple of low down fools and cowards—and thieves."

For just a second they let go the wheel and stared at him, but he didn't move; just sat there watching them and swinging his legs.

"And what's the use of going to all that trouble?" Westy said. "You'll only make it worse for yourselves. Do you think that boy scouts are fools, just because you can hit one of them on the head and knock him out of your way? I've got two good snapshots of both of you and I hid the camera, and if you choked me, I wouldn't tell you where it is. See? That old Pierce-

Arrow is here because it's here. See? And it's going to stay here, too. I just threw your spark plugs into the lake. If you hadn't been a couple of big fools you wouldn't have stepped inside this car. *Steal a Pierce-Arrow!* You make me laugh. You couldn't even get away with a Ford."

CHAPTER XX

TAKING IT EASY

And he just sat there, swinging his legs and laughing. It was as good as a circus to see him.

"Go ahead, run," he said; "it won't do you any good. Sink this car in the lake if you want to. That'll just mean a longer time in jail. We should worry. You thought a boy scout didn't know how to hit back, didn't you? Let's see you start the machine. You're a couple of circus clowns, that's what you are. You ought to be a pair of villains in the movies. Head hurt much, Roy?"

"Not so bad now," I told him.

Gee whiz, those fellows didn't wait long. Before Westy was finished speaking they were off the car and headed into the woods. That was the last we saw of them, then.

"Did you ever hear of a thief stopping to have his picture taken?" Westy asked.

"If they'd have only stayed a little longer, we could have got them in the movie camera and we could have a play called *The Robbers' Regret*," Pee-wee piped up, "or, *The Missing Spark Plugs*."

"Oh, they're not missing," Westy said; "they're just hiding, disguised as an oil can. Waste not, want not, hey?"

Do you know what that fellow had done—all while we were in the car? Talk about a scout being quick! He had got the snapshots while those two fellows were on the platform. Then he had hid the camera in the bushes. But he wanted to make sure that they wouldn't find the plugs, so he put them into an oil can that he had found under the hood of the machine and tied a piece of wire to the can. He tied the other end of the wire to the root of a bush on the shore. And all that he did while the fellows were in the car. What do you know about that?

So now he just fished them up and cleaned them out and put them back where they belonged. Then we all sat in the Pierce-Arrow waiting to see what would happen next. Right in front of us was that old car with the sign all along its side.

Buffalo 398 Mls.—BREWSTER'S CENTER—N. Y. 30 Mls.

Pretty soon we got to singing, and for a little while everybody was singing something different from everybody else, but after a few minutes we got settled down to this:

"There was the Brewster's Centre car,
That traveled here and there;
It had a lot of adventures, too,

And we don't have to pay any fare.
And when it's here, it's here,
And when it's there, it's there;
And when it isn't any place,
Why then it's everywhere.
And if it isn't on the ground,
You'll find it up in the air;
And if it goes to the moon or Mars,
A plaguey lot we care!"

"You can talk about tents and log cabins and house-boats and things," Connie said; "but I'm for that old car. It's stood by *us*."

"Stood!" I said. "Good night, it hasn't stood very long anywhere; not since we had it."

"It's full of pep," Connie said.

"Always on the go," I told him; "it's different from other cars. It reminds me of Pee-wee. I wonder where we'll go next."

"Sure, I wonder what's the next step in our itinerary," Connie said. Boy, but that fellow is some high brow.

"Our whaterary?" I asked him.

"Anyway, it's nice sitting here," Wig said.

"I wonder who it belongs to?" Pee-wee said. "I bet it belongs to a rich millionaire."

"Yes, or a poor one," Connie said. "There's only one thing I don't like about this Pierce-Arrow, and that's that I don't own it. Otherwise, it's all right."

"There's one thing *I* don't like about it," I said.

"You're crazy!" Pee-wee shouted. "What don't you like

about a Pierce-Arrow?"

"One great objection," I said.

"You must be crazy," he yelled. "You can bet I haven't got any objections to a Pierce-Arrow."

"That's because you're not as honest as I am," I said.

"Who? Me?" he hollered.

"The only thing I have against this machine is that it's stolen," I said. "I'm funny that way."

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

"I'd feel the same way about a flivver," I said.

"If you took a flivver, that wouldn't be stealing," Connie said; "it would be shoplifting."

"Sure, or pickpocketing," Wig said.

"Do you know the only way to tell if a man has a Ford?" I asked Pee-wee. "Search him. Look how the sun is going down."

The Brewster's Centre sign was all bright on account of the sun setting. It was getting dark and kind of cold and it made me homesick, sort of. It seemed funny to see that car standing there across that strange road, with the lake on one side and the thick woods on the other. The woods were beginning to look dark and gloomy, and the arm of the lake was all steel color. I was glad on account of that sign, because it seemed friendly, like. That's one thing about an automobile, it doesn't seem friendly, like. But boats do. And the old car did, that was one sure thing.

Mostly scouts don't care much about railroads,

because they like the water and they like to hike. But anyway, that old car was friendly. Especially it seemed friendly on account of the sun going down and the day beginning to die and it getting cold. You can talk about boats and motorcycles and tents and leaf shelters and all those things, but anyway, none of them were as good as that old car. And don't you forget, either, that it was Westy that saved it for us. If it hadn't been for him, it would have been in the lake.

He's one real scout, Westy is.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SHERIFF ARRIVES

We were singing that crazy stuff that we had made up, when all of a sudden, along came an automobile with four men in it, and stopped right behind us. We heard one of them say, "Why, that's the car, now."

They all jumped down and came around the big Pierce-Arrow and stood staring up at us. They stared at the Brewster's Centre car, too; I guess they didn't know what to make of it.

One of the men said, "What's all this? What are you boys doing with that machine?"

As long as none of the other fellows said anything, I spoke up and said, "We're boy scouts and we're

sitting here."

"Boy scouts!" he said, all flabbergasted.

"Right the first time," I told him; "we rescued this car from two fellows that were trying to get away with it. You see that railroad car? That belongs to us."

"We're going to have a deed to it," Pee-wee shouted.

"Sure," I said; "a dark and bloody deed. We just happened to be there, because we rolled down the grade from Ridgeboro. Believe me, I've been through eight different grades in school, but this one was the worst I ever saw. We came near taking a header into the lake, but we got the brakes on just in time. You get a fine view of the car from here, don't you?"

"I'm the sheriff of this county," the man said. "You say you stopped this machine?"

"We can stop any machine, even a Rolls-Royce," I told him.

"Yes?" he said.

"You'd better ask this fellow how it was," I said, pointing to Westy.

"We stopped them, that's all," Westy said. That was just like him.

"Well then, *I'll* tell you," I said. "When they said they couldn't get by, they wanted to run our car down into the lake. What did they care?"

"But we *foiled* them," Pee-wee shouted.

"Foiled them, hey?" the sheriff said. Gee, he couldn't help smiling.

Then I just grabbed Westy's head and pulled it where the men could see. "When they were on the railroad car," I said, "this fellow took the spark plugs out of the machine and hid them in the lake."

One of the men blurted out, "What!"

"That's nothing," Pee-wee started; "once——"

"He got a couple of snapshots of them, too," I said; "maybe they'll be of some use to you."

"Hey, Mister, can this machine do eighty miles an hour?" Wig piped up.

"Seventy," the man said.

"*Y—a—a—h!* What did I tell you?" Connie said, giving him a rap on the head.

"Maybe you'll be able to catch them, hey?" Connie said. "Anyway, I hope so, because one of them hit this fellow a good whack on the head."

"So?" said the man. "Well, we'll take care of that pair. It won't be hard, with their pictures. They're a couple of the most desperate auto thieves and highwaymen in this state. You boys did a fine thing. You deserve great credit."

"That's nothing," Pee-wee said; "once when——"

"Which way did they go?" the men asked.

So then we told them all there was to tell, and about our car, and about how we were brought out to Ridgeboro by mistake. They were in so much of a hurry that I thought they'd just let our car roll down into the water, so that they could get by. But anyway, they didn't do that. I guess they liked us,

because we did them a good turn.

As soon as Westy gave them the film out of his pocket camera, they lifted a big heavy log across the tracks near the water. They said they thought they could let the car roll easily against that, without any danger of its going on down into the water. You bet we were nervous till we saw them do it, and then we realized that probably those thieves could have done the same thing, except that they didn't care anything about other people's property.

The men thought that the two fellows would cut through the woods and come out at a town named Skunk Hollow. Ozone Valley, that was the new name of it. So we all went in the two cars to that place, because a train stopped there at about half-past eight, and they thought that maybe those fellows would take the train.

I don't know which went faster, the automobiles or Pee-wee's tongue. Anyway, Pee-wee's tongue was running on high. He sat behind me in the big machine, wedged in between two big deputy sheriffs, and he told every heroic act that scouts have done since the movement started. Blamed if I know how he finds those things out, but he does. He gave them Westy's whole history and told how Tom Slade won the gold cross and how burglars and highwaymen weren't safe any more, on account of the Boy Scouts. Every time they told him it was wonderful, he would say, "That's nothing," and come right back with a five reeler. Oh, boy, I thought I'd die, but I guess the sheriffs liked it. Anyway, they laughed a lot.

Pee-wee told them about a scout in the dismal north (that's what he called it) that rescued a maiden. He told them a maiden was something like a girl, "only

more kind of pale and weak and helpless, like." I nearly doubled up.

But anyway, he didn't mention cooking.

CHAPTER XXII

RAILROADING

When we got to the Ozone Valley station, there wasn't anything there, but the ozone and a couple of milk cans. The men searched all around in the woods and under the freight platform, but they couldn't find the two fellows.

"Don't you get discouraged," Pee-wee told them; "often I couldn't find things and then later they'd turn up."

"Oh, they'll turn up," the sheriff said; "and they'll *go* up, too. Just give us a chance to get those films developed."

Pretty soon the train came along, going toward Skiddyunk. It was a way train and I guess it stopped every now and then to change its mind. It had a couple of baggage cars and a couple of freight cars and a refrigerator car and one passenger car at the end. There were only a few people in the car.

The sheriffs searched the whole train, but they couldn't find the two fellows anywhere. They even searched the refrigerator car, but I didn't think they'd

be there, because they were fresh enough without going on ice.

The conductor was a big fat man; he was awful nice. When the sheriffs told him about us, he laughed and said, "That's funny; I have a bill for that car; I'm going to pick it up to-night."

I said, "We heard there wasn't a freight on the Slopson Branch till Tuesday morning. We don't exactly want to go back yet."

He said, "Well now, Sonny, you see I haven't got any say about it. I get a bill and that's all there is to it. There might be a freight out of Slopson to-morrow or the next day, and then again, there might not. You could come near sending the whole of Slopson by Parcels Post. I've heard about you kids and I've got word to look after you. You're mighty lucky you didn't all go kerflop into the lake."

"How soon is there another train through here?" the sheriff asked him.

"Twelve-fifteen, if she's on time," the conductor said; "she's a through from Buffalo."

