

FICTION

Edward Sylvester Ellis

The Boy Patrol on Guard

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION



The Balmy Afternoon Passed Rapidly

THE BOY PATROL SERIES

The Boy Patrol On Guard

BY

EDWARD S. ELLIS

Author of "The Flying Boys Series,"

"The Launch Boys Series,"

"The Deerfoot Series," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

EDWIN J. PRITTIE

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Dedication

Without asking permission, and as a partial recognition of the example set by them in their daily lives, walk and conversation, I have taken the liberty of dedicating these volumes to

George Albert ("Bert") Hall Scout Master of Blazing Arrow Patrol, Troop 2 and his Boy Scouts, Charles A. Chase, Patrol Leader; George Robe, Corporal; Kenneth Henke, Kenneth Mitchell, Robert Snow, Ernest Oberlander, Colgate Craig, Robert Rice, Hubert Wood and Harold Hopkins.

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CHAPTER I--A Prospective Tenderfoot

One bright sunshiny day in the summer of 1912, a boy some seventeen years old awoke to the fact that he had lost his way in the depth of the woods of southern Maine.

He was a sturdy Irish youth, with red hair, freckled face, a fine set of teeth, an exhaustless fund of good nature, humor and wit, of pugnacious temperament, like so many of his people, but so truthful and chivalrous that every one with whom he came in contact speedily grew to like him.

Now, if you have *idled* your time in reading my "Launch Boys" stories, you will recall this lad, Mike Murphy by name, for they gave a pretty full record of his adventures on the Kennebec and along its shores. In order to make clear the incidents that follow I must add a few words of explanation.

Mike, as you may recall, was gifted with a voice of marvelous purity and sweetness. His singing of several Irish songs on the steamer crossing the Atlantic enthralled the listeners and so roused the admiration of a famous prima donna that she offered to prepare him for the operatic stage, but there was nothing attractive in such a career to the modest lad. He preferred the simple life with its invigorating ozone and freedom. During the winter months he was one of the most regular attendants at the school in Boothbay Harbor, where, under the skilful tutelage of Professor Herbert E. Bowman, he made rapid progress in his studies. So with warm thanks to the distinguished songstress, he passed up the proposition.

Mike's father was caretaker for the millionaire capitalist, Gideon Landon, of New York, who had built a fine bungalow on the southern end of Southport Island, where the Irishman, his wife and the son Mike dwelt in a cottage near the large structure. A little way to the south was the home of Chester Haynes in a bungalow less pretentious than the other. Alvin Landon and Chester Haynes were chums, the former being the owner of a splendid launch, the *Deerfoot*, in which the three boys met with more than one stirring adventure. Although Mike knew nothing about the management of a boat, Alvin made him his first mate, and thus opened the way for the experiences that have been related elsewhere.

Hardly had the summer's sport begun for the three boys with their motor boat, when the machinery broke down disastrously. It was plain that the craft would have to go to the repair shops in Portland before it could be of any further use to them. Accordingly, it was towed to that city, with the natural request that work should be rushed. The reply came back that there was such a congestion in the shops that it would require two or three weeks to complete the job. You know what that always means. The time is sure to be much longer than named, and it may be said the boys knew such would be the fact. It was a keen disappointment to them, but there was no help for it and they accepted the situation like true philosophers.

This incident, trifling of itself, brought consequences to our young friends of which none of them dreamed. Alvin and Chester while at home had become interested in the admirable Boy Scout organization, and had joined the Blazing Arrow Patrol, of which their old friend "Bert Hall" was Scout Master. He was arranging for an outing in the Adirondacks with the Stag and Eagle Patrols, when the plan was changed for reasons that will soon be explained. Their destination became Gosling Lake in southern Maine, a few miles back in the woods from the Kennebec River.

Alvin and Chester decided to bear them company as tenderfeet. They provided themselves with natty uniforms, and, knowing the size required for Mike, sent a suit by express to him with the request that he should join them in the hike to the cool twilight of the pine woods.

"It would never do to go without him," said Alvin; "he will be the life of the camp and will make a model Boy Scout."

"The hardest task will be to cure him of his love for fighting," added Chester; "he can get up a first class shindy in ten minutes, no matter where he is placed."

"There won't be anything of the kind with the Scouts, for it is impossible; they are taught to detest fighting and Mike is always so chivalrous that he is never the aggressor. I prophesy there won't be a more peaceable boy in camp than he."

"It is to be hoped so," commented Chester with a dubious shake of his head.

When the garments arrived Mike was mystified. He lifted them out of the box and held them up for the inspection of himself and parents. His father took his pipe from his mouth, squinted an eye as if aiming a gun and gravely remarked:

"It's a Sunday suit meant fur *me*,--there's no doubt of the same."

"Ye're mistook, dad, as much as ye were last night whin ye picked up that red hot coal thinking it was a cold pratie. The garments are intinded either for mither or mesilf, as will be told whin we try 'em on."

It cannot be denied that Mike looked "nifty" in his uniform, which fitted him as if he had been melted and poured into it. The hat was of olive-drab felt, with eyelets in the crown for ventilation and enough stiffness to keep its shape;

breeches of olive-drab khaki cut full and with legs laced below the knee and with belt guides and pockets; leggings or puttees of waterproof army duck; poncho; shirt of olive-drab flannel with two bellows pockets, open front, coat style; coat of same material as breeches, with four bellows pockets, straight collar, dull metal buttons with Boy Scout emblem; an ordinary belt; shoes, broad, high and strong and of soft tan leather; a haversack of waterproof canvas, with leather straps, buckles and separate pockets, scout emblem on the flap--these were the chief garments in which Mike Murphy carefully arrayed himself. He turned slowly around as if on a pivot for his parents to admire. At the same time, he strove to twist his head about so as to gain a view of the rear, but it cannot be said his effort was successful.

"It is strange that the lad didn't find any word of explanation," remarked the father, after a search in the box and the different pockets failed to bring anything in the nature of a letter to light.

"He may have sent it through the mail--begorra! how come I to find it?"

"What's the matter with ye?" asked the mother as her son leaped to the chair over which he had hung his discarded clothes and began a vigorous fumbling of them. From the hip pocket of his trousers he drew a creased and soiled envelope, glanced at it and handed it to his father.

"Is that your name written on the same?"

The astonished parent turned it over, held it off and then drew it closer.

"If my name is Patrick Murphy the letter is for me, for that is what is written on the outside. How long have you been toting that about the country?"

Mike reflected for a moment.

"To-day is Wednesday; let me think,--yes, it was last Monday morning that I was handed the letter by the postmaster at Boothbay Harbor,--he being afraid to trust you with the same, for fear you would not give it to yourself."

"Why didn't you hand it to me before this?"

"I forgot, dad, as Tim O'Shaughnessy said after moving back the well curb and then slipping down the well. Shall I spell out the words for you?" asked Mike as his father ran his stubby finger under the flap of the letter and ripped it apart.

"If you think you're able to know writing, you may try your hand."

Mike unfolded the slip and read aloud the contents. The letter was from Alvin Landon and had been mailed before the uniform was sent. All would have gone right had the missive been addressed to Mike, but Alvin, with his fine sense of propriety, had written directly to the parent, asking consent for his son to spend several weeks with the Boy Scouts in camp on Gosling Lake. There was no question in the writer's mind as to such permission being granted.

Following this request were some sentences for Mike himself. After directing him how to reach the sheet of water, Alvin added:

"Chester and I have become 'Tenderfeet' as they are called, which is the lowest grade among the Boy Scouts. Your name has been proposed by us and we see no reason why you should not be accepted. But before that can take place, you must pass the examination, which with some studying I am sure you will be able to do. It isn't likely you can find any one at Southport or Boothbay Harbor to help you, nor is it necessary. What you must know is:

"The Scout law, sign, salute and meaning of the badge (Chester and I can teach you that in a few minutes); the composition and history of our country's flag and the usual forms of respect due it. (This is learned as easily as the other); and you must be able to tie four of the following knots: square or reef, sheet-bend, bowline, fisherman's, sheepshank, halter, clove hitch, timber hitch or two half-hitches.

"I think you told Chester and me that on your trip across the ocean you made friends with several of the sailors, who taught you how to tie a number of knots. If this is so, you will have no trouble on that score. So you see you have not much preparation to make. I tell you, Mike, this is the finest thing of the kind in the world and is just what you need. You will have plenty of fun, which you know is your chief aim in life, with a fair prospect of becoming a gentleman (I trust).

"We expect to reach Gosling Lake in time to get into our quarters on Wednesday and shall look for you to be there to help us with our work."

"And this is Wednesday morning!" repeated Mike in dismay; "what have the poor boys done without me to give them suggestions?"

"They have done a good deal better than had you been with them," replied his mother; "being you have delayed so long, it's best you bide at home."

With a start Mike looked at her, but the twinkle in her blue eyes showed from which parent the son inherited most of his waggishness.

"I must be off," said he, springing to his feet. He would have been out of the house the next minute had not his father checked him.

"Show a little sinse even if ye niver had any; ate a big maal, which ye can do at any time no matter if it be in the middle of the night; put some money and yer knife, watch and compass in yer pocket. Take that buckthorn shillalah, with which I have cracked many a hid at Donnybrook; then hie ye to Boothbay Harbor and hire some one to take ye to the right spot up the Sheepscoot and then thramp through the woods, as ye have been towld to do to Gosling Lake, comporting yersilf like a gintleman, and not make yer father and mither ashamed of ye as ye have done many a time."

This counsel was so wise that the impulsive youth could not object. Despite the completeness of his uniform and equipments more than one thing was lacking. He needed toilet articles, a change of underclothing, needles, thread and a number of trifling conveniences, which a thoughtful mother never forgets.

Thus it came about that early in the afternoon Mike walked to Southport and there boarded the little steamer *Norman II*, and soon thereafter landed at Boothbay Harbor, full of eager expectancy, and little dreaming of the remarkable experience that awaited him.

CHAPTER II--Lost In the Woods

At Boothbay Harbor, Mike Murphy hired Sherb Doloff to take him in his small motor boat *Sunshine* to Hailstone Point. It was the season when the days are long, and the sun was only a little past meridian as the small boat chug-chugged up beside the projecting finger of land and the eager Mike leaped ashore.

"There isn't any path on this side of the point," said Captain Doloff, "but you can't miss your way. A few miles through the woods and you'll be there."

"Have no worriment for me; I'm not the bye to go astray, even if the country *is* new," was the confident reply of Mike, who, having paid the young man the fee agreed upon, bade him good-bye and plunged into the fragrant pine forest. He carried no firearms, not even his revolver,—a fact which caused him no misgiving, since it seemed impossible that he should run into any personal danger. This was not the section of Maine frequented by wild animals, and though there were a few Indians, here and there, all were civilized and they attract no more interest than those of the Caucasian race. A tramp of several miles on such a balmy day was enjoyable when there was just a tinge of crispness in the air to remind one that autumn was only a few weeks away. The pine cones and moss, and the many years' accumulation of decaying foliage formed a spongy carpet, upon which the shoe pressed without giving back any sound, and made walking the pleasantest sort of gentle exercise.

Mike carried the heavy buckthorn cane which his father had brought with him from Ireland, but he did not need its aid. He twirled it as an officer dallies with his swagger stick and sang snatches of song in that wonderfully sweet voice, which no one could hear without being charmed. Of course it was impossible for the lad to be unaware of his amazing gift in this respect, and you have been told of some of the occasions when he used it for the delight of others. He frequently sang for his father and mother, and again, as in the present instance, the low delightful humming was for his own pleasure, since one of the blessed peculiarities of music is that it requires no "witnesses" for its perfect enjoyment.

Still, as has also been shown, Mike was never forward in displaying his unrivaled voice. Many a time he had listened to the singing of others and joined in the applause without a single one of the audience suspecting how infinitely superior he was to the foremost of the company, nor did Mike ever enlighten them.

With all his waggishness and pugnacity, he was devout in his religious belief and had won the commendation more than once of the priests at home, who knew all about him.

"I wonder why the Lord is so good to me," he reflected with reverent emotion; "there ain't a meaner rapscaillon in creation than me, and yet He treats me as if I were a twin brother to Alvin and Chester and lots of other folks. I must try to remember all this, but I'm sartin to forget it on the first chance that comes to me.

"Now, about those Boy Scouts,—I wonder what they are; I never heard of 'em before; I s'pose they call themselves Scouts 'cause they're always scouting for a row, and kick up a shindy whenever they git the chance. I'll try to do me part, as I always did in the owld country, and since I set fut in Ameriky."

Giving rein to his mental whimsies, Mike strolled forward until certain he had traveled the full distance. He halted and looked around. Several times a half dozen crows, perched in the treetops, catching sight of him dived away with loud cawing warnings to their comrades of an intrusion into their domain of a foe to be feared, but thus far he had noted no other species of birds. Now, however, when he peered upward through an opening among the branches, he saw a black speck gliding across the thin azure and vanishing in the ocean of ether beyond. It was an eagle, soaring so far aloft that its piercing vision had no knowledge of the tiny form thousands of feet below amid the firs and pines.

"Gosling Lake," repeated Mike; "I must be near the same, as dad remarked whin his friend Jim Muldoon cracked his head wid the shillalah, but I obsarve it not."

He listened keenly but caught no distinctive sound. The soft, almost inaudible murmur which is never absent in a wide stretch of forest, or when miles inland from the breathing ocean, brooded in the air and has been called the "voice of silence" itself.

Thus far the youth had not felt the slightest misgiving, and even now he was sure there was no cause for alarm. If he was astray it could not be for long. He was not far from some of the numerous towns and villages in that section, and if he could not find the Boy Patrol camp, he surely would not have to search far before coming upon friends. If the waning afternoon should find him in the woods, it would be no special hardship to pass the night under the trees, though he did not fancy the prospect and did not mean to stay out unless necessity compelled.

None the less it dawned upon him for the first time that his task was not likely to be as easy as he had supposed. Only an experienced woodsman can hold to a mathematical line in the trackless wilderness, which was what he must do to reach the camp of the Boy Patrol.

"It would be no task if there was a path or road, and I was sitting in an automobile, with my hand on the steering gear or directing the *Deerfoot* up the Kennebec, or if the byes had put up guide posts, which the same I'll remind them to do."

If there was one thing regarding which Mike felt certain it was that he had kept to a straight course after stepping ashore from the launch; but if such were the fact, how could it be explained that he had traveled all of this distance, and yet, so far as appearances went, was as far from his goal as when he started?

"It's more than I can understand, as Maggie Keile said when her taylor told her 'queue' spelled 'q.' Now, if I could come upon the tracks of some person it would be all that I could ask--and begorra! here they be!"

Looking down at the ground, his eyes rested upon the very thing he wished to see: there was the impression visible in the soft leaves. Scarcely a rod from where he was standing was a yielding patch of moss where the trail showed with clearness. The outline of the broad sole of a shoe could be plainly traced until it became more obscure on the drier leaves. Mike stepped nearer and studied the "signs."

"Now, that fellow knewed where he wanted to go, and not being such a fool as me, he's gone there. All I have to do is to keep to the course he took and I'll come out somewhere. I'll stick close, as the fly paper said to me when I sat down on it."

Not doubting that he had found the key to the problem, all anxiety vanished. It was not to be supposed that the individual who had preceded him was ignorant of the woods and the quickest ways of emerging from them. Mike even figured on coming upon him with the appearance of accident, and of keeping from him his own need of assistance in going to the Boy Patrol camp.

"It may be they've been here so short a time that he hasn't observed the same, but Gosling Lake has been in these parts a good many years, and he'll be sure to know where it is. I'll draw it out of him as if I don't care much."

The youth had not forgotten that simplest of all expedients which is the first to come to an astray person. This was to shout at the top of his voice. More than likely he would be heard at the Boy Scout camp, and if not there, by the stranger whom he was trailing. But he was not ready to admit that he really needed help, and to ask for assistance would be a confession that he was frightened for his own safety. He would be ashamed to appear in such a plight, and Alvin and Chester would be sure to make the most of it. What more humiliating than to be introduced to a lot of strangers as one who did not know enough to travel a few miles through the woods without some person to lead him by the hand?

"Not yet," he muttered, compressing his lips with resolve. "I wonder whether the Boy Scouts can tell by looking at a person's footprints whether they were made an hour or a month ago. Howsumiver, I don't see that it makes any difference here. He must have gone this way sometime and all I have to do is to follow him till I come upon him or the place where he went, which will serve as well."

Less than half an hour later, the trailer abruptly halted with another wondering exclamation. Again he had come upon a velvety bed of moss, where he looked upon the imprint, not of one pair but of two pairs of shoes. They were side by side, with one set of impressions as distinct as the other, and all looking so much alike that Mike was struck with an absurd fancy.

"It can't be that the man has grown four legs or is creeping along with shoes on his hands as well as his feet. Each print looks more like the others than it does like itself---"

A shiver ran down his spine and he gasped. He recoiled a step, scrutinized the footprints, and then advanced and compared them with what he had first come upon.

"Beggorra! it was meself that made 'em all!"

It was the astounding truth. He was trailing himself. Instead of moving in a straight line as he believed he had been doing from the first, he had been walking--at least during the latter part of his tramp--in a circle. You know that when a person is lost in a trackless waste he is almost sure to do this, unless he is a master of woodcraft or uses the utmost precaution against going astray.

Many explanations of this peculiar tendency have been given, but it is probably due to the fact that one side of every man and woman is more developed and stronger than the other. A right-handed man is more powerful on that side, and the reverse is the case with a left-handed person. Very few are ambidextrous. We unconsciously allow for this condition in our daily walks and movements, since we are surrounded by landmarks as may be said; but when these aids are removed, we are swayed by the muscles on one side more than by those on the other. A right-handed person unconsciously verges to the left, while the left-handed one does the opposite. The impulse being uniform, even if slight, his course naturally assumes the form of a circle.

It was hardly to be expected that Mike Murphy should reason out this explanation, for he had never before experienced anything of the kind. So far as woodcraft was concerned he could not have been more ignorant. He removed his hat,

ran his fingers through his abundant red hair and laughed, for he could not close his eyes to the comical absurdity of it all.

"It's a mighty qu'ar slip, as me cousin said whin he started to go up stairs and bumped down cellar, and be the same token Mike Murphy is lost to that extent in these Maine woods that he'll niver find his way out till some one takes his hand and leads him like a blind beggar.

"There must be some plan to figger the thing out," he added, as he replaced his hat. "I've heerd that there be many signs that do guide one when he's off the track. Alvin once told me he had heard an old hunter say that there's more bark on one side of a tree than the ither, but I disremember whether it was the east or west or north or south side, and I can't strip off the bark to measure it, so that idea will do me no good. Then I've heerd that the tops of some of the trees dip the most toward a certain p'int of the compass, but I don't mind me whether the same are apple trees or pear trees or some ither kind, and which is the side they nod their heads on. Ah, why did I forgit it?"

He drew forth his small mariner's compass and eagerly studied the dancing needle.

"That little finger ought to p'int to the north, but it don't!" he added disgustedly, noting that the flickering bit of steel, instead of indicating the ornamented "N," fixed upon the "SSW" almost opposite. He did not know that the needle is always "true to the Pole," and that all he had to do was to shift the case around so as to make it correspond. It was beyond his comprehension.

His only recourse--if it should prove a recourse--was to call for help. Peering around among the shaggy columns of bark, without seeing the first sign of life, he shouted in the voice which, clear as the tone of a Stradivarius violin, penetrated farther than even he supposed among the forest arches:

"Hello!"

He was thrilled almost instantly by the welcome reply:

"Hello!"

CHAPTER III--The Hermit of the Woods

The reply to Mike's hail was so prompt that he thought it was the echo of his own voice. He looked in the direction whence the answer came, and, seeing nothing to account for it, shouted:

"I observed 'Hello!' and I take it kindly that ye did the same," and he added to himself: "Now, Mr. Echo, let me see what ye can do with them words."

The response was unexpected and startling. Nothing was heard, but a man came into sight among the pines and walked with slow, steady step straight toward the astonished lad, his keen eyes fixed inquiringly upon the youth, as if uncertain of his nature.

The person was tall, thin, slightly stoop-shouldered and certainly well past the age of three-score and ten. His straggling hair and abundant beard, which descended over his chest like a fleecy veil, were as white as snow. The nose was well formed, inclined to Roman, and his gray eyes under the shaggy grizzled brows were of piercing intensity. He grasped a long crooked staff in his right hand, the top rising a foot above his head, and used the stick for a cane in walking. He wore no hat or covering of any kind for his crown, but his attire was a suggestion of a Norfolk coat such as Scout Masters wear. It was buttoned down the front and closed about the waist by a girdle or belt of the same material, which was olive-drab cotton cloth, with two pleats before and behind. Although the garment was well worn it was clean and unfrayed. The trousers of the same kind of cloth reached to the top of the coarse, strong shoes. Under the coat was a dark flannel shirt, though it scarcely showed because of the closed garment and the beard curtain.

"I wonder if he intends to walk over me," mused Mike, as he met the steady gaze and held his position; "it looks that way."

A half dozen paces away, however, the old man abruptly halted, stared and remained silent. Mike raised his hand and made a military salute.

"With me compliments and best wishes and many of the same."

"Try that again, young man," said the stranger in a mellow voice, "you didn't do it properly."

"I did the best I know how," replied the astonished Mike, "and I was thinking it couldn't be much improved upon."

"None the less it is wrong."

"If ye'll be after instructing me it's mesilf that will try to do you justice."

"Are you not a Boy Scout?"

"Not just yit, though I'm hoping to honor the Scouts by allowing the same to put my name on their roll."

"Why then do you wear their uniform?"

"Would ye have me take it off and wear the rigimintals I was born in? I'd be feared of the scratches from the bushes, though I should like to be obliging."

"Are you on your way to the Boy Patrol camp?"

"That's me distination, as me uncle said whin he looked down at the ground as he was falling from a balloon."

"You are walking away from instead of toward it. The Boy Patrols are two miles to the rear."

"I don't wish to drop down on 'em too quick; ye have heard of sudden joy killing a person and I want to approach 'em slow and grand like, that they may have time to give me a proper reception."

Fearing that his jocosity might not be acceptable, Mike added:

"I may as well own up, me friend, that I've lost me way, but before going thither will ye instruct me as to how to make the Boy Scout salute?"

"It is simple; observe; crook your right little finger inward; keep it down flat by pressing your thumb upon it; hold the other three fingers upright, palm outward and bring the hand in front of the forehead; try it."

With the example before him, Mike had no trouble in making the salute.

"That is right; so long as you wear the uniform of the Boy Scouts, and since as you say you expect to become one of them, you must use their method of greeting one another."

"And now will ye put me under bigger obligations by showing me the exact coorse to folly to reach the camp of me friends?"

The old man raised his staff from the ground and pointed to the left of the lad.

"If you will hold to that direction, you will go straight to them."

"Now that ye have told me I won't furgit it."

"All the same you will; you know so little about the woods that you will be lost before you have gone a fourth of the distance."

"How can I do that wid such plain instructions as ye have given me?"

"Were you not directed before you set out for your friends' camp?"

"But not by such an intilligent gintleman as yersilf."

The twitching of the beard at the side of the old man's mouth showed that he was pleased by the whimsical compliment.

"It is easy to see from your blarney that you were born in Ireland: what is your name?"

"Mike Murphy; me father, Mr. Patrick Murphy, has charge of Mr. Landon's bungalow on Southport Island, where I make me home wid him whin I'm not living somewhere ilse. 'Twas his boy Alvin that sint fur me to jine the Boy Patrols on Gosling Lake."

"I called there yesterday and spent most of the day with them. They are a fine set of youths and have an admirable Scout Master; I expect soon to see them again; the troop, as it is called, numbers three Patrols, that of Mr. Hall, the Scout Master, being the Blazing Arrow."

"Ye said there were three Patrols in the troop: what are the ithers?"

"The Stag and the Eagle. Now it has occurred to me, Michael, that since you expect to join the Boy Patrols and know comparatively nothing of them, it will be wise for you to go to my home, which isn't far off, and spend the night with me; I'll teach you enough, not only to pass a good examination but to astonish the other Scouts by your knowledge."

This offer brought out the question that had been in the mind of Mike for some minutes:

"Ye are very kind and I'm thankful for the invitation, but may I ask who ye are?"

"That is your right, since you have already introduced yourself. My name is Elkanah Sisum, more generally called 'Uncle Elk'; a long time ago a great sorrow came to me; it drove me into the woods, where I put up a cabin and have lived for fifteen years; but I have not lost my love for my fellow men and especially for boys; I can never look upon a youth like yourself without being awed by the infinite possibilities for good or evil slumbering in him, and my heart yearns to help all along the right path."

"How is it ye know so much about the Boy Scouts of America?"

"Living by myself, I spend a good deal of time in hunting, fishing and cultivating the little patch of ground on which my cabin stands, but I find leisure for reading and study. I became interested a year ago in the accounts of the Boy Scout movement, which owes so much to Lieutenant-General Sir Robert S. S. Baden-Powell of England. I should be stupid indeed to pass so many years in the wilderness without learning woodcraft, campcraft, trailing and the ways of the woods."

Mike had set his heart on joining his friends that day--for you know he had been tardy in following directions and Alvin and Chester would be disturbed over his failure to show up--and the distance was so short that he could easily traverse it before night. With the confidence of youth, he felt no fear of losing his way, despite the assertion of Uncle Elk. But the presentation of the case appealed strongly to him. He had a natural dread of going into the Boy Patrol camp as the champion ignoramus of the party. Alvin and Chester would have rare sport with him, for they knew only too well what he would do had the situations been reversed. But to stride among them with the proper salute, which he knew already, and, when subjected to the preliminary examination, to pass triumphantly would be an achievement which would make his blood tingle with pride.

What a lucky stroke of fortune it was that in losing his way in the woods he had met Uncle Elk, whose language showed him to be a man of culture and qualified to give him the very instruction he needed. The incident was another illustration of the truth that many a misfortune is a blessing in disguise.

"I thank ye very kindly," said Mike, with hardly a moment's hesitation; "I shall be glad to spend the night in yer home."

"Come on then; darkness is not far off and it is quite a walk to my cabin. I make one condition, Michael."

"I'm listening."

"You must bring a good appetite with you; I have no princely fare to offer, but it is substantial."

"It would be ongrateful fur me to disapp'int ye, and ye may make sartin that ye shall not be graived in that respict."

CHAPTER IV--The Training of the Tenderfoot

Uncle Elk turned around and stepped off with a moderate but firm tread, using his staff more for pleasure than from necessity. He did not look around, taking it for granted that his young friend was at his heels. The ground was so high that the carpet of leaves and moss was dry, with so little undergrowth that walking was as easy and pleasant as upon an oriental rug in one's parlor.