"Believe me," I said; "that's one town I know something about—Buffalo. I'll never forget Buffalo, 398 Mls." They all laughed.

"She doesn't stop here, does she?" the sheriff asked.

"Stops at Skiddyunk for water," the conductor said. "She passes us down at Red Hill siding."

The sheriff said, "I guess two of us had better watch the station here and be on the safe side in case she slows down, and the other two will go down in one of the machines and keep an eye out at Skiddyunk.

They might get on there. We'll probably beat you to Skiddyunk, but if we don't, nab 'em if they get on. They're going to try to get away from these parts, I know that."

I was just thinking we'd have to hike back along the road to our little Home Sweet Home, when the conductor said, "Hop on, you boys."

When we got to Skiddyunk, the sheriff and one of his men were already there. But there wasn't any sign of the two fellows. Then the train started backing up along the Slopson Branch and the two sheriffs stayed on it. Pretty soon we were back almost to where we had started from. There wasn't any station at Ridgeboro, but the sheriffs looked all around the closed-up store, in the wood-shed and under the platform. Then the train backed down the siding and very gently bunked into the Brewster's Centre car. There were men swinging lights and shouting to each other, while one coupled our car to the train. Then there was a lot more shouting and swinging lights and then we started.

We stood on the back platform of our own car and I could see the moon just beginning to shine on the part of the lake that we were moving away from. The wheels rattled, rattled; and it seemed kind of as if the car was saying *so long, so long, so long*——

Pretty soon, away across the lake, we could see a light and we knew it was the fire at *Camp Smile Awhile*. Then we passed the store that was all closed up tight and I said, "so long, store. So long, *Camp Smile Awhile*." And while we stood out there on the

back platform, the wheels kept saying, "S'long, s'long, s'long, s'long, s'long...."

Gee whiz, I was sorry.

CHAPTER XXIII

CRAZY STUFF

One thing sure, those auto thieves weren't on our train; they didn't get on at any of those three places, Ozone Valley or Ridgeboro or Skiddyunk. The two sheriffs got off at Skiddyunk again, to keep a watch when the late train came through. The Skiddyunk Station was all dark. As we left it the wheels kept saying, "s'long, s'long," and pretty soon we couldn't see it at all, and I knew that the country where we had had so much fun was way back there in the dark and that probably we'd never see it any more.

That was a single-track railroad and as we stood on the back platform, we could see the two shiny rails going away back into the dark.

"Let's go and sit down," I said; "I'm tired."

We had a shoe box full of eats that the girls at *Camp Smile Awhile* had given us and, yum, yum, those sandwiches were good.

Pretty soon a brakeman came staggering through, holding onto the seats. He had a red lantern and he hung it on the back platform. "So's the flyer won't

bunk her nose into us," he said.

"Reg'lar private car, you kids got," he said.

I said, "When do you think we'll get to Bridgeboro, New Jersey?"

"Depends on the out trains from New York," he said; "we get in about three. No telling how long you'll stand in the yards. If you're picked up pretty quick, you ought to be home in time for breakfast. But there's no telling with a dead special."

I said, "You don't call this car a dead one, do you? You ought to have seen the adventures it had."

He laughed and said, "A dead special is a pickup. It ain't carried straight through. It's picked up and laid down and picked up. See?"

"We should worry when we get home," I said.

"You'll get there," he said, nice and pleasant; "don't you worry."

"Worry?" Connie said. "That must be a Greek word; I never heard it."

He was an awful nice fellow, that brakeman.

Pretty soon we were all sprawling on the seats, started on our favorite indoor sport, jollying Pee-wee. The train went through a pretty wild country and sometimes we could look way down into deep valleys, and sometimes mountains went right up straight from the tracks and seemed like walls outside the windows.

Wig said, "To-morrow is Columbus Day."

"Right the first time," I told him; "I wish we weren't

going to get home 'till Tuesday."

"What's the difference between Tuesday?" Connie wanted to know.

"Is it a conundrum?" I said.

"No, it's an adverb, I mean a proverb," he said.

"Tuesday and *what*?" Pee-wee shouted.

"Tuesday and nothing," Connie said; "just Tuesday. Ask me the answer to it."

"You're crazy," Pee-wee shouted; "what's the answer to it?"

Connie said, "There isn't any answer. Want to hear another? How many onions are there?"

"Where?" Pee-wee yelled.

"Anywhere," Connie said.

"That shows how much sense you have," the kid screamed.

I laughed so hard I nearly fell off the seat.

"What's the cause of tears?" Connie said right back at him.

"What?" Pee-wee asked him.

"Crying," Connie said. "Why is the sky blue?"

"Why is it?" the kid shouted.

"It isn't," Connie said; "look out of the window, it's black."

"That isn't a riddle," Pee-wee shouted.

"It's a fact," Connie said; "what's the answer to a question?"

"You make me tired," the kid screamed; "what kind of a question?"

"Any kind," Connie said; "how fast is a mile?"

"A mile isn't fast, you crazy Indian!" Pee-wee screamed at him. "That shows——"

"All right, how slow is it then?" Connie asked him. "Suppose I have my picture taken."

"Well, what?" the kid blurted out.

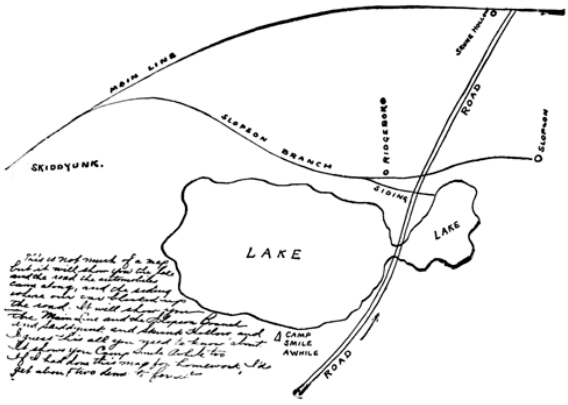
"Nothing," Connie said.

"You said, suppose you had your picture taken," Pee-wee screamed.

"All right, suppose I did; what of it?" Connie laughed.

"He's got a right to have his picture taken, hasn't he?" I said. "You can take mine if you'll bring it back."

"You're all crazy," Pee-wee shouted; "you don't know a riddle when you see one. Do you call those riddles? A riddle is something where you ask a question and the answer, kind of, means something else."



"Precisely," Westy said; "the same as somewhere is a place you get to, by going to it. Deny it if you can."

"Well, there's one place I'm going to," Connie said; "and that's asleep."

"If you don't mind, I'll go with you," Wig said.

I don't know how it is, but just before we turn in, we always have a lot of nonsense like that. I bet you think we're crazy. Pretty soon Westy and I were the only ones awake. He's so careful he never goes anywhere without thinking it over beforehand—not even to sleep. If he were going to go crazy, he'd have to think it all over beforehand and count ten first. Talk about watching your step; he has his chained. And he always remembers where he puts things, too. He never even loses his temper. I don't lose mine much, but gee whiz, I mislay it sometimes.

CHAPTER XXIV

UP IN THE AIR

"This is a pretty wild country," Westy said; "it's all mountains. Do you hear the echo of the engine?"

Just as clear as could be, I could hear the sound of the engine echoing back from the mountains; the chugging and rattling sounded double, like. Then, pretty soon, it kind of died away.

After about half a minute, Westy and I just sat staring at each other, listening.

"That's funny," he said; "it seems to be going farther away."

"It sounds like the trains when you hear them at Temple Camp," I said.

He said, "That isn't our train, it's another train; it's over that way. We didn't hear it before, on account of ours."

I guess neither of us said anything for about half a minute, and all the while we could hear the rattling of the train, away off somewhere.

I said, "Westy, we're slowing down; it feels kind of funny; do you notice?"

"How?" he said.

"We're slowing down and there isn't any knocking of the cars against each other."

We both listened and all the while we could hear the rattling of a train far away.

"It feels just the same as it felt when we rolled down the siding," I said; "I don't know, kind of funny—easy like."

He opened the window and then shouted, "*Look, look!* This car's all alone. Look off there."

Away ahead of us, but a little over to one side, we could see a bright spot moving along and little bright dots in back of it. I knew it was the brightness thrown by a headlight and the lights showing through car windows. It was *our* train scooting along around the mountains. Our car kept slowing down very easy sort of, as if there was nothing pulling it or holding it back either. I knew the feeling, because I had been on that car when it was like that before. It went slower and slower and slower and then the wheels sounded different—sort of hollow, kind of. Then the car just crawled along and at last it stopped.

"Look down," Westy said; "I can't see the ground. Do you hear water rushing?"

I looked out of the window and down, down, down, till I couldn't see anything but just the dark. But I could hear water way down there.

"We're on a high bridge," I said.

Just then the wind blew strong and it brought the noise of that train near again. And it shook the bridge, too, ever so little.

Westy said, "Roy, we're a couple of hundred feet up. You know just how the water in Black Gully sounds up near Temple Camp. That's over two hundred feet."

"What happened, do you suppose?" I asked him.

"Coupling broke, I guess," he said. "Let's have one of those lifters from the stove."

We dropped one of the iron lifters and listened to hear it fall. But all we could hear was a little splash, away far down.

"This bridge must be terribly high," Westy said; "feel how it shakes in the wind."

"This is a dickens of a spooky place to be," I told him; "especially in a strong wind."

"You said it," Westy answered.

Gee whiz, I've often felt kind of shaky going over a high bridge in a train, but to be left standing in the middle of one; *oh, boy*!

"Let's go and see what happened," he said.

We got the red lantern from the back platform of the car and went through to the other platform and held it down. There was nothing at all beneath us, except ties very far apart, and the rails and the heavy steel runners outside the rails. The coupling was broken, all right. I guess that coupling must have been an old timer.

"Hang the lantern on the rail," Westy said, "while I get down and see what happened."

"Look out what you're doing," I said; "there's two or three hundred feet of space below you. Watch your step."

He lay on the platform so as to be able to reach down and look down where the coupling was, and find out just what had happened.

"Hold the light down," he said.

Gee, I can't tell you just how it happened. Westy says he was to blame and I say I was to blame. He said he knocked the lantern out of my hand, but, gee whiz, I should have kept it out of his way. Anyway, it went tumbling down and it went so far that it looked like just a little red speck. It stayed lighted till it crashed away down in the bottom of that place. And the light turned yellow and spread a little bit, then went out. I guess the oil spilled on a rock down there. Anyway, it looked like miles.

Westy was breathing hard and I guess I was, too. He said, "Have you got that time table? What time did our conductor say that train from Buffalo comes through?"

I said, "About midnight. We're in a pretty bad fix. I guess I'd better wake the fellows up, hey?"

We were both pretty serious.

CHAPTER XXV

IN THE DARK

I guess you know that was an old out-of-date car, because anyone would know that the railroad people wouldn't use a good car to stand on a side track for a makeshift station. Gee whiz, we didn't care about that, we even liked it, because it was old-fashioned

and kind of ramshackle; it made it seem like a good place for camping. And if it hadn't been for that old stove in the corner of it, we could never have bunked in it and cooked our meals. Crinkums, I like old things, but not old worn-out couplings. Nay, nay!

Another thing, the only lights in that car were three lamps along the top, but they weren't exactly lights, because the lamps were broken. Just the brass things were there. There was just one good lamp in a side bracket in the ticket agent's place, and when we started away from Brewster's Centre that was full of oil. But we used it all up on Saturday night in Ridgeboro and we couldn't get any at the store the next day, on account of it being Sunday. We were going to get some on Monday morning, but you see we were picked up Sunday night. So now the only light we had was a little flashlight belonging to Connie Bennett.

I said, "Westy, this is the worst fix we were ever in. I never thought about anything like this when I said it was a lot of fun being pulled all over the country in this car. Feel how the bridge shakes in the wind; it's kind of spooky like, hey? If it only wasn't so dark. That makes it worse, not being able to see where you are at all. Listen, do you hear a train?"

"Nope," he said, all the while listening; "I guess it's just because you're scared."

"Anyway, there's no use wasting time," I told him; "let's wake up the fellows."

That was some job. We had to roll Pee-wee off the seat onto the floor and then roll him out into the aisle. I guess they didn't know what we were talking about first, but when they knew about it, they sat up

all right. We just sat there talking in the pitch dark.

"What good is the flashlight?" Connie asked us. "It won't show far enough and the battery won't hold out for more than about a half an hour. I hear a train now."

No one said a word; just listened. "I heard that," Westy said; "it isn't a train."

"One is likely to crash into us any minute," Wig said; "I'd rather jump and be done with it—the suspense."

"Do you call that using your brains?" Pee-wee shouted. Gee whiz, when you come right down to it, I have to admit that kid is a bully little scout.

"You couldn't walk the ties even if we could," Wig said; "you can't take a long enough step."

"Well, then, *you* walk them and I'll stay here," the kid said.

I reached across in the dark and hit him a good rap on the shoulder. "That shows there's one thing about scouting you don't know, Kiddo," I told him. "A scout troop is just as strong as its weakest member, just the same as a chain is as strong as its weakest link. We *will* use our brains, right up to the last minute. Don't get scared."

We all listened to a sound we heard far off.

"I'm not scared," Pee-wee said. And even in the dark I could see his eyes looking straight at me and they looked awful brave and clear, kind of.

"No use getting excited," Wig said. "Why couldn't we break up some wood and start a fire a few feet away from the car?"

"Listen!" Connie said; "shh——"

"Maybe it would stop a train, but it would surely burn the bridge down," Westy said. "The ties are wooden. There's enough wood to curl the steel all up into a mess of wreckage. And all that might happen before the train came along."

"Could we walk the ties?" Wig asked. "Even if they're far apart we might help Pee-wee——Listen!"

"Don't be all the time scaring me," I said, kind of mad, like. Because I was getting good and scared, and rattled. "Let's see your light, Connie."

I held the light to the time table. "There's no station anywhere around here, I guess," I said; "but that flyer ought to come along pretty soon——"

"I hear it now," Wig said.

"No, you don't," I told him; "what's the use of getting us all excited? Sit still. If it comes along, all we can do is to go out and lie flat on the ties and trust to luck. Any fellow that wants to hang by his hands, can do it. It would be pretty hard lifting ourselves up again though. But the flyer isn't coming yet."

"I hear a whistle," Wig said.

"No, you don't hear a whistle," I told him; "that's an owl down there in the woods. Don't you know the call of an owl?"

"How about freight trains?" Connie asked.

I said, "I don't know anything about freight trains; they're not on the time table. Of course, we're up against it, but what's the use of going all to pieces? If any fellow wants to try walking the ties, he can do it.

It would be hard enough in the daytime. On a dark night like this, he'd just go crashing down into all those rocks and water, that's all. Maybe the chances are against us, but I say, let's stick together."

"That's what I say," Pee-wee shouted; "we've always stuck together. I say *stick together*."

"Bully for you, Kid," I said.

"We had a lot of fun anyway," he said; "and I always voted for you for patrol leader. I'm not scared."

I got up, because I just couldn't sit there any more. Every time the wind blew and the car rattled, it gave me a start. I put my arm over Pee-wee's shoulder and I said, "I've jollied you a lot, Walt."

"I don't mind that," he said; "and besides, a scout is brave."

"You're a better scout than any of us, I guess," I told him.

Then I went out onto the platform, because I just couldn't keep still. I remembered what Connie had said about all the men that lose their lives working on railroads. Anyway, Pee-wee was right, we had had a lot of fun. I guess we never thought about the other side of it. I looked away down into the dark and I could just hear the water splashing on the rocks. I had to grab hold of the railing when the wind blew. I looked away off along the tracks, but I couldn't even see where the bridge ended; only I could see a kind of a big patch of dark that was blacker than the regular dark, and I thought it was a mountain. I guessed maybe a headlight would show suddenly around that. Connie came out, but didn't say anything, and then went back through to the

other platform. I could hear frogs croaking, away down.

"Going to watch?" I called after him.

He said, "We're going to hang from the ties when we hear it."

"All right," I told him; "it's awful dark. I can't see a thing."

I heard one of the fellows inside say that maybe the wind would start the car, but I knew that was crazy talk, because a bridge is always level. I made up my mind that I'd hang from one of the ties and clasp my hands around it. I knew that it would be hard pulling myself up and scrambling onto the bridge again; *all* of us wouldn't manage it, that was sure. It seemed kind of funny that probably we wouldn't have a full patrol any more. I wasn't exactly scared but, kind of, I didn't like to hear those frogs croaking way down there. It sounded so spooky.

I heard Westy say, "So long, Roy, if I don't see you again."

I called in for him to keep the kid near him. He was always my special chum, Westy was....

CHAPTER XXVI

WALTER HARRIS, SCOUT

All of a sudden, somebody was standing near me on the platform and clutching my arm. It was Pee-wee.

"Look out you don't fall, Kid," I told him.

"I didn't tell any of them," he whispered. "Listen, I've got an idea. I was—all the while I was trying to use my brains. But anyhow, I don't know just how we can do it, but you can find a way, so then really it'll be *your* idea. Shh—I want the fellows to think it's your idea; see? Shh! Why can't we use the movie apparatus, some way; why can't we? And flash it to them."

"You said it!" I fairly yelled.

"Shh—h," he whispered; "I always voted for you; listen, it's *your* idea, see? Because I don't know just how——"

Oh, boy, I just grabbed that kid around the neck, till I could feel his curly head right tight close to me.

"What should I '*shh*' about?" I shouted. "You little brick! What are you whispering about? *Pee-wee's hit it!*" I just fairly shouted. "We're all right. Get in the car," I yelled at him, and I gave him a push. "Telling your patrol leader to shut up, are you?"

Then I called him back again, I just couldn't help it, and I grabbed him around the neck and I just held him that way.

"You *bully*, *tip-top* little scout," I said; "you—you little Silver Fox! You—you've saved all of us."

"And we can *always* stick together, hey?" he said.

"Sure,—oh, sure," I told him; "you bet!"

Gee whiz, all we needed was the idea. All the rest of the ideas came to us quick enough.

"There's oil in the movie lamp," Wig yelled.

"Break one of the windows," I said; "*quick*."

"What for?"

"Never mind what for. Get a piece of glass," I hollered. "Pick out two long sticks—hurry up."

It didn't take us long to decide just how we'd do.

"Two *long* ones," I said; "don't be listening for trains."

Crash went a window. "I've got a good piece," Pee-wee yelled.

"All right, blacken it with the movie lamp," I told him.

Oh, boy, we were some busy crew. The wood that had been nailed up under the car in Brewster's Centre was in long strips, and we hauled a couple of the longest ones out double quick. It wasn't exactly my idea, what we did; it was all of our ideas, I guess. We planned it out while we were hustling.

One of those long strips we stuck out of the window and then held it up outside. One end of it was inside the car, resting on the seat, and the other end pointed up as straight as we could hold it outside. It reached up past the roof. Two of us held it that way, while two others did the same thing with another one through the window just opposite. So you see those two long strips stuck up, one on either side of the roof. They didn't stand up straight on account of sticking down through the windows, but they slanted away from each other up above. It took four of us to

hold them that way.



SPRAWLING RIGHT ACROSS THAT SHEET WAS THE WORD *STOP*.
Roy Blakeley's Camp on Wheels. Page 150

While we were doing that, Pee-wee had the little movie lamp turned up so it smoked and he held the piece of glass over it until it was all black with soot. Pee-wee was all black with soot, too. A scout is thorough. In two minutes more, I guess, he would have been disguised as a negro.

"Turn it down," I said; "that's enough. Are you game to climb up on the car? Get the sheet and the rope, quick."

Pee-wee was game for anything. You never saw him back down, did you? Not even—but never mind. That's a thing of the past. In five seconds that little monkey was up on top of the car with the screen cloth and the rope that we always used to hang it from. I called up out of the window for him to look out.

"I don't see any trains," he shouted down.

"I mean look out for yourself," I said. "Tie the rope across from one stick to the other as high as you can reach," Wig shouted; "and be careful when you stand up."

"That's nothing," Pee-wee shouted.

In less than half a minute the sticks stood up all right without being held, and we knew that they were tied together and bent enough toward each other so that they would stand up good and solid. Then we told him to sit down, because we didn't want him standing and reaching up to fix the sheet.

"I'll go up," I said.

When I got up on the roof, Pee-wee and I hooked the sheet to the rope all the way across and tied it to the sticks at the bottom, so it wouldn't blow. Then we dangled the end of rope down past the window just below, and the fellows tied the movie apparatus to it, and we hauled it up. There was a kind of a tank lying flat on the roof and fastened tight, and we stood the apparatus close against that, and kept close to it ourselves to keep from slipping and falling off.

Jiminies, I've heard of tramps riding on the tops of cars like that, but believe me, I wouldn't want to be on the top of one while it was going.

With my little finger I printed the word STOP in good big black letters on the smoked glass.

"Listen," Pee-wee said; "shh; do you hear a train?"

I listened. "I guess it's just the fellows down in the car," I said. "Have you got matches?"

"I've got four pockets full of them," he said. Even then I had to laugh. A scout is thorough.

"Listen," he said; "I think it's a train."

Away off I could hear a rattling sound, very low and quick—*tkd*, *tkd*, *tkd*, *tkd*, *tkd*, *tkd*, *tkd*, *tkd*; then all of a sudden a long, shrill whistle. And I could hear it again, very low, echoing from the mountains.

"*She's coming!*" Connie shouted up.

"We should worry," I hollered down.

But just the same my hand trembled as I put the piece of glass into the apparatus, and held it there in place.

There wasn't any sign of light anywhere, the cloth stayed as dark as pitch.

"What's the matter?" Pee-wee asked, all breathless.

"It doesn't work," I said. I could hardly speak, and cold shudders were going all through me.

Away far off, there came a big patch of light on one of the mountains, so that we could even see the trees off there. It was from the headlight of a locomotive

that we couldn't see yet. I guess it was coming around the mountain.