The two tramped silently for a half mile or more, and Mike was peering ahead among the shaggy tree columns, wondering how much farther they had to go, when the guide halted, turned and in his gentle voice said:

"Well, here we are, Michael, at last."

They stood on the margin of a natural clearing of upward of an acre in extent, every square foot of which was under fine cultivation. Corn, potatoes, various kinds of vegetables and fruits grew under the training of a master hand. The soft ripple of a rivulet of clear, icy water was heard from the other side of the clearing, and was an unfailing source of supply during a drought.

Rather curiously, however, there was not a horse, cow, dog, cat, pig, chicken or any kind of domestic animal on the premises. Uncle Elk had never owned anything of the kind. Such supplies as he had to have were brought in his catboat from one of the near-by towns to a point on the Sheepscott, where he landed and carried them overland to his home.

In the center of the open space stood a log cabin, some twenty feet square and a single story in height. It was strongly made, with the crevices filled with moss and clay and had a stone chimney running up on the outside. The butts of the lower logs were a foot or more in diameter, and the whole structure showed a compactness, neatness and a certain artistic taste that pleased the eye at the first glance. It was self-evident that some parts of the labor were beyond the ability of a single man unless he were endowed with the strength of a Samson. It may be added that Uncle Elk received the help of several sturdy friends who were glad to do any favor possible for him.

The man paused on the edge of the clearing only long enough to give Mike a general view of the picture, when he led the way over the short, well-marked path to the single door that served as an entrance. It was of solid oaken slabs, from which a latchstring dangled, as a perpetual invitation to whoever chose to enter and find himself at home. At the front as well as the back, two small windows, each with four square panes, served to admit light.

If Mike Murphy was surprised by his first sight of the humble dwelling and grounds, he was amazed when he stepped across the threshold. The floor was of smooth planking, without carpet or rugs, but as clean as the kitchen of one of the *wouws* of old Amsterdam. The broad fireplace held a crane from whose gallows-like arm was suspended a kettle, while a poker and pair of tongs leaned at one side. On a shelf to the right of the fireplace inclined a number of blue-tinted dishes besides various cooking utensils. From the wooden staples driven into the logs over the hearth hung a long-barreled percussion rifle, with powder flask and several other articles near. Three chairs, one with rockers, strongly made and evidently of home manufacture, sat promiscuously around the room, while a table or large stand of circular form stood in the middle of the apartment and a number of fishing poles with lines winding spirally around them leaned in one corner.

Perhaps the strangest feature of this lonely home was what may be called its library. Three shelves of unpainted wood stood against the wall, facing the door, and each shelf was compactly filled with well-bound books, and on the top rested a dozen magazines and papers. Nearly all the volumes were of a classical, scientific or theological character, the names of the authors being wholly unfamiliar to the visitor.

When Mike had become somewhat acquainted with the curious interior, he walked across the room and halted in front of the books, not to learn their titles, but to read a printed slip tacked into the wood. And this is what so impressed him that he committed the sentences to memory:

The Fourteen Errors of Life

To attempt to set up our own standard of right and wrong and expect everybody to conform to it.

To try to measure the enjoyment of others by our own.

To expect uniformity of opinion in this world.

To look for judgment and experience in youth.

To endeavor to mould all dispositions alike.

Not to yield in unimportant trifles.

To look for perfection in our own actions.

To worry ourselves and others about what cannot be remedied.

Not to alleviate if we can all that needs alleviation.

Not to make allowances for the weaknesses of others.

To consider anything impossible that we cannot ourselves perform.

To believe only what our finite minds can grasp.

To live as if the moment, the time, the day were so important that it would live forever.

To estimate people by some outside quality, for it is that within which makes the man.

There were two apartments of about the same size. The second was the bedroom. It had a looped curtain in the doorway and was provided with two of the small windows referred to. It was clear that Elkanah Sisum was a person of taste and education, who, as he said, had taken up his abode in the wilderness, not because he was soured against his fellow men, but on account of some crushing grief that had fallen upon him long years before. His words and what he had done proved his warm regard for boys, and, hermit though he undoubtedly was, his nature was as sweet as that of a devoted mother.

I have been thus particular in my reference to him, because through one of the strange freaks of fate his fortunes became involved with those of the Boy Patrols and others, and resulted in a remarkable drama which can never be forgotten by those who took part therein.

Mike had removed his hat upon entering the dwelling, and as he now faced the old man, who was watching him, the youth made the Boy Scout salute.

"I would utter me admiration, Uncle Elk, but in truth I'm that pleased that I'm unable to spake a single word."

"A neatly turned compliment; suppose now I start the fire and we have supper."

"Show me some way by the which I can offer ye a little help."

"There is none unless you choose to bring me a pail of water from the brook beyond."

"I'll bring ye a barrellful if ye wish it," replied the pleased Mike, accepting the empty tin pail, which sat on the floor beside the door. He strode along the path to the small stream of sparkling cold water, in which was a cavity deep enough to make a dipper or cup unnecessary. When he returned, Uncle Elk had the fire blazing on the broad hearth.

In a brief while the meal was placed upon the table and the two sat down. The food consisted of slices of crisp, fried bacon, coarse brown bread, clear, amber coffee with sugar and condensed milk. Mike could not have asked for anything better and praised the culinary skill of his host.

The old gentleman did not use tobacco, and after the dishes had been cleared away, the guest helping, the two seated themselves in front of the fire, for the night air was crisp enough to make the slight additional warmth pleasant. Although the cabin was provided with a kerosene lamp it was not lighted. The mellow illumination from the blaze on the hearth filled the room and showed each one the face of the other, as they talked of the Boy Patrols.

The hermit gently swayed back and forth for a few inches, as he looked into the embers or the countenance of his young friend, who was keenly interested in everything that was told him. Mike had an excellent memory, and aware of the importance of the instruction he received, treasured every word that was said, asking a question now and then when the meaning was not clear. His teacher drilled him patiently, and when necessary to illustrate some of the points, stirred the glowing logs which sent up myriads of sparks and leaned forward in the yellow glow.

Now, instead of putting down everything, I shall adopt the plan of Uncle Elk, who, when he had impressed upon the lad all that he could clearly remember, said:

"I shall ask you no questions to-night, but give you your examination to-morrow morning after breakfast, when you are ready to start for Gosling Lake. All the knowledge you then possess you will carry with you. It will crystallize while you sleep."

"And the same would have been true wid me barring I niver had the knowledge to crystallize during me dreams."

With his fine-grained courtesy, the host insisted upon giving up his bed to Mike, who of course refused the favor, declaring that before consenting to such foolishness he would sleep in the woods with the risk of being devoured by elephants and tigers. So a compromise was effected by which the lad slumbered soundly upon a blanket spread on the floor.

Thus it came about after the morning's meal--in which flapjacks took the place of bread--Uncle Elk put his pupil

"through his paces." Here is a condensation of the questions and answers:

"What are the twelve points of the scout law?"

"To be trustworthy, loyal, friendly, helpful, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent."

"Of what does a Patrol consist?"

"Of eight boys, all more than twelve years old, one of whom is patrol leader and another corporal."

"What is a troop?"

"Three or more patrols, whose leader is Scout Master; he must be at least twenty-one years old and the assistant Scout Master cannot be under eighteen years of age."

"It isn't necessary to go further into the details of the organization, as it would confuse you. What is the Boy Scout motto?"

"*Be Prepared.*"

"Pretty comprehensive counsel; suppose you give something in the way of explanation."

"He must be prepared in mind by learning obedience and by thinking out beforehand what should be done in case of any accident or situation, and in body by making himself healthful, strong and active."

"It will be time enough to learn the various badges when you are ready for them. That of the tenderfoot is of gilt and seven-eighths of an inch wide, and it is made for the button hole or with a safety pin clasp. Now reverently repeat the scout oath:

"On me honor I will do me bish:

"1. To do me dooty to God and me country, and to obey the scout laws;

"2. To hilp ither people at all times;

"3. To kaap mesilf physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."

"Give the scout sign and salute."

(These have been described. The sign is merely holding up the three fingers in position, while the salute requires that the fingers shall be raised to the forehead.)

"You glibly rolled off the twelve points of the scout law, but their meaning should sink deep into the understanding. We all admit that it is our duty to be helpful to others, but we neglect such duty shamefully. I have often reflected that if certain rigid rules were laid down much more would be accomplished. What is the wise provision of the Boy Scouts?"

"That aich must do at least one good turn every day to somebody."

"What little trick do many of the Boy Scouts adopt to keep this duty in mind?"

"They lave the ends of their nickties hangin' outside till the good turn is done, though I'm thinking," added Mike with a grin, "that it would be as well to tie a string round his finger; that's what me mither used to do wid me."

"How did it work?" asked Uncle Elk, yielding to the diversion.

"I can't say it was a succiss," replied Mike with a sigh; "me good mither tied the cord so tight that it hurt that much I furgot what it was there fur; so me wise mither adopted a better plan."

"What was that?"

"She ixplained the matter to me dad and he----"

Mike with a grin pointed at his buckthorn which leaned against the wall.

"I understand, and now what of being courteous?"

"The Boy Scout must show courtesy to ivery one, espicially women, childer, old people, the waak and hilpless and he must accipt no tip or pay for such services."

"What are the different classes of Boy Scouts of America?"

"They are the tenderfut, second-class scout and first-class scout."

"For the present your interest lies in the tenderfoot or lowest grade, which is the first step and in which grade you must serve at least a month before you can advance to the next. You have given the scout law, the sign and salute, and may now tell me something about our national flag. How old is it?"

"It was born in June, 1777, and was first flung to the breeze at the battle of Germantown, in Siptimber of that year. A star

is added in the blue field on the Fourth of July, next after a new State comes into the Union. 'Tis for this reason that the flag now has forty-eight stars."

"What about the stripes?"

"They be never changed; all the same, at the first off the government added two stripes when Kentucky and Vermont were admitted, but they were taken off in 1818."

"I think that will be news to a good many of the Boy Scouts," commented Uncle Elk. "For an Irish lad who never set foot in America until last year, you can put more than one of our youths to shame."

Mike rose, bowed and made the Boy Scout salute, his red face as grave as that of a deacon during service.

"Excuse me blushing, Uncle Elk."

"I am unable to see that you are blushing, since your face could not be any redder than it seems always to be," said the old gentleman with a twinkle of his bright eyes.

"I am trying my best; angels could do no more, as Jim O'Brien remarked when he agreed to lick five men in five minutes and each one got the best of him."

"Now, Michael, as to showing respect for the flag: what can you tell me of raising and lowering it?"

"It should be hoisted before sunrise and not be left aloft after sunset."

"What is the rule for 'retreat' at sunset?"

"Civilian spectators must stand at attention and uncover while the band plays 'The Star Spangled Banner'; military spectators must stand at attention and give the army salute."

"When the national colors are passing on parade or in review?"

"The spectators if walking should halt, and, if sitting rise, uncover and stand at attention."

"You know that a flag is flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning: what should be done at the close of the funeral?"

"The flag should be hoisted to full staff."

"How should a flag be placed at half-mast?"

"It should be hoisted first to the top of the staff and then lowered to position, and before lowering from half-staff, it should be first lifted to the top."

"We have a beautiful custom of observing Memorial Day on May 30 each year. What is the law for displaying the flag throughout that day?"

"The same should fly at half-mast from sunrise to noon, and at full staff from noon till sunset."

"I repeat 'Well done!' All that now remains is for you to show your skill in tying at least four out of eight knots known as square or reef, sheet-bend, bowline, weaver's or fisherman's, sheepshank, halter, clove hitch, timber hitch or two half hitches. When I was a boy we called a few of these by different names. You have told me that some of the seamen on the steamer showed you how several knots are tied. So I think you will find no difficulty in meeting the requirements in this respect. Let us begin."

Uncle Elk brought forward several coils of small rope and handed them to Mike, who grinningly set to work. He was absorbed for less than half an hour, when he leaned back and looked into the kindly face.

"Fetch on what is left, as my grandfather said when he finished the last of half a bushel of praties."

"There is none left; you have tied every one; you'll pass, young man."

Every one knows how to tie a few simple knots, but I am sure you would like to learn the method of tying the more complicated ones. They are very useful and are easily learned, but I do not think I can make my explanations clear by means of description alone. Mr. Samuel A. Moffat, Field Commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America, in their official handbook illustrates these various knots and has kindly given me permission to use the same, so to Mr. Moffat belongs the credit of what follows in the next chapter.

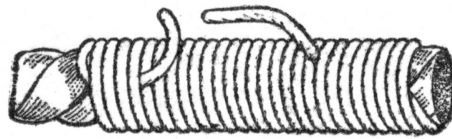
CHAPTER V--How "Knot" to Do Several Things

Every day sailors, explorers, mechanics and mountain-climbers risk their lives on the knots that they tie. Thousands of lives have been sacrificed to ill-made knots. The scout therefore should be prepared in an emergency, or when necessity demands, to tie the right knot in the right way.

There are three qualities to a good knot: (1) Rapidity with which it can be tied; (2) Its ability to hold fast when pulled tight, and (3) The readiness with which it can be undone.