"All right?" Westy called up out of the window.

"It doesn't work, Westy," I said.

I could hardly speak, my throat felt so queer, sort of.

CHAPTER XXVII

"POTS"

"Did you take the cap off?" Westy called up. Thoughtful little Westy!

"G—o—o—d night," I said; "I never took the cap off the lens cylinder."

"Maybe that was the reason," Pee-wee said, in that innocent way of his.

"It's just possible," I said.

I took off the cap and, oh, *Christopher Columbus*, wasn't I happy! Sprawling right across that sheet was the word STOP in good big letters. Believe me, that was my favorite word. STOP. It showed far enough in both directions for an engineer to see it in time to come to a full stop.

"Will they see it?" Pee-wee asked me, all excited.

"If the engineer isn't dead, he'll see it," I told him.

"Maybe we ought to have said *please*, hey? A scout is supposed to be polite," he said. I just had to sit back and laugh, right there on the roof of that car. Cracky, but that kid is a scream.

One funny thing was that from the train the word would show wrong side around. It would show the right way from one direction and the wrong way from the other direction.

"It will read POTS," I said.

"Maybe he won't stop, hey?" the kid asked me.

"Sure he will," I said; "how does he know how big the pots are? It will knock him silly when he sees that."

Even beyond the screen, away over against a hill, we could see the word POTS printed very dim and small. Only the P was wrong side around.

But anyway, safety first; so I kept moving the glass so the word danced around. An engineer who couldn't have seen that must have been blind.

Pretty soon, along she came, and we could see the headlight now, good and clear, and hear her thundering along as if she should worry about anything. *Rattle*, *bang*, she went, and roaring and clanking as if she'd be glad to trample the whole world down and never even stop to take notice. *Slam*, *bang*, she came along, and we could see the mountains as plain as day, brightened up by her headlight.

I just held the glass, moving it around, and I have to admit I was a little kind of nervous, sort of.

Slam bang, slam bang! She came along and we could hear the rattling and clanking echoing from the

mountains, and the racket was all mixed up. Sparks of light were flying up out of the smokestack and we could hear the rails clanking, clanking....

Then the sound of the clanking changed. Then it died down, and there was only the steady rattle, rattle....

She was slowing down.

"We've got her, Kid," I said; "sit still, you'll only fall off. We've got her eating out of our hands."

"Clank, clank, clank—clank—clank," she went; then "s-s-s-s-s-s...."

She had stopped.

There she stood, puffing and puffing, part on the bridge, and part back in the dark. The locomotive seemed like a big lion that had just been going to spring at us.

"Hurrah!" we heard the fellows down in the car calling.

"P-f-f-f-f-f-f," the locomotive went.

"Let *me* do it! Let *me* do it!" Pee-wee yelled.

I took the piece of glass out and leaned back against the tank. All of a sudden I saw something else sprawled all over the sheet. It was the right way around, too, for the engineer. I guess Pee-wee had been carrying it in his pocket. Anyway, there were spots on it where the soot had been wiped off. But it was easy to read it, and this is what it said:

MUCH OBLIGED, MISTER

Honest, can you beat that kid?

CHAPTER XXVIII

"SEEN IN THE MOVIES"

I guess the fellows down in the car must have seen the notice where it was printed kind of faint like, against a hill, because they couldn't have seen it on the screen. Anyway, they set up a howl and began shouting up out of the windows. They're a crazy bunch.

"Show them Pee-wee peeling potatoes! Show them Pee-wee flopping flip-flops!" they began yelling.

"Show them the one of me stirring soup," the kid said, grabbing me by the arm; "that's the best one!"

I said, "You crazy Indian, do you think those people in the flyer are there to see a movie show? Keep still, here come a couple of men with lanterns."

"They're going to penetrate the mystery," Pee-wee said. I guess he got that out of some book, hey? *Penetrate the mystery.*

I said, "As long as they didn't penetrate this car, I'm satisfied."

We could see two lights bobbing along toward us from the train. Even with lanterns it must have been a pretty risky job, walking those ties. All the while Pee-wee and I were taking down the sheet, and as soon as we loosened it from the sticks, the fellows down in the car pulled them in.

"Look how clear it shows against the hill, now the sheet isn't up," I said to Pee-wee.

I guess you know what I meant, all right. Even

through the sheet the printing had shown kind of dim against a hill in back of the train, but with the sheet taken down it showed pretty clear and it seemed awful funny. And besides, now that the sheet was down we had a good look at the train; the light from the movie apparatus seemed to shine right along the tops of the cars.

All of a sudden, Pee-wee grabbed me by the arm and said, "Look! *Look!* On the top of the second car. Look! Do you see? Right beside that long sort of a boiler thing."

I looked, and then, for once, I had sense enough to do the right thing in a hurry. I closed the shutter in the apparatus.

"Did you see them?" Pee-wee whispered, all excited.

"Sure," I said; "two men."

They were lying on the top of the car, right close against a big, long thing like a boiler. It was much bigger than the thing on our car. One was lying on one side of it, and the other one on the opposite side. The reason I shut the light off in such a hurry was because I didn't want them to know they were seen.

"Are they train robbers?" Pee-wee whispered to me. "Are they highwaymen?"

"They're high enough to be highwaymen," I told him.

"Maybe they're bandits, hey?" he said.

"I hope so, for your sake," I told him. "I hope they're a couple of pirates, but I guess they're only tramps. Come on, let's go down."

We dangled the movie apparatus down and the

fellows took it in through the window. Then they came out on the platform and helped the kid and me down. That was a pretty hard job, believe *me*. Just as we got our feet on terra what d'ye call it.—I mean terra cotta[A]—that Latin for platform—anyway, you know what I mean—as soon as we got our two feet (I mean four feet) on the platform, the two men with lanterns had just reached it.

One of the men said, "What's all this? What are you doing here, anyway? Who are you?" Gee whiz, it sounded like an examination paper.

Whenever we get mixed up with grown-up people it's usually me—I mean *I*—that has to do the talking. Pee-wee usually helps though. So I gave the men our regular motto.

I said, "We're here because we're here. Ask me something easy. This is the Comedy of Errors." I said that because we have the Comedy of Errors in school and I just happened to think of it.

I guess the man was the fireman; anyway, he had on a jumper. He walked into the car and looked all around with his lantern and the other man looked all around, too, trying to size us up, I guess.

The fireman said, "Comedy of Errors, huh?"

Pee-wee said, "Sure, that's in Shakespeare."

"Well, it's mighty gol darn lucky you had a movie machine along," the fireman said. "You youngsters have had a *mighty narrow* escape."

"Why shouldn't it be a narrow escape?" Connie said. "It's a narrow bridge. Anyway, where do we go from here?"

"There's a couple of men lying on the top of one of your cars, too," Pee-wee said; "we could see them by the light."

"Tramps, I guess," the brakeman said. He didn't seem to be surprised.

So then we told them all about how it was with us—our adventures with the car and all that. They said we had a bad coupling and that it was no wonder it had parted.

"We should worry," I told him; "scouts stick together, even if couplings part. But anyway, we'd like to get off this bridge."

The fireman said it wouldn't be a bad idea.

FOOTNOTE:

[A] He probably meant terra firma.

CHAPTER XXIX

"FOILED"

Pretty soon they went back to the train and then, after about ten minutes, the engine began puffing and coming toward us ever so slow. It seemed as if it hardly moved.

"I think we're going to get a good bunk in the nose," Wig said.

"Good night," I told him; "I hope it doesn't pick up speed."

"I'd rather see it pick up anything than that," Connie said.

"Suppose it had hit us at full speed," Pee-wee said.

"It would have been a home run all right," I told him.

Even with that locomotive just creeping along toward us, it scared me. It seemed as if it couldn't touch our car without banging it into splinters. But that engineer knew what he was doing all right. The train came along so slowly you could hardly tell it was moving, and sometimes it stopped and started again. Pee-wee said it was going scout pace. But it was more like a snail's pace, I guess.

Pretty soon it stopped just about ten feet from us and the headlight brightened up the whole car. I could feel the bridge tremble a little, sort of keeping time with that great big locomotive, as it stood there puffing and just kind of throbbing. And I thought how all that engineer would have to do was pull a handle and—*g—o—o—d* night! He was sitting, looking out of the window, sort of calm and easy, smoking a pipe. Connie called up to him and said, "Hey, Mister, have a heart and don't start anything." The engine just went, "*pff, pff, pff,*" very slow. We could even feel the heat of it.

Somebody called out for us to get inside the car and stay there. A man went through our car with a red lantern and kept swinging it on the other platform. I could see men swinging red lights way in the back of the train, too. Some people on the train tried to get out, but the railroad men made them get on again. I

could hear a lady crying that there was going to be a bad collision. Cracky, I never heard of a good one, did you?

The men between the front of the engine and our car had a long iron bar, sort of, and they had one end of it fixed in a sort of coupling just above the cow-catcher. It was pretty hard keeping us off the platform, so we saw everything they did. The other end of that bar they held up so it stuck out like a shaft, and then the engine moved about an inch, then stopped, then moved about another inch, then stopped. Gee whiz, I was glad I wasn't down there with those men. *Yum*, *yum*, I like sandwiches, but I don't like being the middle part of one. Then all of a sudden, *bunk*.

The men climbed up on our car and in a minute, chu chu, along we went ever so slow, the engine pushing us.

When we were off the bridge, the train stopped and the men on the other end of our car went away along the tracks, swinging their lanterns. Gee, it's all right to say a bridge is strong, and I guess that one was, all right, but me for the good solid earth. It feels good underneath you.

Pretty soon the conductor and a lot of passengers came along to take a look at us. What did *we* care? Everybody said we were *wonders* to think about using the movie apparatus and they were laughing. I guess it was at the word *pots*, hey? One man said we were prenominal,[B] or something or other like that —I should worry.

Pretty soon we noticed a little crowd of people outside the second car, so we went up that way to

see what was the matter. A couple of men were just coming down off the platform and each of them was holding a man by the collar. The men they were holding had on scout hats. I took one look and *g—o—o—d* night! Those two fellows were the automobile thieves.

"*What—do—you—know—about—that?*" Connie whispered to me.

"And the train people never knew they were up there until we told them," Westy said.

I guess the two men were detectives. Anyway, just as they stepped off, they let go the one man and one of them said, "Now you two hoboes beat it, and the next time either of you is caught riding on this road, you'll do time for it There's the road——"

Jiminetty! I didn't wait for him to say any more. I just went right up to that detective and I said, "Mister, those men are worse than tramps; they're not tramps at all; they're thieves; they stole an automobile; hurry up, you'd better catch him."

Oh, boy, didn't he grab hold of that fellow again! The fellow must have seen some of us, because he was just starting to run when, zippo, that detective had him by the collar again. The other one hadn't been let go even, so he was safe.

By that time passengers from the train were crowding around and Pee-wee was right in the center, shouting, same as he always does. "They're—they're desperate—culprits——" he said; "we *foiled* them once before—we did——"

All the passengers were laughing. Even the conductor

and the detectives were laughing. I was laughing so hard, I couldn't speak.

He just shouted on, "You can say what you want about robbers and bandits and—and all things like that being bad—in the movies—but anyway, I don't care how many censors there are—you've got to admit that the movies are all right—they can—what d'ye call it—they can reveal identities, they can——"

Then Westy spoke up. He said, "This is our little mascot; he's harmless." Then he told all about how our car was stalled on the road and how the thieves got away. Westy always has his wits about him when he talks, that's one thing.

One of the detectives said, "Can you boys positively identify this pair?"

"Haven't they got our hats?" I said. "Sure we can identify them."

The two thieves looked at us as if to try to scare us, but what did *we* care? They made a big fuss and said they were only tramps, but it didn't do them any good, and nobody believed them. Because all those people could see we knew what we were talking about, especially Westy, because he's always so sober, like. And besides, they knew that we were the ones who had first discovered them on top of the car, and I guess they saw that we had some sense, because on account of our flashing the signal in that way.

Anyway, you can bet those two fellows didn't get away. The men took them into the baggage car and that was the last we saw of them, because after the train started we had to stay in our own car, on

account of the engine being between us and the train. That was the only thing that kept Pee-wee from giving a movie show.

But the fireman came in to see us, because he knew how to climb all over the engine. He told us that those fellows had handcuffs on, and he got all our names and addresses, because he said we'd have to come back and be witnesses. But we never did, because the fellows confessed. Gee whiz, I would have liked to go back again. Maybe it wouldn't have been so much fun though, hey? I guess maybe I wouldn't have liked to. It's no fun seeing people sent to jail. But anyway, one sure thing, they had no right to steal a Pierce-Arrow. Even they wouldn't have had any right to steal a Ford.

But anyway, who'd want to steal a Ford?

FOOTNOTE:

> [B] Phenomenal is probably what the man said.

CHAPTER XXX

OUR PATROL "SING"

So you have to admit that there were two thieves that really got caught in the movies. Mr. Ellsworth says that movies with thieves and robbers and pistols and things are no good. But if it hadn't been for that movie outfit, good night, where would we have been,

I'd like to know? And where would those thieves have been?

Anyway, pretty soon the excitement was all over, except that Pee-wee kept things going. Nothing but an earthquake would stop *him*. It was pretty bright in our car on account of the headlight from the engine. We moved along so slowly that I guess I could walk just as fast. The fireman paid us a good visit. He was an awful nice fellow. He could bend his left thumb way back. He said he would be an engineer pretty soon. Jiminy, I hope he's one by now.

He told us that the engineer was going to push us as far as Flimdunk Siding and leave us there and that another train would pick us up the next day. He said both our couplings were rusted out and no good and one of them would have to be fixed before we could be taken on.

He said, "We can't push you far like this; 'tisn't safe and we have to just crawl."

"Flimdunk suits *us* all right," I told him; "we're not particular. Columbus didn't know where he was going anyway, and to-morrow's Columbus Day. We should worry."

He said he guessed Number 23 would pick us up.

"*Good night!*" I told him, "that means more adventures. I suppose that's the skiddo special. Probably we'll be dumped off a cliff. All in the game."

He laughed and said that probably we wouldn't have any more trouble, because Number 23 made a quick run straight to Jersey City.

"What does it want to go to Jersey City for?" Wig asked him.

He said, "Well, it doesn't stay there long."

"I don't blame it," Connie piped up.

He told us that when we got to Jersey City a Northern local would pick us up and drop us at Bridgeboro.

"All right, just as you say," I told him.

Anyway, we weren't going to worry about it. When we got home we'd get home, that was all. And when we didn't, we wouldn't.

After the fireman went away, we fixed two seats facing each other and sprawled all over them. I guess we were getting pretty sleepy.

"Shout to the engineer to turn off that headlight and we'll go to sleep," Wig said.

"Let's make some turnovers first," Pee-wee said.

"All right, *you* make them," I said.

Then followed a big chunk of silence.

All of a sudden Connie started singing:

"We stood on the bridge at midnight."

"Keep your feet off me," I said; "what do you think I am? A door-mat?"

"Let's make up another verse," Wig said.

"Let's put Flimdunk in it!" Pee-wee shouted.

Pretty soon all of us were singing:

"We stood on the bridge at midnight,
We stood on the bridge at midnight,
We stood on the bridge at midnight."

Then somebody sang:

"We came near getting a bunk,
We came near getting a bunk."

Then we all sang:

"We stood on the bridge at midnight,
We came near getting a bunk;
We came near getting a bunk;
We came——"

"We flashed them POTS!" Pee-wee yelled.

"Now we're on our way to Flimdunk," Westy said.

So pretty soon this is what we were all singing:

"We stood on the bridge at midnight,
We came near getting a bunk;
We flashed them POTS for an S—O—S,
Now we're on our way to Flimdunk."

Gee whiz, I have to admit we're a crazy bunch in our patrol.

CHAPTER XXXI

FLIMDUNK SIDING

After a little while, Pee-wee fell asleep, but the rest of us stayed awake, because we wanted to see what kind of a place we were going to stop at.

For about fifteen or twenty minutes the engine pushed us awfully slow, then we stopped, and a couple of men went between our car and the engine and did something to that long iron bar. We watched them from the platform. Then one of the men went through our car to the other platform and the other one stayed on the platform near the engine. Another man started along the track with a lantern.

"The plot grows thicker," I said; "what's going to happen now?"

"Search me," Connie said; "look around and see if you see Flimdunk anywhere—not inside the car, you crazy Indian."

I was looking inside the car for it.

"How could we tell it if we saw it?" Connie asked us.

"Can't you tell a village when you see one? It'll look like a young town," Westy said.

"The fireman didn't say anything about a town anyway," I told them; "he just said Flimdunk Siding."

"Maybe that man is swinging the lantern so the town can get off the track," Wig said; "anyhow, I bet something is going to happen."

It was pitch dark all around, except that the headlight of the locomotive made a long shaft like a searchlight 'way far ahead, and we could see the man walking along the track in that shaft, swinging his lantern. Our car was all bright, too. It seemed awful lonesome where he was going, far ahead in the dark.

The locomotive kept going *pfff, pfff, pfff*, just like a horse stamping his foot, because he's in a hurry to start. It seemed kind of as if it didn't want to wait.

"Have we come to the siding?" I asked the man on the platform.

"You'll have to take the switch," he said.

"We wouldn't take anything that didn't belong to us," Connie said; "you'll have to give it to us if you want us to take it."

"I don't care so much about having one, anyway," I said. I guess that man thought we were crazy.

"We'll give you the run," he said.

"I wouldn't blame you for doing that if we took the switch," Wig told him. Gee, he had to laugh.

Pretty soon the man who was far ahead began swinging his lantern around in a circle. Then the engine gave a kind of a quick, shrill whistle, and we started again. We went a little faster than before and then, all of a sudden, we saw the engine standing quite a way off, and already the men on our car were turning the hand brakes. Our car was rattling along all by itself. In about half a minute, *kerlick, kerlick*, it went on a switch and then the men began yanking on the brake handles for all they were worth.

But I knew that old car all right, and its brakes were pretty near as bad as its couplings.

"Oh, merrily, merrily on we roll," Connie began singing.

"What's the matter with this plaguey old boat?" one of the men said, all the while bracing his feet and

pulling and pulling on the wheel.

"It likes to go off on a hike by itself," I said; "you should worry. When it stops, it stops."

"Well, it better stop pretty soon," he said, "or else—— Here, get hold of this wheel, you kids, and pull."

"Them brakes got about as much bite in 'em as a ki-oodle," the man said; "how old is this old scow? 'Bout a hundred, I guess."

"This old car is all right," I told him; "a scout must have respect for age—page something-or-other-scout handbook. We may be old ourselves some day. What do we care, yo ho?"

He said, "Well, I hope the brakes on your tongue will work better than they do now."

"The pleasure is mine," I told him.

Two of us were pulling away as hard as we could, helping one of the trainmen, two were helping the man on the other platform, and Pee-wee was sleeping peacefully inside with his head on the floor and one of his legs sprawled up over the seat.

As well as I could see, we were rolling merrily along a track that branched away from the main track. I thought that, because I couldn't see the full blaze of the engine's headlight any more, and I knew we were verging away from the railroad.

"Talk about prodigal sons," Westy said; "when this old car gets back home, they ought to kill the fatted calf for it."

"Good night," I told him; "if the fatted calf gets on the track, he'll be killed all right."

"Oh, boys, where do we go from here?" Wig began singing.

But those trainmen didn't seem to think it was much of a joke. All of a sudden, we went rattling through an opening in a fence and I saw a couple of big white things near us.

"They're tents," Westy said.

By now the car was slowing down and pretty soon it stopped right in front of a big dark thing—a kind of a building. If we'd have gone fifty feet more, we'd have bunked our nose right into it.

The trainman said, "That's the craziest old set of brakes I ever saw. You'll have to be contented to stay right here, that's all; twenty-three'll back in after you."

"Contented is our favorite nickname," I told him; "is this Flimdunk, with the fence around it? It's a good idea—the place can't run away. I hope they'll like us."

"Do you think we're intruding?" Westy said.

I guess those trainmen set us down for a lot of idiots. Anyway, they didn't have to tell us so, because we admit it. They said that the brakes were worn off so much that they didn't press hard against the wheels, only sort of gentle, like. They were nice polite brakes.

One of the trainmen said he'd leave us a lantern so we could see to talk; then they went back out through the fence and I could see their lanterns making circles in the dark. Pretty soon we could hear the engine puffing and all of a sudden, it gave a loud,

shrill whistle. It sounded as if the train was coming very slowly up toward the switch, but in about a couple of minutes we could hear it rattling along, farther and farther away, and going faster and faster.

"So long, old flyer," Westy called.

I said, "Listen! Listen to the sound it makes—*tk-ed, tk-ed, tk*——It seems as if it's saying, 'twenty-three for yours,' doesn't it?"

"Skiddo, flyer!" Connie shouted; "anyhow, you were foiled by the Boy Scouts."

That word *foiled* reminded us of Pee-wee, so we went inside and looked at him. I guess the stopping of the car had shaken him up some. His head was way underneath the seat, one of his arms was halfway up on the seat and one of his legs was on the movie outfit in the aisle.

It was a sight for a painter. I mean a sign painter.

CHAPTER XXXII

EXPLORING

"What do you say we explore the neighborhood?" Wig said.

"What do you say we put a block in front of the wheels?" I said. "Safety first."

"This seems to be a kind of a walled city, like China," Connie said. "I can see a kind of a shadow. Do you suppose that's the fence going all the way around?"

"Sure it is," I told him; "all we have to do is shut those big gates and the car will never get away. Only China isn't a city, if anybody should ask you."

"What's the difference?" he said. "Nobody's likely to ask me."

"This is a very mysterious place," Westy said; "I, for one, would like to know where we're at." That's just the nice way he talks. It's caused by his bringing up.

I said, "Oh, dear me, *I for two*, would be delighted to ascertain."