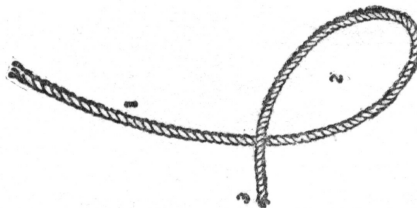
The following knots, recommended to scouts, are the most serviceable because they meet the above requirements and will be of great help in scoutcraft. If the tenderfoot will follow closely the various steps indicated in the diagrams, he will have little difficulty in reproducing them at pleasure.

In practising knot-tying, a short piece of hemp rope may be used. To protect the ends from fraying, a scout should know how to "whip" them. The commonest method of "whipping" is as follows:



Lay the end of a piece of twine along the end of the rope. Hold it to the rope with the thumb of your left hand while you wind the standing part around it and the rope until the end of the twine has been covered. Then with the other end of the twine lay a loop back on the end of the rope and continue winding the twine upon this second end until all is taken up. The end is then pulled back tight and cut off close to the rope.

For the sake of clearness, a scout must constantly keep in mind these three principal parts of the rope:



1. *The Standing Part*--The long unused portion of the rope on which he works;
2. *The Bight*--The loop formed whenever the rope is turned back upon itself; and,
3. *The End*--The part he uses in leading.

Before proceeding with the tenderfoot requirements, a scout should first learn the two primary knots: the overhand and figure-of-eight knots.

After these preliminary steps, the prospective tenderfoot may proceed to learn the required knots.



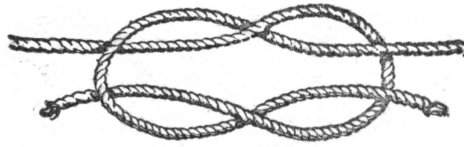
The Overhand Knot

Start with the position shown in the preceding diagram. Back the end around the standing part and up through the bight and draw tight.



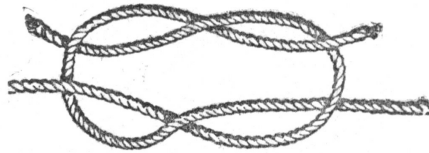
The Figure of Eight Knot

Make a bight as before. Then lead the end around back of the standing part and down through the bight.



Square or Reef Knot

The commonest knot for tying two ropes together. Frequently used in first-aid bandaging. Never slips or jams; easy to untie.



False Reef or Granny

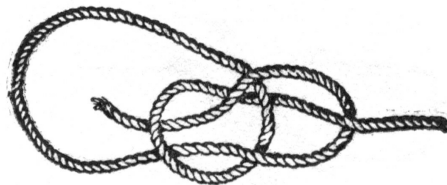
If the ends are not crossed correctly when making the reef knot, the false reef or granny is the result. This knot is always bad.



Sheet Bend or Weaver's Knot

This knot is used in bending the sheet to the clew of a sail and in tying two rope-ends together.

Make a bight with one rope *A, B*, then pass end *C* of other rope up through and around the entire bight and bend it under its own standing part.



The Bowline

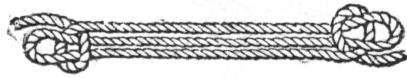
A noose that neither jams nor slips. Used in lowering a person from a burning building, etc.

Form a small loop on the standing part leaving the end long enough for the size of the noose required. Pass the end up through the bight around the standing part and down through the bight again. To tighten, hold noose in position and pull standing part.



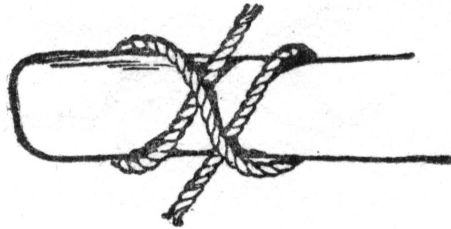
Halter, Slip, or Running Knot

A bight is first formed and an overhand knot made with the end around the standing part.



Sheepshank

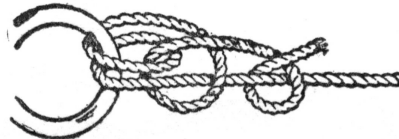
Used for shortening ropes. Gather up the amount to be shortened, then make a half hitch round each of the bends as shown in the diagram.



Clove Hitch

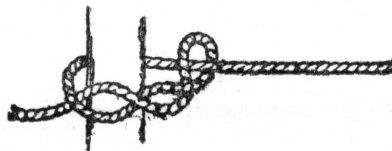
Used to fasten one pole to another in fitting up scaffolding; this knot holds snugly; is not liable to slip laterally.

Hold the standing part in left hand, then pass the rope around the pole; cross the standing part, making a second turn around the pole, and pass the end under the last turn.



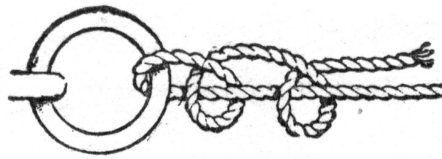
The Fisherman's Bend

Used aboard yachts for bending on the gaff topsail halliards. It consists of two turns around a spar or ring, then a half hitch around the standing part and through the turns on the spar, and another half hitch above it around the standing part.



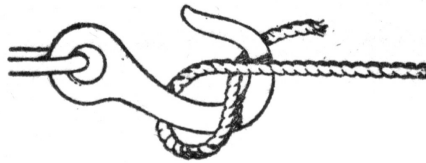
Timber Hitch

Used in hauling timber. Pass the end of the rope around the timber. Then lead it around its standing part and bring it back to make two or more turns on its own part. The strain will hold it securely.



Two Half Hitches

Useful because they are easily made and will not slip under any strain. Their formation is sufficiently indicated by the diagram.



Blackwall Hitch

Used to secure a rope to a hook, standing part when hauled tight holds the end firmly.



Becket Hitch

For joining a cord to a rope. May be easily made from diagram.



The Fisherman's Knot

Used for tying silk-worm gut for fishing purposes. It never slips; is easily unloosed by pulling the two short ends.

The two ropes are laid alongside one another, then with each end an overhand knot is made around the standing part of the other. Pull the standing parts to tighten.



Carrick Bend

Used in uniting hawsers for towing. Is easily untied by pushing the loops inwards.

Turn the end of one rope *A* over its standing part *B* to form a loop. Pass the end of the other rope across the bight thus formed, back of the standing part *B* over the end *A*, then under the bight at *C*, passing it over its own standing part and under the bight again at *D*.

CHAPTER VI--How Two Millionaires Did a Good Turn

Gideon Landon sat talking with his friend Franklin Haynes in the city home of the former one cold evening in the early spring of 1912. You may recall that they had been estranged for a time, but after the removal of the misunderstanding, they became more intimate than before. They were associated in various business deals and hardly a day passed without their seeing each other.

The subject of their conversation on this occasion was the Boy Scouts of America, in which both were deeply interested, for they knew that their sons, of whom you have already learned something, had joined the organization.

"That fact led me to look closely into it," said Landon, "and the more I learned about it the more I liked it; in my opinion the Boy Scouts mark the grandest advance that has been made in all history by the youths of any country. It will prove a mighty factor in the betterment of mankind."

"It has started with such a boom," remarked Haynes, "that I fear its collapse; such an enthusiasm as a rule soon expends itself; action and reaction are equal and the higher the climb the greater the fall."

"There will be nothing of the kind in this case, for there is no element of weakness in the organization. It was originated and is controlled by men who understand boy nature through and through, and who know how to appeal to it. The very word 'scout' kindles that yearning which every healthy boy feels for stirring incident. What youngster can resist the call of the fragrant woods, the rugged climb of the mountains, the rollicking plunge and splash in the crystalline waters, the trailing through the cool twilight of the forest,--the fishing, canoeing, hunting with a tinge of danger, the crackle of the camp fire, the stories of adventure, the sweet dreamless sleep on the bed of spruce tops or balsam boughs,--the songs of the birds----"

The friend raised his hand in protest,

"Cease, I pray thee. You remind me of the colored parson and his deacon riding on mule back through the Arkansas lowlands. The deacon depicted so eloquently the rapturous delicacy of browned 'possum, smothered in rich gravy, that the preacher suddenly gasped and dived from his animal, splitting a boulder apart with his head. As he climbed to his feet unharmed but slightly stunned, he explained that he couldn't stand the ravishing memories called up by the deacon's picture. And here you are discoursing so fascinatingly on the out-door life, that I am tempted to clap on my hat and overcoat and make a run of it for the pine woods."

"I believe I should do it myself, if it were not too early in the season."

"Yes, I see you hiking for the woods; before you reached the Grand Central you would switch off to Wall Street. You managed to worry through a few weeks at Southport Island last summer, and then on the first flimsy excuse you could think of, sneaked back to New York and stayed there."

"I am afraid you are right, Franklin; we didn't begin early enough. No danger of our boys making that blunder; those youngsters know how to live and they will get all there is coming to them, when they plunge into the wilds of Maine. Not only are their bodies trained but their minds and consciences. I was impressed some weeks ago when the Blazing Arrow Patrol held a meeting in my library and by invitation I was present. I sat back and looked and listened. It was the regular Saturday evening business session, when the Scout Master presided and the usual order or schedule was followed. The one feature that caught me was when the leader called upon each Boy Scout to tell what 'good turn' he had done for some one during the day. I then learned that each boy is pledged to do at least one such kindness for some person every twenty-four hours. I felt a lump in my throat as the youths popped up one after the other and modestly told their stories. All the incidents were trifling: one had volunteered to do an errand for his father or mother; another had helped an old lady across the street; a third had assisted a small boy in carrying a big bundle; another, when challenged to fight by a young ruffian, had turned his back without a word and walked away. 'And I knew all the time I could lick him,' the scout added with a flash of his eyes; still another had pointed out to a gentleman the best way to reach the Waldorf-Astoria, and so it went.

"Think of it,--a boy on the lookout every day of his life for a chance to do a good turn for some one else. Such a youngster is sure very soon to beat that record; he will hit the four hundred mark every year; that's four thousand in ten years or twenty thousand in a half century. Won't that look fine, Franklin, on the credit side of the great Book that will be opened at the Judgment Day? Ah, I fear the balance will be on the other side of the account, so far as *I'm* concerned."

"And with me, too," sighed his friend; "think what a different world this will be when every one, even the children, is hunting for an opportunity to do a kindness for a fellow creature."

"I wonder if the Boy Scouts would admit us into their organization," said Landon with a wee bit of earnestness.

"We are both old enough, which is about our only qualification. We have done many turns for others, but they hardly deserve to have the adjective 'good' applied to them."

"Well," sighed the elder millionaire, "I am so pleased with the principles of the Boy Scouts, and they have had such good effect upon Alvin--"

"The same is to be said of Chester."

"That I have decided to do the Blazing Arrow, the Stag and the Eagle Patrols (which I believe are those that make up the troop) a good turn which is so slight that it isn't worth bragging about."

"What is that?"

"You know I own the southern shore of Gosling Lake, which lies in the lower part of Maine, a few miles from the bank of the Sheepscott. Our club is about to put up a bungalow on that bank that will serve for headquarters. Such of the members as wish will bunk there while fishing this summer. It is the close season for game, beside which there is little to be had in that section. I have invited Scout Master Hall to spend the month of August there with his boys."

"That is a long distance for them to travel and I'm afraid some cannot afford the expense."

"It shall not cost any one a cent. It is to be simply an outing for the troop, who will be the guests of Alvin."

"And Chester: I shall insist upon *that*."

"As you please. Our boys will go to Southport early in July, or as soon as their schools close. They and Mike Murphy will manage to worry through several weeks with the motor launch, until the main party is ready to hike for the woods and all have their picnic on Gosling Lake."

"I gather from what you say that this will not be the usual camping-out experience, in which the boys put up their tents in the depth of the woods and provide for their own wants."

"No; they will have something of the kind--to keep their hands in, as may be said--during early spring and summer nearer their own homes. They will continue to study woodcraft, undergo training, perfect their discipline, and in short rough it like real scouts. They will be on edge, and prepared to mix some of the conveniences of life with the roughness of existence out of doors. Perhaps you and I will feel like taking a turn at it ourselves, if they will consent."

Haynes shook his head with a grim smile.

"As we agreed a few minutes ago, we have waited too long for that. Your plan is admirable and does you credit."

"Precious little. If it is what may be called a good turn, it is the only one of which I have been guilty in more years than I like to think of."

"You say you have talked the plan over with Scout Master Hall?"

"He has spent several evenings with me discussing the scheme with Alvin, Chester and myself. I may say it has been perfected; the boys are all anxious to go, but a few of them will spend their vacation in their homes. I believe we can count upon twenty guests at the clubhouse on Gosling Lake."

"Call it an even score; that will be twenty good turns that you will do others; you can't help piling up several additional ones during the dog days, and will be able to make a creditable report when called upon."

"I never thought of that, but I'm blessed if it doesn't give me a comfortable sensation. I tell you, Franklin, the Boy Scouts are the Junior Freemasons of society and the most powerful organization ever formed for the advancement of the idea of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. I shall do all I can to help along the work."

"And I am with you. But let's stick to practical facts. You and I will send the troop into the Maine woods, at the beginning of August, and see that every possible provision is made at the bungalow for the boys. Won't that place quite a task on your shoulders?"

"None whatever. When the boys arrive at the lake they will find sleeping quarters awaiting them in the clubhouse. If they think they are crowded, some of them can sleep in the woods, and it will be just like the majority to do so. Of course they will take their fishing tackle and such articles as they are likely to need with them."

"What about firearms?"

"The only one of which I have heard is a revolver of which Scout Master Hall is the proprietor. He talks as if he knows something about the weapon, but in my opinion he is bluffing and doesn't know whether to aim the butt or muzzle at a target. Bear in mind that the Boy Scouts don't live to kill, and the safety of our friends will never demand a gun or pistol. Several for amusement may make a few bows and arrows, but not much will be done in that line. They wear uniforms because they look natty, and they wouldn't be boys if they didn't like to make a display. Beyond question it helps to enforce discipline and assists in the military drill which forms a part of their training."

"Will the camp be provided with boats?"

"Two large canoes are to be sent there from Portland and they will be at the disposal of the scouts at all times."

"What of provisions and supplies?"

"You may be sure that we have guarded against famine. There is a track of several miles from the lake through the woods to the main road over which a strong team can be driven; thence the communication is easy with Boothbay Harbor, where there is no end of provisions. A wagon will make the trip once a week taking all that may be needed to the camp."

"Those miles through the woods must be pretty tough traveling."

"That cannot be denied, but one of the things in Maine and many other states that will amaze you is the terrific roads over which teams seem to have little difficulty in making their way. Last summer I strolled along the boardwalk ground the southern end of Squirrel Island. I was puzzled by numerous tracks in the black earth. There were ruts, hollows and cavities that looked as if made by wagon wheels, but that appeared impossible, for the course was choked with huge boulders and deep depressions over which it seemed as if only a chamois or goat could leap. While I was speculating and wondering I saw a horse coming toward me, dragging a wagon in which sat a man in his shirt sleeves, driving. Straight over those boulders and through the abrupt hollows, he plunged and labored without halt or hesitation. Sometimes the hind wheels bounced high in air with the front diving down, the body yawed and was wrenched, and the driver wobbled from side to side and forward and back, but he kept bravely on, and as he pitched and lurched and bumped past, calmly called out that it was a pleasant day. Compared with that roadway the few miles through the forest to Gosling Lake will be like a macadamized turnpike."

The conversation thus recorded may form the framework of the picture of the camp of the Boy Patrols on Gosling Lake. Omitting the preliminaries which otherwise might be necessary, let us step forward to that day, early in August, 1912, succeeding the arrival of the lads at the bungalow on this beautiful sheet of water in southern Maine.

CHAPTER VII--On Gosling Lake

The body of water referred to, which for certain reasons I shall call Gosling Lake--though that is not its real name--is of irregular form, about two miles long from east to west, and somewhat less in breadth. It is surrounded by pines, balsams and firs, which in most places grow quite close to the water's edge, with here and there a grassy stretch of moderate extent, bordering the lake.

On the southern shore stands the bungalow or clubhouse, to which more than one reference has been made. It is a low, log structure of one story with a piazza in front, is strong and secure and has no pretensions to elegance or luxury. It was intended merely to afford sleeping and dining quarters for the occupants. When a party of wealthy men plunge into the wilderness for what they call an outing, they make a great ado over "roughing" it. They announce that they will sleep in the open, work strenuously for their own meals, and live the simple life, as did the wood rangers in the olden times. But the chances are ten to one that the campers out will bring a professional cook and one or two other servants with them, will sleep in the beds prepared by other hands, and spend most of their time in luxurious idleness.

The bungalow which we have in mind is fifty feet in length and is divided into two rooms,--the smaller for dining and social communion on stormy afternoons and during the evenings. This room has an old-fashioned fireplace and is provided with cooking utensils, a large table, several chairs and other simple articles of furniture. The larger apartment is furnished with rows of bunks along each side, where spruce tips or pine boughs serve as mattresses upon which pillows and blankets are spread. The floor is of smooth planking, and without rugs. Large wooden pegs driven into the walls take the place of closets. In short the aim is to yield solid comfort, yet encourage the belief among the campers that they are actually roughing it.

Drawn up on the grassy slope in front of the clubhouse were two Indian canoes, each large enough to carry a half dozen full grown persons. The single paddles required for propulsion were kept within the building and the craft when not in use were turned over with the bottoms facing the sky. Such is an imperfect glimpse of the clubhouse that was to serve as headquarters of the Boy Patrols during the last month of that summer.

One of the striking attractions of the rivers, lakes and streams of Maine is their crystalline clearness. I have looked down at the boulders and pebbles twenty feet and more below the surface, where they were as clearly visible as if only the atmosphere was between them and my eyes. Maine lies so far north that its waters are generally cold and the bather who plunges into their depths gasps and feels like scrambling out again; but let him persevere for a brief while and the bath becomes invigorating and gives the body a glow and reacting warmth that thrills with exquisite pleasure.

At six o'clock on that memorable morning in early August, you might have looked at the clubhouse and believed it did not contain a living person or creature,--so quiet and free from stir was everything connected with it; but a few minutes later, the broad door opened and a young man walked a few steps toward the lake and then halted and looked around, as if expecting some one. He had dark curly hair, large clear eyes, black mustache, fair complexion somewhat tanned, a lithe, active figure rather below the medium stature, and an alert manner. His dress was such as is worn by the Boy Scouts. On the upper part of his left sleeve was a badge in blue, green and red, consisting mainly of an eagle with spread wings and shield, and the motto "Be Prepared" in gilt metal. This is the official insignia of the Scout Master, Scout Commissioner, Assistant Scout Master and of the First Class Boy Scout.

The gentleman who thus stepped upon the stage of action was Bert Hall, who, although a family man, is as much a boy as he was a dozen years ago. In fact, he can never be anything else, though in his activities no one is more mature than he. He is always doing something for the benefit of others, so it was inevitable that when the scout movement was originated it caught his attention and engaged his sympathy and co-operation.

The Scout Master's second glance at the door showed mild surprise. He drew out his watch and then smiled, for he saw he was a few minutes ahead of time.

"I have tried to teach the boys that it is better to be too early than too late, but better than either to hit the nail exactly on the head."

He kept his eye on the face of the watch until the minute and hour hand formed a straight line from the figure XII to VI. Then he slipped it back in his pocket.

Almost in the same instant, the door was drawn inward, and with a shout, a Boy Scout, his face aglow with eager expectancy, dashed down the slope like a deer, ran a few paces into the lake, splashing the water high, closed the palms of his hand above his head and dived out of sight. He was Charley Chase, the Blazing Arrow Patrol leader. Right behind him on a dead run, came Corporal George Robe, followed by Scouts Kenneth Henke, Kenneth Mitchell, Robert Snow, Ernest Oberlander, Colgate Craig, Robert Rice, Hubert Wood and Harold Hopkins.

After a brief wait, other members of the troop streamed laughing after the leaders, among them being our old friends Alvin Landon and Chester Haynes. The clothing of each consisted of a pair of tights, whose length from the extreme northern boundary to the remote southern edge, was perhaps twelve inches. It was a proper concession to the aesthetic demands of the occasion.

How they frolicked and disported themselves! A party of boys can no more keep from shouting than so many girls can refrain from screaming at sight of a mouse whisking about their feet. They dived, swam, splashed one another, darted under the surface like so many young submarines, and reveled in the very ecstasy of enjoyment. The first thrilling sting of the cold element caused all to gasp, but a few minutes ended that and none would have had it a degree milder.

Scout Master Hall moved a little to one side, so as to be out of the way, stepped close to the water, folded his arms and smiled in sympathy at sight of the joyous abandon of boys,—one of whom he had often been and meant to be again. His present duty was to oversee his charges. He knew all were good swimmers, but some one might be seized with cramp, because of the sudden plunge, and accident always threatens everybody. A person can be drowned with such awful suddenness that the Master never took any chances that could be averted. He held himself ready to leap into the lake on the instant his services were needed.

As the minutes passed, he felt how slight the danger was of anything of that nature, but as has been said, he was ever on his guard. He was watching Alvin Adams and Corporal Robe, who were engaged in the rollicking sport of ducking each other. Suddenly Alvin slipped below the surface, when his friend was not looking, seized the corporal's ankle, and yanked him under. The next instant, Robe bobbed up, blew the water from his mouth in spray, glanced around and seeing Alvin swimming desperately away, made after him. Both were equally skilful in the water and it could not be seen that the pursuer was gaining. Alvin might have escaped by heading for shore or where the water was shallow, but that would have been an admission of the superiority of the other, and no healthy youngster will do *that* until it is fairly demonstrated and even then will hesitate.

Suddenly Alvin dropped out of sight. It looked as if he did so to escape his pursuer who stopped over the spot where he had gone down, ready to seize him the instant he came within reach. Scout Master Hall laughed and watched the fun.

Up shot the head of Alvin a little way off, and Robe was about to make after him, when the youth called out:

"I've got a cramp!" and down he went.

Hall gathered himself for the run and jump, when with one foot in the water, he saw the necessity had passed. In a few seconds, Alvin's head showed again, but the corporal with one resolute stroke was beside him.

"All right, old fellow; put your hand on my shoulder," he said.

Despite his predicament, Alvin was cool and did as directed. As he rested his left hand on the shoulder of his friend, he said with a laugh:

"Gee! but my legs seemed to be tied up in knots; that's the first time I ever was caught; thanks; I'm all right, with your help."

Chester and several other boys had hastened to his help, but they saw all danger was over. Robe swam with moderate stroke toward shore. The water quickly shallowed, and when his feet touched the hard bottom, Alvin tried awkwardly to walk, but he had to have support before he could stumble to land, where he sank down and began vigorously working his legs, while Robe and the Scout Master massaged the corded muscles.

"The next time you go in bathing, try the Indian preventive of cramps," said Hall.

"What's that? I used to wear an eelskin tied about one of my ankles."

"No good. Before entering the water, rub the pit of your stomach hard with the dry palms of your hands. When the skin grows red, dash cold water over the stomach and rub dry; after that you need have no fear of cramps. You seem to be all right."

"I am; I should like to try it again; I owe the corporal the biggest ducking he ever had."

"No; you have had enough swimming for this morning, and so have all the boys."

The Scout Master gave the signal and the whole party obediently came ashore, ran into the building and hurriedly donned their clothing.

The next thing in order was breakfast and you may be sure every lad was ready for it. Although the old-fashioned implements in the clubhouse would have served well, yet with the score of sharp appetites to satisfy, the delay would have been trying. Moreover, the Scout Master wished to drill the youngsters in preparing their meals, as if they were on a hike through a long stretch of wilderness. So the three Patrols set to work under his eye, doing so with a system

and intelligence that called for slight suggestion from him.

"Remember," he cautioned; "*you* must use no more than two matches in starting a fire and a single one ought to answer."

The team with supplies had arrived from Boothbay Harbor the day before, so there was no lack of food. The first step was to build a fireplace or primitive stove. This was done by rolling three or four large stones in position near one another. Into the open space between them were arranged some dry shavings from a dead limb of cedar, including leaves, twigs, pine cones and pieces of heavier wood,—all set so loosely that there was plenty of room for draught. Then a Vulcan match, carefully shielded from the slightest breath of wind, was applied to the feathery stuff at the base of the pile. It caught at once, climbed over and through the more solid wood, and in a few minutes a vigorous, crackling blaze was going. Resting on top of the irregular stones—which gave many openings for the flames to circulate through—the big round griddle was placed in position. As it caught the heat, the smooth surface was smeared with a piece of salt pork, and then the batter of self-raising flour was poured out. Almost immediately the upper side of the mixture broke into numerous little holes or openings, proving that the hot iron was doing its work. The cook slid his round flat turner under the circle of batter, flopped it over, revealing the rich golden brown of what had been the lower side. Two griddles were kept going until it seemed the pancakes were beyond counting. When after a long, long while a sufficient number had been prepared, thin slices of bacon were fried on the griddle and in the surplus fat, shavings of raw potatoes were done to a turn.

I am sure you need no instruction in the most modern methods of making griddle cakes, frying bacon, preparing canned salmon or trout, roasting potatoes, baking fresh fish, grilling frogs' legs, the different ways of cooking eggs, and making coffee, cocoa and tea. If you feel you need training in those fields of industry, apply to your mothers or big sisters and they will teach you far better than I can. I advise campers out, however, not to try to bake biscuits or bread. The results are not satisfactory and it's easier to carry it.

The most destructive scourge to which all wooded sections of our country are exposed is that of forest fires. The last report of the Forestry Commission is that the loss in one year has amounted to five million dollars. A vast amount of property is thus annually destroyed, and the lamentable fact remains that in many instances the conflagrations are due to carelessness. A party of campers go into the woods, start a fire for cooking purposes and leave the embers smouldering, thinking they will die out in a little while and cause no harm. These embers, however, may stay alive for days, be fanned into a blaze by a gust of wind, and, scattering among the dry leaves and withered foliage, swell into a varying mass of flame which sweeps everything before it.

Many states thus exposed employ fire rangers who use incessant vigilance in saving their forests. Notices are posted throughout the Maine woods warning all against this peril. A few years ago, Congress passed a law imposing a fine of five thousand dollars or imprisonment for two years or both as a penalty for maliciously firing any tract, and a lesser punishment for causing a fire through carelessness.

When the morning meal was over, the Boy Patrols promptly extinguished every ember by pouring water over it until not a spark remained. Then the dishes were washed, dried and piled away on the shelves in the clubhouse; the bedding was aired and fuel gathered for the midday meal. By that time the sun was well up in the sky. Scout Master Hall put the troop through a brisk military drill, and then asked them to express their wishes.

The propositions offered almost equaled the number of boys. Some wished to paddle around the lake in the two canoes. True, most of them knew little about the management of such craft, but every one was sure he could quickly learn.