"Where do you think we are?" he said.

"That's easy," I told them; "I know where we are."

"Where are we?" Wig wanted to know.

"We're here," I told him.

"Yes, but what is this?"

"It's a place, that's all I know," Connie piped up.

"Come on, let's wake up the kid," Wig said; "and take a stroll around. It looks to me like a ball field or something like that. Anyway, those are tents over there."

We didn't dare to start out without Pee-wee, so we shook him up and dragged him up and down the aisle and played football with him, and at last he let out a long groan and we knew we had him started.

"Wh-a-a-t—where—am I?" he yawned.

"We were just going to have a game of one o'cat with you," I told him; "wake up, it's twenty years later; the peace treaty has just been signed."

"Who signed it?" he gasped.

"I did," I said; "come on, get up."

If you can once get him on his feet, he usually stays up. I said, "We're in a land of mystery; we've got Alice in Wonderland tearing her hair from jealousy. I think we're in somebody's back yard."

"Where's the train?" he asked.

"It went down the street to get a soda," I said.

That opened his eyes all right. "Can you get sodas around here?" he shouted.

We got hold of a chunk of wood and blocked one of the car wheels and then started out. We couldn't see very well in the dark, but we made out that the high fence went all the way around a great big flat field. There was a kind of a wide road around near the fence. The tracks ran right up under that building that we had seen ahead of us, into a kind of a tunnel. We saw it was an ice-house, and I guess ice was loaded onto cars there.

The two white things that we had seen were tents and there was a light in one of them, but we didn't go in. There were little buildings around, but they were closed up. There was a kind of a big platform with a railing around it. In another place there was a long shed full of cows. There were kind of things like mess boards all around, only some of them were too high for mess boards.

"I give it up," I said

"It's a cross between a barn-yard and a picnic ground," Connie said.

Westy said, "I think it's an aviation field."

"Sure," I told him; "how stupid of me. And the cows are aviators."

"What do you say we follow the fence around?" Westy said.

"What do you say we don't?" I said. "Come on, let's go back and I'll cook some fritters and then we'll get our suits off and have a good sleep, and to-morrow we'll see what we see."

We were all pretty sleepy, so we decided to do that. If we had taken a little hike all the way around near the fence, the terrible thing that I am going to tell you about now, would never have happened. You had better get ready for it, because it's one of the most terrible things that I ever told. When you hear about it, you'll turn cold and your hair will stand up. Even now whenever I think about it, I just shake. That's the word—*shake*.

Yah, hah! You thought I was going to tell it in this chapter, didn't you?

CHAPTER XXXIII

OUR YOUNG HERO

Now it was so dark that we had some trouble finding our car, and before we got to it, we passed a funny kind of a little shack with a high porch in front. It didn't look exactly like a place to live in—gee, I couldn't tell you exactly what it did look like. But anyway, it was all closed up. As we passed it, we heard voices inside, but we were too sleepy and hungry to pay any attention.

All of a sudden our young hero paused and, *you* know, stood riveted to the spot where he stood. Anyway, if he wasn't riveted he was nailed down.

"*Listen! Hark!*" he said.

"We're harking," I said; "what is it?"

"Shh-h," he whispered and held his hand to his ear.

"What's the matter; have you got an earache?" Connie asked him.

"Break it to us gently," I said; "let us hear the worst."

"Shhh, listen!" he said. "Somebody's being killed."

"How tragic!" Wig said.

"It isn't tragic at all," Pee-wee said; "listen——it's true."

"Have it your own way," I told him.

"In that little house," he whispered, all the while going back on tiptoe; "hark—shh."

We all followed him back, giggling, because we had been through things like this before with our boy hero. Believe me, Dauntless Dan of the Dauntless Dan Series has nothing on Scout Harris. In front of the little shack we all stood stark still, listening.

"Do you hear it?" Pee-wee whispered. "It's a bitter struggle."

The first sound that *I* noticed was a sound as if a chair was falling over. Then I heard a man's voice say, "I'll choke you till you tell me. Are you ready to speak?" Then another voice said, "Never!"

Pee-wee said, "Shh, what did I tell you?"

We were all pretty interested by that time. Pretty soon a kind of a high, squeaky voice said, "Do you think I'm afraid of you—you big——" Then it seemed as if the voice was just kind of choked off, because there were stifled cries, sort of, and all the while a gruff voice saying, "Are you ready to take that back? This is your last chance—I'll teach you——" And all the while that other voice kept crying and yelling, and it seemed just as if the person must be struggling.

"It's a child," Westy said, all excited.

"He's strangling it to death," Pee-wee whispered, so scared and excited, that his voice was hoarse. And just then we could hear a long kind of a gurgle and a man's voice saying, "I'll teach you! I'll teach you!" And then the two voices seemed to be mixed up together.

"Wait here," Pee-wee said, and off he started, pell-mell for the tent where there was a light inside.

In ten seconds he was back with a couple of men, and shouting, "*In that shack! In that shack! A man is murdering somebody in that shack! Hurry up!*"

By that time we were all pretty scared, I guess. The two men vaulted up on to the platform and pushed

the door open and we stood outside looking up over the edge of the platform. All of a sudden Westy said, "*What—do—you—know——*"

That was all he could say. He just vaulted up himself with the rest of us after him. And there we all stood in the doorway, only Pee-wee pushed his way inside.

Jiminetty! I almost fell in a fit, I laughed so hard. "Save me," I said to Westy, "before I fall off the platform."

But Westy was laughing too hard to save anybody.

Right there in front of us in a little room, there was a man in his shirt sleeves sitting on the side of a kind of a sleeping bunk. Sitting on one of his knees was one of those big funny-looking dolls with a black face and a big, square mouth that works by a hinge. The doll was straddling the man's knee and one of its legs was dangling down on either side.

"What's the big idea?" the man said.

Both of the other men were laughing so hard, they couldn't speak, but one of them pointed at Pee-wee. Our young hero just stood there, panting, all out of breath, and gaping like an idiot.

"I—I—eh—I didn't know you were a ven—a ven ——-" he blurted out. "I thought you were murdering somebody—I—I did."

The man just looked at him and smiled; then he began to laugh. He said, "I consider that a compliment, my young friend; you're welcome. Sam, tell the young gentleman he is welcome."

The big fancy doll said, "You're welcome." And, gee whiz, it sounded just as if it came out of his own

throat. Pee-wee just stood there staring at Sam, and Sam sat there on the ventriloquist's lap, staring very bold at Pee-wee.

"Tell the young gentleman we were having a rehearsal," the man said; and Sam said, "We were having a rehearsal."

Pee-wee just stood there not saying a word, and gaping at Sam and at the man. All of a sudden we heard a cat meowing right near.

"Look out, you're stepping on the cat," the man said to Pee-wee. Pee-wee moved his feet as if he were in a trance and looked down.

But there wasn't any cat at all.

Gee, that man was a wonder.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE TRAIN

That man's name was Pedro De Vail, and he was French, only he was born in Hoboken. He was the greatest ventriloquist in the whole world. He said so, and gee whiz, he ought to know. Westy said that when he said anything, it counted for a whole lot, because he could say it in half a dozen different voices. But, oh, boy, Pee-wee lost his voice entirely. Anyway, Mr. Pedro said it didn't make any difference, because he had a lot of voices to spare. I

guess he kind of liked Pee-wee.

As long as we were there we made him a call, and I guess he'd be pretty good at stalking, because he could imitate all the animals and birds, and he could make you think he was sawing wood. He said that the place where we were was the Fair Grounds, and that the next day the Firemen's Carnival was going to start there. He said it was going to last three days. He said he always went to County Fairs and Carnivals and things like that. He told us that Flimdunk was about a couple of miles away.

We told him all about our adventures and about the Brewster's Centre car. I said, "As long as we're here, I'm glad of it, because we can take in the Carnival. I hope that train twenty-three doesn't come until late to-morrow; I hope it doesn't come until to-morrow night. Better late than sooner."

He said, "Well, there are going to be big doings to-morrow—races, balloon ascension, murders and everything like that. But I'm afraid you boys are going to be disappointed. There's a train comes through here about four or five in the morning, going east. I think that'll be the one to pick you up."

We went back to our car feeling pretty glum about it. Jiminies, you couldn't blame us. What was the good of being left at a carnival in the middle of the night and taken away again before daylight? That's one thing I don't like about railroads; they do just as they please. They push you and pull you around and take you away again before you want to go.

"Why can't they let us spend Columbus Day here?" Westy wanted to know.

"When did the brakeman say it would come?" Connie asked.

"Hanged if *I* remember," I said; "but I knew how it would be when I heard that the train would be Number Twenty-three. I'll never trust that number."

"And races and everything, too," Wig said.

"Sure, and a balloon ascension," Connie began grouching.

"Maybe he's mistaken," I said; "we've had pretty good fun, anyway."

"You call it fun, starting away just when the fun is going to begin?" Pee-wee piped up.

I guess we didn't know what to think or what to expect. Anyway, I knew that the train that had left us there would telegraph to some place or other about us, that was all I knew. When another train stopped for us, we'd just have to go.

"Anyway, let's have something to eat and turn in," I said; "we'll just have to trust to luck."

One sure thing, we all felt pretty bad, because the next day was a holiday and there'd be lots of fun at that Carnival. I made some rice cakes and then we fixed the seats and turned in.

I don't know how long I had been asleep, but what made me wake up was the whistle of a locomotive. Westy woke up, too, and we both listened.

"It's coming," he said.

"The game is up," I told him.

Pretty soon we were all awake, listening. The train

was backing down along the branch track and coming nearer and nearer to us. We could hear the engine puffing, and the sound of wheels going *ker-lick*, *ker-lick*, as the train backed in very slowly. Gee whiz, I was feeling sore.

"Come on out on the platform," Westy said.

"This railroad makes me sick," Connie grouched.

"Why couldn't they wait until to-morrow night?" Wig wanted to know. "I thought we were going to have a good day's fun."

Out on the platform all we saw was a man sitting on the railing in the dark.

"Where's the pesky old train, anyway?" I said.

"Train?" the man said; "what train?"

Then he just reached forward and ruffled up our young hero's hair.

I was all flabbergasted. "Mr. *Pedro*!" I just blurted out.

"I thought I'd pay you back, that's all," he said.

Oh, boy, couldn't that man imitate a train!

CHAPTER XXXV

THE PROFITEERS

When we went out in the morning the surprise was mutual. Gee, it was *especially* mutual. There was a crowd outside the car, staring up at it. It must have looked funny standing there with BREWSTER'S CENTRE sprawled all over it. There were all kinds of people in that crowd. One of them was a woman who was a fortune teller. She had on a dress with all spangles on it. Her name was Princess Mysteria. I wanted to ask her when the train would come for us and if we'd have any more adventures, but Westy wouldn't let me, because it cost twenty-five cents. He said he'd rather spend the twenty-five cents for licorice jaw-breakers and then we'd *know* what was happening to us. Gee whiz, you don't need any fortune teller after eating licorice jaw-breakers.