"All you have to do is to sit still and swing the paddle first on one side and then on the other," was the self-complacent assertion of Kenneth Henke.

"That may be so," assented the Scout Master, "but there is a right and a wrong way of doing everything, and, as a rule, a boy can be depended upon to begin with the wrong way. You never saw a quadruped which when thrown into the water will not swim on the first trial, as well as if he had spent months in training, but whoever heard of a man or boy who did it?"

"I have," was the surprising reply of Alvin Landon.

In answer to the inquiring looks of the party, Alvin said:

"Chester and I have a friend, an Irish boy about our age, named Mike Murphy, that we expected would meet us here, who had never been able to swim a stroke. We have watched him try it many times, but he always failed. One day when he was asleep he was pitched overboard where the water must have been twenty feet deep, and straightway he swam like a duck to land."

"I have heard of such instances, but they are exceedingly rare. It was not the case with me and I think with none of

you."

There was a general shaking of heads. Then a proposal was made to fish along shore, or to break up into small parties and ramble through the woods, studying the different species of trees and plant life, birds, and possibly some small animals, trailing, and what may be called the finer points of woodcraft.

It was Chester Haynes who struck fire by shouting:

"Let's have a game of baseball!"

"That's it! hurrah!" and a dozen hats were flung in air; "there's more than enough of us to make two nines and all know the game."

"A good idea," said Scout Master Hall, who could not forget that it was only a few years before that he won fame as one of the best batters and short-stops on the team of his native town.

The enthusiasm of the boys was not dampened by the discovery of several facts which, in ordinary circumstances, would have been discouraging. In the first place, there was only one ball in the whole company. Not only were there grave doubts about its being of the regulation make, but the seams had been started, and it looked as if the cover would be quickly knocked off. No use, however, of crossing a bridge till you reach it.

That no one had brought a bat mattered not. It was easy with the sharp hatchets to cut and trim a limb to the proper size, or near enough for practical purposes. When Bobby Rice, with many suggestions from the others, had completed his task, all agreed that it was an artistic piece of work, and might well serve as a model for the regular outfitters.

No one referred to the lack of gloves and chest protectors, for only mollycoddles would mind a little thing like that. The German students at Heidelberg are proud of the scars they win in duels, and any reputable ball player is equally pleased with his corkscrew fingers and battered face.

But one obstacle for a time looked unsurmountable: where were suitable grounds to be found?

The grassy slope which borders Gosling Lake is comparatively narrow, though of varying width. Of necessity the players would have to restrain their ardor when it came to batting balls. If these were driven too far to one side they would drop into the water, the fielders would have to swim after them and home runs would be overwhelming. If batted in the other direction they would disappear among the trees and undergrowth, and what player can send the ball in a straight line in front of the plate?

A hurried search brought to light a tract which it was decided would do better than had been expected. The slope was perhaps fifty feet wide in the broadest part, while lengthwise it extended mostly round the lake. In this place the diamond was laid out. A big flat stone served for home plate. Scout Master Hall paced off the right distance to first base, where another stone was laid. Second base was in the wavelet which lapped the beach, with third base opposite first. If a runner should slide for it, the chances were that he would keep on sliding into the lake, and he would care very little if he did. It may be said that the alleged diamond, while substantially of the right length, was very narrow and shut in on one side by water and on the other by forest.

Bobby Snow captained one nine and Harold Hopkins the other. As the batting order was arranged, Alvin Landon was to lead off for his side, which was the first to go to the bat. Bobby was proud of his skill as a pitcher. There is a legend that on one occasion when pitching for his school nine, he struck three men and was hit for nine bases and a home run in one inning. He indignantly denies the charge when it is made, and I don't believe it myself. Be that as it may, there can be no criticism of his style when he sends them over. His pose is impressive and leads the spectators to expect great things.

Scout Master Hall generally acted as umpire. Every one knew he was fair in his decisions and if he hadn't been nobody dare say anything. It wouldn't pay.

All being ready, Alvin stepped to the plate, with his bat firmly grasped. He spat on his hands, rubbed them up and down the rough surface, tapped the stone home plate, spread his feet apart and waited while every eye was fixed upon him.

Meanwhile, Bobby Snow, the pitcher, wound himself up. Standing erect to the towering height of nearly five feet, he swung his left foot around in front of his right, with the toe resting on the ground, and clasped the ball in his two palms which were held as high above his head as he could reach. He and the batter grinned at each other.

"I dare you to give me a good ball," said Alvin tantalizingly.

"Do you want an outcurve or incurve or dip or a spit ball?"

"I didn't know you had ever heard of those things; do your worst."

Bobby with the sphere still held aloft, gravely looked around at his out-fielders. The three almost touched elbows.

"Ty Cobb," he shouted, "move further to the left."

"I can't do it," was the mutinous reply, "without going out into the lake."

"Well, go there then."

"I'll see you hanged first; you do it."

"Don't get sassy; I'm not one of the spectators. Hans Wagner, shift to the right."

"If I do," said the other fielder, "I'll have to get behind a tree."

"You'll be of as much use there as where you are."

"Go ahead and pitch the ball, if you know how to do such a thing."

Bobby pretended not to hear this slur, but drawing back his right arm, hurled the ball toward the plate. It was wide, but Alvin struck at it, missing by about three feet. It went past the catcher as he clawed at it and he had to hunt several minutes before finding the elusive object, which he tossed back to Bobby, who without any more remarks shot it forward and Alvin swung at it. He hit it fairly too, though harder than he intended. It rose some fifty feet and flitted like a flash among the trees. Alvin hurled his bat aside, narrowly missing the umpire, and ran for first base. Arrived there, he glared around.

"Where's second base?" he called; "Ty Cobb, you moved it!"

"It got in the way of my feet; I flung it into the lake."

"That's what I call dirty ball," commented Alvin, making a dive ahead and arriving by a roundabout route at the home plate.

Meanwhile, the ball remained missing. One player after another plunged into the woods and joined in the search. Finally the umpire followed and then all the other players took a hand. You know how contrary inanimate things--as for instance a collar button--can be. That ball to this day has not been found, and the declaration of the umpire was justified:

"The shortest game of baseball on record; two balls pitched, one swipe and that's all."

CHAPTER VIII--The "Instructor In Woodcraft"

The ball game having ended so summarily, the Patrols gathered once more on the slope in front of the clubhouse to decide what should be done during the remainder of the forenoon.

"That's what I call a mystery," declared the chubby faced Corporal Robe, alluding to the disappearance of the ball; "I wonder whether any big bird flying overhead made off with it."

"The explanation is simple," said Alvin Landon as if in pity of the ignorance of the others.

"Well, you are so smart," remarked the corporal, "suppose you explain for the benefit of the rest of us."

"Didn't you observe that I put all my power in that sweep of the bat, and I caught the ball on the trade mark? Well, it is probably still sailing through the air and most likely will be found on the outskirts of Boothbay Harbor or at Christmas Cove."

"Strange we never thought of that," commented Robe, as if impressed. "I had a notion that the ball lodged somewhere among the limbs of the trees."

"I never heard of anything like that."

"Don't you think there may be several things of which you never heard?"

"Enough of this aimless talk," broke in the Scout Master; "we have a visitor."

There was a general turning of heads toward the lake, where all saw the cause of the last remark of the Scout Master. A birch canoe had put out from the eastern shore and was approaching the bungalow at a moderate speed. In the stern of the craft was seated a man who swung the short paddle with easy powerful strokes. His face was turned toward the group of lads.

"I thought Rip Van Winkle lived in the Catskills," remarked the corporal in a low voice, whereat all smiled, for the appearance of the stranger justified the comparison. He was bareheaded and his long hair and beard were of snowy whiteness. The picture was a striking one, with the curving prow of the pretty craft pointed straight toward the landing. The crystalline water was split into a gentle ripple by the bow, fashioned the same as the stern, and the sparkle of the blade looked as if he was lifting and tumbling liquid diamonds about for the party to admire.

You have been introduced to "Uncle Elk," and do not need any further description of him. He and Mike Murphy were to meet some hours later not far away in the woods.

Scout Master Hall and the boys walked down to the edge of the lake to welcome their caller. They were glad to receive strangers at any time, and believing the man to be much older than he was, they stood ready to give him the help he might possibly need. But he required nothing of that nature.

Uncle Elk seemed to be surveying the group from under his shaggy brows, but he acted as if he saw them not. With the same regular sweep of the paddle, he held the boat to its course, gently checking it as the prow neared land, so that it impinged like a feather against the shingle. He arose, stepped out, drew the craft farther up the beach and then astonished the boys and their leader by doing a most unexpected thing. He straightened his slightly stooping figure, fixed his penetrating eyes on the Scout Master, and made the Boy Scout salute. So far as his exuberant beard permitted them to see, he was grave and solemn of manner.

"Hurrah! he's one of us!" called Herbert Wood, as led by Hall, all stood erect and returned the greeting. And almost instantly the old man taught them precisely how the wolf makes his cry, followed by the "baow," of the stag and the "kreece," of the eagle. Those keen eyes which scorned all artificial aid, had observed the flags of the three Patrols displayed along with the emblem of their country above the roof of the bungalow.

Hall stepped forward and offered his hand, which was clasped by the venerable man, who showed his pleasure in looking into the faces of so bright a lot of youths.

"Will you accept me as a Boy Scout?" he asked, the movement at the sides of his mouth showing he was smiling, while his eyes twinkled and fine wrinkles appeared at the corners.

"You seem to be one already," replied the Scout Master.

"I have not been initiated, though I have taken pains to inform myself about your organization. I have only one misgiving."

"What is that?"

"I believe you accept no person who is under twelve years of age."

"If you will give us your word that you have seen that number of years, I shall be satisfied. What do you say, boys?"

Entering into the spirit of the moment, the lads discussed the question. Hardly a face showed a smile, and there were grave shakings of heads. Finally, Leader Chase said:

"We are willing to run the risk."

"With your permission," said the visitor, bowing toward Scout Master Hall, "I shall be glad if you see your way clear to my becoming an honorary member of your order. My name is Elkanah Sisum, more generally known as 'Uncle Elk'; I live by myself a couple of miles inland from the lake" (indicating the point); "I have a comfortable home; my latchstring always hangs outside and I shall take it as an honor if you will come and see me often."

"I do not recall any rule regarding honorary members of the Boy Scouts, but I hereby declare you to be such, Uncle Elk," said Scout Master Hall with much heartiness.

In obedience to a unanimous impulse every youth made the salute, to which the old gentleman responded.

"Thanks for the honor, which is appreciated. I have lived in the Maine woods for a good many years and have hunted from Eagle Lake away up in the wild north, to this settled section, where not much in the way of game is left. Perhaps there may be something relating to trees, birds, fishes and the ways of the woods that I can teach you, though," he added with a twinkle of his bright eyes; "boys in these days have so many advantages that they run away from us old fellows in knowledge. None the less, you will find that the more you learn the more there is left for you to learn. Many a boy with a twine and bent pin can beat the best of you in wooing fish from the water; scores of urchins much younger than you know more of the woods and its inhabitants than you will learn in years; I can show you lads who with the bows and arrows made by themselves will bring down game that you can't touch with the latest improved firearms, while as regards trailing through the depths of the wilderness they can teach you the rudiments."

"Nothing can be truer than that; the advantages we have are many, but without brains and application they will do us little good. Your offer to help us along these paths of knowledge is gratefully accepted. We shall make frequent calls upon you, with the understanding that you will often come and see us. We have studied woodcraft a good deal, just enough to realize, as you have reminded us, how little we know of it. We need an instructor and we hereby close with your offer without giving you time to withdraw it."

Addressing the scouts, the Master said:

"The only matters to be settled are the title that is to go with Uncle Elk's office and the size of salary that is to be paid him as instructor."

"Suppose you leave the latter question to me," gravely suggested the old man.

Scout Master Hall pretended to be undecided and asked his boys quizzically:

"Is it safe to do that?"

"There doesn't seem to be any help for it," replied Patrol Leader Chase.

"Then we may as well make a virtue of necessity; and now as to the proper title which Uncle Elk is to assume. I am ready for suggestions."

Uncle Elk and the Scout Master listened with amusement to the proposals of the boys. All were eagerly interested and nearly every one submitted at least one proposal. Some of them were overwhelming. Perhaps the most striking was that of Gordon Calhoun, Scout 5 of Patrol 2. It was "Lieutenant-General and Supreme Counsellor and Master of the Mysteries of the Woods."

Uncle Elk and Scout Master Hall laughed.

"If I were of the African race, that would suit me exactly, but, as it is, the weight would crush me. Try, boys, to hit upon something simple."

Calhoun joined in the merriment at his expense and gave up.

Isaac Rothstein, the black-haired, dark-eyed Jewish member of the Stag Patrol, amid the hush of his comrades said:

"Why not call Uncle Elk 'Instructor in Woodcraft'?"

"You've hit it," commented the pleased visitor.

"I agree with you," said the Scout Master, patting the shoulder of the blushing boy who stood at his side. "The name is simple and expressive and therefore meets every requirement without paining the modesty of the gentleman who wears it; and now, Mr. Instructor, may I be permitted to ask when it will suit your convenience to begin earning your salary?"

Uncle Elk glanced up at the sky and noted the position of the sun.

"It is now a few minutes past eleven; the day is so far along that I propose to go back to my home and stay there until to-morrow morning. Nothing unexpected occurring, I shall be here at half-past eight o'clock. I shall not come in my boat but on foot, prepared to take up my duties."

(Scout Master Hall slyly glanced at his watch, while the man was speaking. The hands showed it was six minutes past eleven.)

"You will remain and take dinner with us." The Instructor nodded.

"I shall be pleased. Meanwhile, may I witness a drill of your troop?"

The Scout Master blew a sharp blast on his whistle and strolled to the front of the clubhouse, the Instructor beside him. Facing about, the former nodded and a pretty exhibition followed. The three patrols composing the troop, each under the command of its leader, went through the maneuvers with a precision and unity that were almost perfect.

The troop formed in two ranks, the second covering the intervals between the scouts in the first rank, the feet turned out at an angle of forty-five degrees, the body erect, arms hanging easily, fingers slightly bent, head up and eyes to the front. This is the "Alert" position. It will be remembered that the boys carried no weapons.

The next command was to "stand at ease." Each left foot was shifted eight or ten inches to the left, the weight of the body being thus equally divided on both feet; the hands were carried behind the back, one loosely resting on the palm of the other, the grasp being maintained by the fingers and thumb. Then followed "dressing," the different turnings,--right-turn, left-turn, about-turn, and right and left half-turn.

In the brief pause that occurred at this moment, Instructor Sisum asked the Scout Master in a voice which all heard:

"What are the rules regarding salutes?"

The Scout Master nodded to Corporal Robe, who with a sly grin passed the question to Private Harold Hopkins, and he, having no one to whom he could shift it, promptly replied, accompanying his words with a practical illustration:

"We have the half salute and the full salute. Scouts use the half salute when they meet for the first time in the day. The fingers are held as in the full salute, but the right hand is raised only shoulder high, with palm to the front.

"For the full salute we raise the hand to the forehead, elbow in line and nearly square with the shoulder, for one or two seconds."

"When should this salute be given?" asked the Instructor.

"When a private meets one of his officers, any commissioned officer of the United States army, or the colors of a regiment when passing the body at a funeral; on such occasions as the Fourth of July, Flag Day, Memorial Day; when the Stars and Strips are hoisted, and, if in uniform, when the 'Star Spangled Banner' or 'My Country' is played."

"Which hand should be employed in making the salute?"

"The same rule holds as in the United States army; it must be done by the hand farthest from the person saluted. In addressing an officer a Scout will halt two paces from him and salute and will repeat it before withdrawing."

Other exercises were followed by the troop drill. The scouts fell into line for inspection, with the assistant patrol leader on the right of each patrol, the leader one pace in front of his patrol and the Scout Master two paces in front of the line.

You will not care for a detailed description of the pleasing drill. If you wish to learn the various movements, the best plan is to become a Boy Scout, and at the same time improve yourself mentally, morally and physically.

Having dismissed the troop with liberty to do as they pleased until dinner time, Scout Master Hall seated himself on the piazza extending along the front of the clubhouse, beside his visitor, intending to spend the interval before dinner time in conversation. He had become much interested in the old gentleman about whom was wrapped something of mystery. Hall expected a partial explanation or at least some reference to the cause of Uncle Elk's self exile, but he did not give any hint, and of course Hall was silent on that point.

Thus it came about that when the Instructor in Woodcraft paddled away in his canoe, quite early in the afternoon, neither the Scout Master nor his boys knew anything of their visitor beyond the fact that he was a most attractive old gentleman, with whom they expected to spend many pleasant hours while serving as his pupils in the woods.

CHAPTER IX--The New Tenderfoot

The next day was as sunshiny, clear and delightful as any that had greeted the Boy Scouts since their visit to Maine. As before, they prepared their morning meal out of doors, cleaned the dishes, and laid the fuel for use at midday.

Naturally the thoughts of all turned to Instructor Uncle Elk, who was to give them their first lesson in woodcraft. They felt they were fortunate in this respect and were sure of gaining a good deal of valuable knowledge.

"He said he would be here at half-past eight," remarked Scout Master Hall; "he carries no watch but most of you have timepieces; it will be interesting to note how nearly he hits it. Possibly he may be a little ahead of time, but I should be willing to wager anything he will not be a minute late."

"He ought to be allowed some margin," said Patrol Leader Chase; "for he has two miles to tramp through the woods, and is likely to vary a little one way or the other."

"What time does your watch show?"

A general comparison of timepieces followed. Inevitably a slight variation showed here and there, but the agreement was that it was practically a quarter past eight. A number glanced in the direction of the wood where the old man was expected to appear but he was invisible.

"There is always the possibility of accident----"

"There he comes!" exclaimed several.

"It isn't he," said the Scout Master, "it's a stranger."

The others had noted the fact, and the wonder grew when they observed that the person approaching wore the garb of a Boy Scout. He stepped boldly into view from among the trees, a hundred yards away, and came forward with an erect, dignified gait. In his left hand he grasped a heavy buckthorn cane, which he handled as if it were a plaything instead of an aid in walking. His pace was deliberate, his shoulders thrown back and his chest thrust forward, as if he held a high opinion of his own importance.

It was noticed even that his necktie dangled over his breast, that artifice as you know being a favorite one among Boy Scouts to remind them of their duty of doing a good turn for some one before the set of sun.

Twenty paces away the visitor halted with military promptness, and wearing the same solemn visage made the full salute.

"Where are yer manners, and ye calling yersilves Boy Scouts?" demanded the newcomer indignantly; "can't ye recognize a high mucky-muck when he honors ye by noticing ye, as Jim O'Shaughnessy asked the Prince of Wales when he pretended he did not observe him?"

Alvin Landon and Chester Haynes happened to be on the edge of the party farthest removed from the caller, whom they had identified at the first glimpse.

"It's Mike, as sure as I live!" whispered Alvin; "let's keep in the background for a few minutes; he hasn't noticed us."

It was surely strange that the scouts in their wonderment forgot for the moment to greet one of the brotherhood who had appeared so suddenly upon the scene. They made amends by crowding round him with profuse apologies, shaking his hand and giving him a cordial welcome. It was the unanimous consensus of the troop that they had never seen a redder mop of hair, a more freckled face, a snubbier nose and more general homeliness of countenance concentrated in one person; nor had they ever observed a finer set of teeth--though the mouth was big--or bluer twinkling eyes. As I have remarked before, the Irish lad suggested Abraham Lincoln, of whom it was said that he traveled the whole circle of homeliness and came back to the starting point of manly beauty.

Alvin and Chester now walked forward and greeted their old friend, who was as glad to see them as they were to meet him.

"Why were you so late?" asked Alvin, when the exclamations were over.

"'Twas yer own fault, fur ye made the mistake of addresssing yer letter to dad instead of to mesilf, as ye mustn't forgit to do when yer bus'ness is of importance. It was like him to furgit to ask me for the dockymint till it was too late to board the expriss for Gosling Lake."

"How is it you come so early in the day? Have you been walking all night or sleeping in the woods near by?"

"I passed yer camp yisterday, but observe yer were not riddy to resave me in fitting style and not wishing to embarrass ye I called on a frind of mine."

"What friend have you in this part of the country?" asked the astonished Chester.

"An uncle on me cousin Tim's side."

"What's his name?"

"Uncle Elk."

Alvin now introduced Mike to Scout Master Hall and the boys. All knew that a friend was expected, and they were sure of his identity when they heard the greetings between the comrades.

"So you are acquainted with that fine old gentleman?" was the pleased inquiry of the head of the Boy Scouts.

"It has that look, whin I supped wid him last night, stayed till morning, took breakfast and was started by him on me way to yersilves."

"He spent several hours with us yesterday and promised another visit to-day. In fact, we were watching for him when you came out of the woods."

"He niver hinted a word of the same to mesilf. If ye are expicting him," said Mike with a characteristic grin; "I won't longer deny that I lost me way yisterday, and if he hadn't found me I'd had to roost among the limbs of the trees till this morn."

"I don't understand why Uncle Elk did not keep you company when he expected to follow you so soon," said Alvin.

"He hasn't been out of my sight for a minute since he left my home."

All looked in the direction of the familiar voice. Their Instructor in Woodcraft had appeared among them as unobtrusively as a shadow.

Scout Master Hall looked at his watch. The hands showed that it lacked twenty-eight minutes to nine. Uncle Elk remarked:

"I stood behind the oak for a couple of minutes; I did not tell Michael of my engagement with you, for I wanted to observe what benefit my instruction last night was to him."

"Didn't I do foine?" asked the proud youth.

"You did not; I directed you to hold to a straight line till you reached camp, but you twisted and shifted about until more than once I thought you would turn back to my cabin."

"Ye see, Uncle Elk, I couldn't furgit that winsome breakfast ye gave me, and then, too, some of the trees had a way of getting in front of me and I had to turn out for 'em or walk through 'em, as Jim O'Toole tried to do whin he found all the Horse Guards drawn up in front of him."

"When you were half way here, you walked for fifty yards at right angles to the right course. I was about to call to you when you see-sawed back."

"Begging pardon fur the same," said the grinning Mike, "I don't understand that when I looked back many times I niver obsarved yersilf."

"You turned your head so slowly that you gave me notice of your intention; if not close to a tree trunk, I stood still and you did not see me. There are native tribes in India whose men when pursued will whisk behind the rocks and instantly assume such fantastic attitudes, with arms akimbo and legs at queer angles, that the pursuers are likely to mistake the whole company for so many leafless trees and pass them by."

The Instructor seemed to straighten up with his new responsibility.

"We shall plunge directly into the woods, following a course that will lead to my home. We have left so plain a trail on the leaves that you can have no trouble. We shall proceed in loose order, all on the same level, with no officers except the Scout Master."

"I beg to amend that," said Bert Hall, "by saying that *you* are the only officer. So long as you are in charge, I am a private."

"Perhaps it is as well; go ahead."

By chance Mike Murphy assumed the lead, with Alvin and Chester a pace or two behind him. Permission was given to talk and the chatter became incessant. The Instructor kept a little to the right so as to observe the action of each boy. He told them to use their eyes and to note everything,—the ground, the different species of trees, the foliage and the birds. The forest had very little undergrowth and in the cool twilight no exercise could have been more pleasant than tramping over the velvety leaves with pine cones scattered here and there, and patches of dry, spongy moss gently yielding to the tread like some rich, oriental carpet. While advancing in this disjointed fashion Mike came abreast of a

fallen pine, a couple of feet in diameter, its smooth tapering trunk extending twenty times as far before showing a limb. Mike rested one foot on the log and stepped lightly over. Alvin followed, but Chester cleared the obstruction with one vigorous bound. Their companions did the same with the exception of two lads who merely lifted their feet over.

"Halt!" commanded the Instructor, in a sharp, military voice.

All obeyed and looked inquiringly at him.

"Of the whole party only two passed that obstacle in the right way. My young friends, you must learn to save your strength when in the woods as well as when elsewhere. Every one who rested one foot on the log had to lift the whole weight of his body to the height of the same; those who leaped over, put forth unnecessary effort; the right method is simply to step over the obstruction. Go ahead."

"Suppose now," said Mike to Alvin and Chester, "that log was six feet high, wouldn't I be likely to split into twins if I tried to straddle the same?"

Chester turned the question, expressed more gracefully, to the Instructor.

"He should always go round an obstacle. Never clamber over a mass of rocks or anything of that nature, unless the distance is too great to flank the obstruction. Save your strength whenever you can, boys."

The scouts were now told to give special attention to the trees, different varieties of which were continually coming into view.

"Michael, tell me what you know of *that*."

The leader pointed his staff at a tree directly in front of the youth, who cocked his head to one side and squinted at it.

"With yer permission I beg leave to say we don't have such scand'lous growths in Ireland; it seems to be trying to shed its overcoat and not making a success of the same, as Mike Flaherty said after his friends had tarred and feathered him."

The other boys were able to give satisfactory information. You are all familiar with the "shagbark" or "shellbark" white hickory, which furnishes you the delicious nuts that too many of you are inclined to crack with your sound teeth. The wood is white, rich, solid and makes the best kind of fuel. The tree itself is tall, graceful and has large leaves. Its most striking peculiarity is the bark, which clings in shaggy slabs to the trunk, the patches being stuck in the middle with the upper and lower ends curling outward; hence the name. In the autumn, when the frosts have popped open the husks, it is rare fun for a number of boys to seize hold of a heavy beam of wood and use it as a battering ram. When after a brief, quick run it is banged against the trunk the nuts rattle down in a shower. No imported fruit can compare with our native, thin-shelled hickory nut, which does not grow very plentifully in Maine.

"These chaps know so much more than me about the trees," remarked Mike to his chums, "I'll show 'em proper respect by not introoding, as Berry Mulligan said when he stepped into a hornets' nest."

"Tell me something about that evergreen," said the Instructor to Isaac Rothstein, who was prompt in answering:

"It is a red cedar and I think one of the finest of all trees."

"Why do you think so?"

"Its heart is almost as red as blood, and the wood has a sweet fragrance; the sap is nearly white, the grain soft and weak, but it will last for hundreds of years. I have seen beams of cedar that were laid before the Revolution and they were as sound as when hewn. Cedar wood makes a good bow; the little berry-like cones are light blue in color and hardly a quarter of an inch in diameter."

"What ground does it prefer?"

"It is fonder of dry than of damp places."

"You have done so well, Isaac, you may enlighten me as to that tree which stands a little to the left of the cedar."