All around in that place men were opening booths and putting up tents and getting counters ready, so they could sell peanuts and lemonade and ice-cream cones and canes and fancy glass jars and other things to eat and drink—not canes and glass jars. There was a merry-go-round, too, and it had an organ that played *We're on our way*.

"Jiminies," Westy said; "I don't know where anyone would expect to get to, riding on a merry-go-round."

Pretty soon a man came up to us and asked us how we got there. I guess he was one of the head men of the Carnival.

I said, "Isn't this Flimdunk Siding? We're supposed to stay here until a train picks us up."

He said, "Yes, but this car has no business inside the fence; this is the old ice-house freight siding. They should have left you standing out near the main line."

I said, "Yes, but this car has something to say about it, too, and it wouldn't stop, so here we are. Don't blame us, blame the car. That's the way it is with railroads, they don't care about anybody's rights."

"That ain't the main entrance you came through," he said; "that gate was open so stuff could be brought in on the freight cars."

"It's all the same to us," I told him; "we're here, because we're here."

He said, "Well, you'll have to pay your admission or be put out."

Connie said, "How are you going to put this car out? If you once get it started it may roll all the way back onto the main track and we'll die a horrible death."

"Yes, and then you'll be sorry," Pee-wee said.

The man said, "Well, this car hasn't got any right on the grounds, that's all."

I said, "Mister, I don't know what we can do, unless we get a couple of those elephants from the merry-go-round to drag it away."

Pretty soon two other men came along and they all stood there talking about what they had better do, and we sat on the steps of the platform, listening to them.

"You seem to be live wires, leastways," one of them said.

"Sure," I told him; "we were struck by lightning when we were kids."

Then they whispered together for about a minute

and after that the man who seemed to be a head man said, "Well, as long as the car's here, we'll let it stay here and you youngsters can scamper about and enjoy yourselves. 'Long as the car's standing idle, we'll use it for a concession booth."

They went away talking about it and we started asking each other what they meant, because we were beginning to get a little scared, sort of. We didn't want to give up our car. Pretty soon Mr. Pedro came along and we told him all about it.

He said he was on our side. This is just what he said; he said, "These people are a crew of bandits. Do you know how much I'm paying for that little shanty? Fifty dollars for the three days. Do you know how much the Princess is handing over for the space where she has her little tent? Seventy dollars, cold cash. She says if she'd known it would be anything like that, she'd never have come."

Westy said, "I should think she would have known it, on account of being a fortune teller."

"What they're going to do," he said, "is to turn this car over to that Punch and Judy man and he'll run an indoor show and whack up with them on a fifty per cent basis. Look at *me*? I have to give an outside show and pass the hat. You're in a robbers' den here, boys; they're all profiteers. You take a tip from me and stand on your rights."

"Sure," I said, "and we'll stand on our car platform, too."

He said, "These fellows know your couplings are in bad shape and will have to be fixed before you're taken away. They know you'll be here all day at the

shortest. Why, they're getting twenty cents for a glass of milk down yonder—it's awful. These people will corner the United States currency before the day's over."

Westy said, "But anyway, this car has no right here, we have to admit that."

Mr. Pedro said, "Well, that's a fine legal question and I don't know what the Supreme Court would say about it. As you said, you're here, because you're here. I think that's a pretty strong argument."

"I invented it," Pee-wee shouted.

Mr. Pedro said, "The car has no right here, but you have a right in the car; you're part of the car, see? They can put the car off the grounds (if they know how), but they can't put you out of the car. You can stay in your car and do anything you please in your car, and nobody can stop you. If they start the car they'll have to take the consequences."

"That's what you call technology," Pee-wee shouted; "it's a teckinality.[C] What do you say we give a movie show?"

"Me for some breakfast," I said.

We wrote a couple of notices on pages out of my field book and fixed them on the doors of the car. They said:

"This car is the property of the First Bridgeboro, N. J., Troop B. S. A.

"Trespassing forbidden."

Mr. Pedro came over and told us that if anybody went in that car while we were gone, he'd call up a lawyer in Flimdunk.

As long as we didn't have much left to eat we went over to a shack and got some coffee and doughnuts. *Good night!* The coffee was twenty cents a cup, and the doughnuts were ten cents each. Then we had a ride on the merry-go-round, and after that we had some ice-cream cones. Those cones were fifteen cents each and even the ice cream didn't go down into the cone, like in Bennett's at home.

Westy said, "The biggest part of those doughnuts were the holes in them."

"Sure," I told him; "the price of holes has gone up; it's simply terrible the high price of emptiness."

Wig said, "I was always crazy to see a robbers' cave and now I see one."

We went out through the main entrance, because we wanted to go to Flimdunk and send telegrams to our homes, so our mothers and fathers wouldn't worry.

"It's only a couple of miles," Westy said.

"There's one funny thing about riding on a merry-go-round," Connie started in; "no matter how long a ride you take, you never have to come back."

"That's because you're already back," I told him.

He said, "Yes, but you *go*, don't you?"

"Sure you do," Pee-wee said.

"Then how do you get back without coming back?" Connie shot at him.

"That's technology," I said.

"You make me tired," Pee-wee screamed; "suppose all the time you're going you're coming back, too? Let's see you answer that."

"Oh, that's different," Wig said.

"Just the same as when our young hero flies up in the air," I told them.

"And foils a murderer," Connie said; "tell him he's a cute little boy scout, Sam."

"Do you know what I'd do if I had my way?" Pee-wee shouted.

"How many guesses do we have?" I asked him.

"I'd foil those profiteers, that's what I'd do," he said. "Fifteen cents for a cone! I can get three cones for that."

"And still you wouldn't be satisfied," Westy told him.

"Well, if I had your way with me, I'd give it to you," I told him; "but I left it home on the piano."

"Did you hear what that doughnut-man was saying about overhead expenses?" the kid shouted. "I looked up, but I didn't see any. There wasn't even a roof."

Laugh! I thought I'd fall in a fit.

"You can bet I know an overhead expense when I see one," he said, all the while trudging along the road,

"and there wasn't any there."

"Overhead expenses are inside," Westy said; "they're the expenses of running a business. It might be the price of a carpet for the floor, see?"

"All you need is a pair of white duck trousers and your diploma with a pink ribbon around it," I told him. "Who in the world taught you all that? You must be studying accountancy."

"A whatancy?" Connie asked.

"That shows how crazy you are," Pee-wee yelled; "how can a carpet that you walk on be overhead? Tell me that!"

"That's easy," I told him; "isn't the roof underfoot? You stand on the roof and it's underfoot. Your overhead expenses may be down in the cellar. Just the same as a scout can do a good turn while he's walking straight ahead. Deny it if you dare?"

"You're crazy," Pee-wee fairly screamed.

"I admit it," I told him.

After we had walked a little way, Westy said, "Just the same, Pee-wee's right, the same as he usually isn't. It would be a good stunt for us to foil those profiteers."

"Only we haven't got any tinfoil," I said.

"Shut up, you're the worst of the lot!" Pee-wee yelled at me. "We've got eighteen dollars left from the movie show, haven't we? I say let's buy some flour and sugar and eggs and cinnamon and ink and glue and make tenderflops and *foil* the profiteers; that's what *I* say!"

I said, "If it wouldn't be too much trouble, I'd like to know how you're going to use ink and glue making tenderflops. They'd be kind of sticky, wouldn't they?"

"Sure," Westy said, "and they'd be a kind of a blackish white, using ink."

"He means fountain-pen ink," Connie said, "that's more digestible, it's thinner."

"You're crazy!" the kid yelled. "Wouldn't we have to make signs and glue them up? You can't print with cinnamon or flour, can you? I say let's get all the stuff we need and have Roy make tenderflops and I'll stand on top of the car and shout that they're all smoking hot, and for everybody to be sure to get them for they're only the small sum of two for a cent. I just happened to think of it," he said, "it's an insulation."

"You mean inspiration," Westy said.

"You know what I mean," Pee-wee hollered.

"Suppose you should flop off the top of the car?" I asked him, because there's no telling what may happen when Pee-wee gets to shouting.

"We'd charge extra for that," Connie said.

FOOTNOTE:

[C] Technicality is probably what was meant.

CHAPTER XXXVI

A FRIEND IN NEED

Now I'll tell you about tenderflops, because I'm the only one that goes to Temple Camp who knows how to make them. I guess you know what a tenderfoot is; it's a new scout. He's supposed to be tender, see? So a tenderflop is a flip-flop that's named after a tenderfoot, because it's supposed to be tender. There are no such things as tough scouts, so of course, there can't be any such things as tough tenderflops. That's what you call logic.

Now the way that you make tenderflops is with flour and salt and water and cinnamon. You can use eggs if you want to, but you don't have to. Once I tried peanut butter in them, but they weren't much good. If you put a little maple syrup in, that makes them sweet. Once I made some at home when Charlie Danforth was there and I put wintergreen in, and my sister Marjorie said that was the reason he never came any more. Cinnamon is better; safety first.

Now the way I usually do is, just when they're frying and beginning to get kind of nice and toasted, sort of, I press my scout badge down on them and that makes a kind of a trade mark on them. It says BE PREPARED. That's our motto. It doesn't mean anything about the tenderflops.

In about an hour, back we came along the road with a big bag of flour and a bag of salt and a couple of big jugs of maple syrup and some cinnamon. We had on scout smiles, too.

"Down with profiteering," Connie shouted.

"Pee-wee forever!" I said. "Hurrah, for Hoover, Junior! Food will kill the profiteers, don't taste it—I mean waste it."

We had to pay admission fees to get in, but what did *we* care? We knew the government was on our side, because wasn't the government arresting profiteers?

Believe me, we had some triumphal march across the grounds to our car. I had a bag of flour over my shoulder and my jacket was all white and my face, too. I guess I looked like a clown. I should worry. The cinnamon made the smallest bundle, but we had Westy carry it, because Pee-wee likes cinnamon. Safety first. We had Pee-wee carry the glue, because if he ate that, it would only stick his mouth shut. Believe *me*, we were some parade.

There were a lot of automobiles parked outside the grounds by that time, and the place was filled with people. The animals on the merry-go-round were running away as fast as they could, and girls were screaming for fear they'd fall off—you know how they always do. There were men shouting for people to come and see their shows for a dime, ten cents, and there were shooting galleries and everything. Sandwiches were thirty cents and the bread on them was stale, because Wig bought one. There was a brass band playing, too.

A lot of people were looking up at our car; I guess they were wondering about it; and just as we were pushing through the crowd, a couple of the head men came down off the platform and one of them said:

"What are you going to do with all that stuff, you boys?"

Westy said, "We're going to make cakes and sell them. We're going to do it inside the car."

We all just laid down our bundles and stood around, kind of scared and disappointed. But anyway, the people who were standing around saw that we were scouts, and most all of them were smiling at us.

The man said, "Well, I guess you've got another guess. You just pack that stuff in there, and go about your business if you don't want to get into a heap of trouble. We'll look after this car."

I guess Westy was kind of flabbergasted, so I spoke up and said, "We've got a right inside of our own car. We've got a right to cook in there if we want to. What harm does that do? Haven't we got a right to try to reduce the cost of living? If you want to start this car going, go ahead and do it, but I tell you beforehand that the brakes don't work. And you can keep off of our car, too."

The man said I was an impudent little some-thing-or-other, and he was just starting to pick up the bag of flour when, good night, all of a sudden a little man stepped out from the crowd. All I noticed about him was that he had a cigar in his mouth and his hat was kind of on the side. But, oh, boy, I heard his voice good and plain.

He said, "Look here, *you*. What's all this trouble about? You mustn't think you can browbeat these boys, because you *can't*. See? I'm telling you the law and you can take it or leave it just as you like. If you've got any kick, go to the railroad. If you're not satisfied to wait until this car goes away, start it going. You stand between those two tracks or on the platform of that car, and you're on the property of

the United States Railroad Administration. I'm a lawyer and I'm telling you that. It's you that happens to be here, not these boys. Here's a crowd of people being fleeced—eating sandwiches that aren't fit to throw to a dog and drinking red lemonade that would die of shock if it saw a lemon. Twenty cents for a cup of coffee that they ought to pay me a dollar for drinking! Now you boys just climb aboard and let's see what you can do. You've got the American people in back of you. I've heard about you scouts; now let's see what you can do. Get aboard and get busy. You're here, because you're here——"

"That's just what we said," Pee-wee shouted.

"All right," the man said; "climb up and I'll take care of the legal end of it. I'm for the Boy Scouts to the last ditch. I once tried a case just like this. Let 'em talk to the car. Climb up and see what you can. I don't believe you know how to boil water!"

He just sat down on the lowest step of the platform and stuck his hat on the side of his head awfully funny, and lighted his cigar. Everybody began laughing. The people were all on our side, that's one sure thing, anyway.

CHAPTER XXXVII

TENDERFLOPS AND OTHER FLOPS

"He's right," Pee-wee whispered to me; "that's a good

argument. Because if a thing is somewhere where it shouldn't be, if it isn't there on purpose, why then if somebody gets into it that doesn't belong on that place, but belongs in it, he's trespassing just as much, because anyway, if he took it away it wouldn't be there. See?"

"Absolutely, positively," I told him. "It's as clear as mud."

"Reduce it to a common denominator," Westy said. That fellow is always thinking about school.

"We should bother our heads," I said. "Here we are; even the Supreme Court couldn't deny that."

"They don't have to deny it, we admit it," Connie said.

"We'll stand on our rights!" Pee-wee shouted. "We'll stand on our he——"



PEE-WEE WAS SHOUTING ON THE ROOF OF THE CAR —"THEY'RE ALL RED HOT!"
Roy Blakeley's Camp on Wheels. Page 207

"Sure, we'll stand on our heads," Wig said. "Anything to please you."

"Our hereditary rights!" the kid yelled.

"All right, get up and stand on the top of the car," I told him, "and shout. We'll do the rest."

We made a paper hat for the kid and tied a towel around his waist for an apron, because we wanted him to look like a chef. I gave him a saucepan from Westy's kit and told him to wave it around while he was talking, because I thought, kind of, it might make the people hungry.

Pretty soon we could hear him marching back and forth on the roof of the car, and shouting at the top of his lungs. Even before I got the stove hot there was a big crowd standing all around outside, laughing.

He kept shouting, "*Here they are! They're all smoking hot! The celebrated Boy Scout tenderflops! Flopped by the only original Boy Scout flopper! They're one cent each! Eat one and you'll never eat another—I mean you'll never eat anything else! O-o-o-o-oh! They're all red hot! The kind we eat around the camp-fire! Only one cent! None genuine unless stamped BE PREPARED! The famous scout tenderflops! They melt in your mouth! They MELT in your MOUTH!*"

"Good night!" I said to the fellows; "listen to him."

By that time I was frying them six at a clip, while Connie and Wig and Westy were passing them around on pieces of board and scooping in the money. All of a sudden I heard Pee-wee's voice; it seemed to be in the stove. I opened the lid and heard him calling down the stovepipe, "Send me some up here so I can be eating them; it'll make the people hungry."

"That's a good idea," Wig said; "let's all be eating them, and let's look kind of happy every time we take a bite. It pays to advertise."

We passed a saucepan full of them up to Pee-wee and charged them up to advertising. Westy said, "That's what you call overhead expense."

Believe me, that kid was some overhead expense, all right.

"You have to demonstrate," he shouted down.

"You're a pretty good demonstrator," a man called up to him.

I was laughing so hard I could hardly fry the cakes fast enough. There was a big crowd outside, just scrambling for them, and we had Westy's aluminum coffee-pot about half full of pennies. Up on the car, Pee-wee was strutting up and down, waving the saucepan with one arm and holding a cake in his other hand and shouting, "*O—oh, to taste one! Just to TASTE one! Watch me eat one! Mm-mmm! They're one cent each! None genuine unless stamped BE PREPARED!* Send up some more, you fellows!"

After a little while we stopped to rest, and we asked Mr. Pedro to come in and have lunch with us. In the afternoon we went around the grounds and had some rides on the merry-go-round and tried our luck throwing baseballs at a negro man. I won a Japanese doll. We found out that the price of sandwiches had gone down to ten cents. Waffles were selling two for a cent and going begging—that's what a man told us. He said crullers were off the market. The coffee-man wanted to buy tenderflops wholesale from us, but we wouldn't sell him any. Believe me, we had all the visitors at that place eating out of our hands—that's no joke either; it's true.

About four o'clock I mixed up all the stuff we had

left. Already we had eight dollars and we had only spent about four. So we had over four dollars' profit. It would have been bigger, except for the overhead expense. It costs a lot to advertise.

On toward evening the crowd was even bigger. That was because everybody was telling everybody else to see the Boy Scouts selling stamped cakes from their private car. We were a what-do-you-call-it—an institution.

All of a sudden came the grand climax. I was just laying the last tenderflops on the boards and trying to scrape enough stuff out of the pan to make just two or three more, when I saw a wagon stop right alongside the car. Oh, please excuse me a minute while I laugh!

Now we had seen that wagon most all afternoon, because a man was using it to cart sawdust from the ice-house and sprinkle it on the race-track. I suppose he did that on account of the races which were going to be at five o'clock.

Anyway, he got down from his wagon and came over to the platform and said, "Let's try a couple of them floperetts I'm hearin' so much about."

I said, "Is this your last load?"

He said yes, it was, and that after he got it sprinkled on the track, he was coming back for more floperetts —that was what he called them.

That man ate a whole board full and I called up to Pee-wee, "There isn't any more batter, so we're on the home stretch. Shout good and loud and tell them it's their last chance."

Just at that very minute I heard a locomotive whistle.

"Good night," I said; "I bet it's twenty-three for us."

"What's the difference?" Westy said; "there's no more batter, anyway, and I'm tired out."

"We have a coffee-pot full of money," I told him.

After I had fried the last tenderflop, I went outside to take a good rest. It was hot working over that stove. Up on the car, Pee-wee was stamping back and forth, waving the pan and screaming for all he was worth.

"Look!" I said to the fellows; "just take one look at him. Get your kodak, Westy."

"*Only a few more left!*" Pee-wee was yelling. "*One cent while they last! None genuine*——and so on, and so on.

By that time I could see a freight train backing in toward us. It was coming very slow and a couple of men from it were running ahead to open the gates. It just crept along—hardly moved. There were men on top and one turning the brake handle.

One of them called out, "Watch your step there, you kid!"

"*They're all smoking hot!*" Pee-wee yelled, and never paid any attention to him.

"Brace your feet, Sonny," the man shouted.

Pee-wee didn't pay any attention, just kept marching up and down, waving the pan and yelling, "*There are no more tenderflops to be flopped! Your last chance! Get a flop*——"

And then, good morning sister Jane, there was just a

little bunk and there was Pee-wee swinging the saucepan and trying to balance himself on one leg.

"*Get—get a flop*——" he was shouting.

And then, all of a sudden, around he went, and off the roof, *kerflop* into the load of sawdust.

It was the end of a perfect day.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ALL ABOARD

The sawdust was all wet on account of there being ice in that ice-house, and it stuck all over our young hero's clothes and face, so he looked as if he were covered with very coarse sandpaper.

We hauled him out and stood him up, saucepan and all. Even he had a tenderflop with a big bite out of it in one hand, and it was all covered with wet sawdust like some new kind of frosting. The crowd went crazy. I thought one of those trainmen would have a fit, he laughed so hard.

I said, "Never mind, Kid, you died for a good cause; only don't open your mouth, or you'll swallow about a quart of sawdust."

Oh, boy, it makes me laugh whenever I think of it. Westy had a headache from laughing. His mother said it was from eating tenderflops, but *I* was the one

that heard him laugh.

Anyway, that was the end of our adventures.

We cleaned our young hero up and brushed him off, but every time he spoke that night, he said he tasted sawdust.

The train people fixed our coupling and in about an hour we were rolling merrily out through the gates on the end of that long freight train. I guess it couldn't have been Number Twenty-three, because nothing happened. Anyway, I bet the profiteers were glad to get rid of us. Pee-wee said we "dealt them a mortal blow." Westy said we "felled them to the ground with a frying pan."

Anyway, we had twenty-seven dollars, counting what we made out of the movie show, and not counting the fifty that Mr. Temple had sent us. That wasn't so bad when you remember that we had only forty-two cents when we started.

Sometime that night we were left in the freight yards at Jersey City, but we were all too sleepy to notice anything. Anyway, what's the use of being awake when you're in Jersey City. Early in the morning, a Northern local picked us up, and pretty soon we were rattling along the shore of our own river. You can bet it looked good to us. At about half-past seven, we were left on the sidetrack near the Bridgeboro Station.

"All the commuters will be coming down for the seven fifty-two," Wig said "Let's get up on the roof and give them a Scout Sing."

It looked good, after that crazy trip, to see all the things that we knew so well. There was Bennett's

candy store, and there was the Royal Movie Theatre just around the corner. Pretty soon people began straggling along for the seven fifty-two, and a lot of them stood about, gaping at our car with its sign.

> Buffalo 398 Mls.—BREWSTER'S CENTER—N. Y. 30 Mls.

So we all got up on the roof and sat there in a row, singing. People down below waved to us and Connie's father shouted hello to us, but we got to singing so loud, we couldn't hear all the things that people said. Everybody down there knew us, and we knew they knew we were crazy, so we didn't care.

"*All together!*" Wig said.

"*Go!*" Connie shouted.

"We started out to wander,
We never meant to roam;
We went, because we went,
And now we're home, we're home.
We're going to go to school, oh, joy!
But we're not in a hurry;
We've got twenty-seven dollars and a railroad car;
WE SHOULD WORRY!"

THE END

Transcriber's note

The following changes have been made to the text:

Page 156: "Just as we go our feet" changed to "Just as we got our feet".

Page 206: "him. "it's as clear" changed to "him. "It's as clear".

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ROY BLAKELEY'S CAMP ON WHEELS ***

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