"That," replied the boy after a quick survey, "is a hemlock, which I don't think much of. The wood is soft, coarse and doesn't endure well. I have heard it said that a hemlock knot is the hardest vegetable growth of the American woods."

"Such is the fact; a hemlock knot will turn the edge of a finely tempered axe or hatchet. Now, boys, take a look at the topmost twig, and tell me whether you notice anything peculiar."

Several replied that the twig drooped several inches to one side, though there seemed nothing remarkable in that fact. Mike gravely remarked:

"The same being a branch, it is trying to *bough*."

The Instructor turned sharply:

"How do you spell that last word, young man?"

"B-a-w-h-g-x," was the instant response.

"All right," commented the mollified Instructor; "everything in the nature of punning is barred while I am in command."

"That is, if we try to pun you will pun----"

Mike dodged the upraised staff, and the Instructor resumed:

"The highest twig of a hemlock in nearly every instance dips to the east, as does the one before us. You can understand how it may help a person who has gone astray in the woods. I am sure you all admire that towering oak, the picture of majesty and beauty."

As Uncle Elk spoke he indicated the forest monarch he had in mind, by leveling his staff at it. The boys looked from it to him in surprise. Mike loftily remarked:

"I was wondering, byes, how ye could give attintion to any other tree whin the oak raised its head afore ye. It is like a lion among a lot of lambs or mesilf amid a group of ignorant Boy Scouts. We have the oak in Ireland, and ye can't fool me as to the same; it is a noble oak, Mr. Insthructor."

"It is not an oak," said Patrol Leader Chase; "but a white pine."

"I agree with you," added Uncle Elk.

"So do I; ye can't flop quicker than mesilf; it isn't the first time me tongue has stubbed its toe."

"I shall be glad," said the Instructor, addressing Jack Grandall of the Stag Patrol, "if you will tell me something about the white pine."

"It is the most famous tree in Maine and gives its name to the state. Many hundreds of thousands of acres are covered with it and millions of feet are taken out every year. It forms the basis of the lumbermen's industry, one of the chief sources of wealth and in whose behalf the utmost care is taken to save it from destruction by fire."

"Describe it more particularly."

"The leaves grow in bunches of five; they are four or five inches long, with the cones a little longer. The wood is soft, pungent, easily split, very buoyant, with straight grain and very inflammable. The resinous pine knots make the best of torches."

"Suppose a fire gets started among the pines?"

"It sweeps everything before it. There are a good many kinds of pines, which are told from one another by their cones. The tree is an evergreen."

"How tall is the one before us?"

Several made guesses and it was generally agreed that the splendid specimen was very nearly if not quite two hundred feet high.

"I shall not accept any guesses," remarked the Instructor; "I wish to know the exact height."

"How can we learn that?" asked Chester Haynes.

"Measure it. You know little of woodcraft if you cannot tell the precise height of such a tree when the sun is shining."

And now came Mike Murphy's triumph.

CHAPTER X--A Few Native Trees

It was the qualification in the Instructor's remark, "when the sun is shining," that gave the quick-witted Mike his clue.

"My first plan was to climb to the top," said he with that gravity which he knew so well how to assume, "but I feared I should tumble before I could complete the measuring of the same, as me mither's second cousin did whin he tried to climb the lightning rod of the church backward. Obsarve me."

Every eye was fixed upon the Irish youth who, while speaking, had been scrutinizing his surroundings. The pine towered fully twenty feet above any of its near neighbors. The wood was so open that the shadow of the top fell athwart a small natural clearing to the westward. Mike walked to the conical patch of shade, stood on its farthest edge, and facing the puzzled spectators, crooked his finger.

"Have one of ye sich a thing as a measuring tape in yer pockets?"

The majority carried the useful article, coiled around a spring in a flat, circular metal box. Three boys started on a trot toward Mike, but Kenneth Mitchell out-spied his companions.

"Now, if ye'll measure the precise distance from the tip of me shoe to the fut of the pine, ye'll have the satisfaction of doing a good turn for the rest of the byes, as me dad did whin he fixed things so that six men instead of two had a share in the shindy at Tipperary on his birthday."

While Kenneth was carefully stretching the tape over the ground in a straight line to the base of the pine, a couple of the boys smiled, for they had caught on to the ingenious scheme of Mike. The yellow tape was a dozen feet long and divided as usual into fractions of an inch. When the owner after using the full length several times grasped it part way between the ends with his thumb and forefinger, so that they touched the bark near the ground, he straightened up and made a quick mental calculation.

"How fur are we apart?" asked Mike from his first position.

"Sixty-two feet, eight inches," was the reply.

"Come hither and while me young friend is doing the same, the rist of ye may get your pencils and bits of paper riddy."

When Kenneth reached the master of ceremonies, he was standing in the oasis of sunlight. Resting one end of the buckthorn cane which he carried on the ground, he held the stick exactly vertical.

"Will ye oblige me by measuring the shadow of the same?"

It was done in a twinkling.

"It is one foot, one inch."

By this time every one of the smiling scouts understood the simple method by which Mike proposed to solve the problem. He called to them:

"The length of me shillalah is three feet, two inches; the length of its shadow is one foot, one inch; the length of the shadow of the pine is sixty-two feet, eight inches: what more can ye ask of me?"

"Nothing," replied Scout Master Hall, "figure it out, boys."

This is the "statement" which the lads jotted down in their note books or on pieces of paper:

Length of cane's shadow	Length of cane	Length of pine's shadow	Height of pine
1 foot, 1 inch	3 feet, 2 inches	62 feet, 8 inches	?

The fractional ratios made considerable computation necessary, and several boys erred in their work, but when nine of them reached the same result, and a comparison proved their accuracy, there could be no question as to the correctness of the result, which was that the height of the noble pine was more than one hundred and eighty feet. (Figure out the exact number of feet and inches for yourself.)

"You did well," said the pleased Instructor to Mike, who made a quick salute and gravely remarked to the scouts:

"Don't be worrying, byes; I'll recognize ye the same as before."

At a nod and wink from Patrol Leader Chase, the whole troop lined up in front of the astonished Mike and silently made the regulation salute. So far as it was possible to do so, his red face blushed and for the first time the waggish youth showed slight embarrassment, but he was instant to rally.

"Comrade," said Colgate Craig, "you can tuck in the end of your necktie."

"And why should I do the same?"

"You have done your good turn for today."

"I'll let me banner wave on the outside, for who shall say how many more good turns I shall have to do ye before night?"

"There may be more truth in that remark than he suspects," remarked Uncle Elk, who now gave the word to push on to his home, still fully a mile away. The Instructor kept pace with the scouts, walking a little to their right, while the Scout Master did the same on the left of the laughing, chattering, straggling party. All, however, made good use of their eyes and nothing worth seeing escaped them. It must be remembered that a goodly number of the boys lived in the country and had a more or less knowledge of the woods in the neighborhood of their own homes. Moreover, there is no marked difference between most of the trees in their neighborhood and those of Maine. Thus, a superb black walnut, nearly as tall as the giant pine, was identified at a glance by several of the youths, and Ernest Oberlander told of its hard, close-grained wood, dark, purplish gray in color and very durable; and of its fruit, two inches round, the stain from whose green husks has a way of sticking to one's hands until sandpaper and soap are necessary to remove it.

Every one was familiar with the white walnut or butternut. Its height is generally about half that of the walnut, its bark is smoother and its leaves similar in shape, but larger and coarser. Its leaflet stalks and new twigs are covered with a sticky brown substance. The leaves are very long, though the leaflets are less than six inches in length.

"You know the delicious, oblong fruit with its prickly shell," said the Instructor; "when you lay the nut on its side to break it open----"

"No, you don't," interrupted Corporal Robe, quick to detect the little subterfuge of Uncle Elk to draw them out: "that isn't the right way to crack a butternut."

"It isn't!" repeated the old gentleman, in pretended surprise; "will you be good enough to explain the proper method?"

"I don't think there is much need of explaining, for every fellow knows or ought to know that you should stand the nut on one end and strike the top."

"What advantage do you gain by that plan?"

"The meat is not broken,--that is if you are careful. I have often cracked a butternut so that the meat came out without a break."

"I like the butternut more than the walnut," remarked Alvin Landon.

"So do I, but it has another use than to serve as food or a luxury. Of course you can tell me what that is."

He looked into the expectant faces, but no one could answer him.

"The oil is, or once was, very popular with jewelers. I remember that my father would squeeze out a drop, which was sufficient to lubricate all the works of the family clock. He applied the oil with a tiny feather and never needed more than the single drop. The jewelers have a refined fluid which serves their purposes, but father would never admit that any oil equaled that of the butternut. It has always been one of my favorites, much more so than that small tree growing in that dry sandy soil, which we call--what?"

Considerable discussion took place before the Instructor accepted the name and description of the common or aspen-leaved birch, whose wood is soft, close grained, weak, splits in drying and is valueless for weather and ground work. Each armpit has a black, triangular scar, which does not appear in the canoe birch.

Uncle Elk gave the boys a brief talk on the genus of trees known as the *Betulaceae* or birch.

"Its flowers grow in catkins--so called from their resemblance to a cat's tail--whose scales are thin and three-lobed. With one exception the species grows beyond the tropic in the northern hemisphere."

"Will you tell us something about the birch from which canoes are made?" asked Scout Master Hall, and the faces of the boys showed their eagerness to hear the explanation which they knew awaited them.

"The paper or canoe birch is the most valuable American kind. Cabinet makers sometimes use the wood, but it quickly decays when exposed to climatic changes. It sounds strange, but the bark is most esteemed because of its durable nature. Many times I have come upon a fallen birch which appeared to be perfectly sound, but on examination, I found the wood entirely rotted away, with the bark as firm and perfect as when the tree stood erect and was growing. You can easily see why it is so valuable for canoes. Would you like me to tell you how we make a birch canoe?"

Every head nodded.

"Of course I pick out the largest trees with the smoothest bark. In the spring I make two circular incisions several feet

apart, with a longitudinal incision on each side. Pushing a wedge under the bark, it is easily lifted off. With threads prepared from the fibrous roots of the white spruce fir, the pieces of bark are sewn together over a framework of wood, and the seams are caulked with resin of the Balm of Gilead fir. Such boats are so light that they are readily carried over the shoulders of a boy when he finds it necessary to make a portage. My canoe weighs less than fifty pounds and will bear up four or five boys."

"I observed, Uncle Elk," said Mike, who was one of the most interested of the listeners, "that ye have no seats in yer boat, which the same I fail to understand, as Jerry Hooligan said whin his taicher told him that if ye multiply one fraction by anither, the answer is less than aither of 'em."

"A birch canoe has no seat because the craft is so unstable it is almost certain to tip over with you; you have to sit as low as possible. The birch not only serves well for canoes, but log houses are often thatched with it, and small boxes, cases and even hats are manufactured from the same material. You are all fond of sweet birch and I can see you chewing the tender, aromatic bark, when you were barefooted boys on your way home from school.

"The canoe is so unstable and sensitive that care is necessary to avoid accidents. In the first place there is the right and wrong way to enter it, with the probability that you will take the wrong one every time. This is what you should do: take the paddle in your right hand and lay it across the gunwale. Seize the outside gunwale with your left hand, resting the right on the other gunwale. Then put your left foot gently but steadily into the boat, being careful to place it exactly in the middle and follow with the other foot, after which you will kneel or sit as you prefer and can push away from the float. By this method you will preserve the equilibrium of the canoe and escape mishap.

"By the way, you should never let the paddle pass out of your grasp, for in case of an upset, it will keep you afloat until help arrives. Nor should you go far without an extra paddle in case of breakage. If you have a lady companion, regard safety before grace. Grasp the nearest gunwale with your left hand, reach up your right and take her nearest hand. She should step in right foot first, grasping the outside gunwale to balance herself. Thus steadied, she can easily lift the left foot into the boat and sit down comfortably, using her right hand to arrange her skirts.

"You should sit near the middle when alone, for, if too far toward the stern, the prow lifts up, and a puff of wind is sufficient to tip over the boat. If an upset occurs, don't forget to keep a firm grasp upon your paddle, and don't swim away from the overturned canoe. One of the craft seldom overturns completely, because you are pretty sure to plunge overboard so suddenly that the boat hasn't time to take in much water. It is easy to climb in again, provided you know how to do it. Lay your paddle across the gunwale, your left hand grasping the paddle and middle brace; bring your legs sharply together as you do when climbing aboard a raft. This will lift the body far enough out the water to enable you to reach for the farther gunwale and you can roll yourself into the boat with no trouble at all.

"Suppose you fall overboard with a companion. Remember the canoe will not sink of itself and each of you has retained his paddle. You approach from opposite directions, and one holds down his side of the canoe, while the other carefully climbs in, after which he can readily preserve the equilibrium while his friend joins him.

"Remember these precautions: never change places in a canoe after leaving the shore, and avoid moving quickly. It is the easiest thing in the world to grasp a pond lily in passing and by means of the sudden pull overturn the craft; don't even turn your head suddenly to look at another canoe that is passing; don't frolic or try to stand up in the canoe, and in no case take out a lady without having a cork-stuffed pillow with you. Finally, no person should ever have anything to do with a canoe until he has learned how to swim."

"What kind of birch produces the most valuable timber?" asked Scout Master Hall.

"The black or mahogany. Its reddish brown wood is hard and close-grained. When it attains the height of seventy feet, with a diameter of three feet, it is one of the handsomest trees in the forest. It buds early in spring, at which time its leaves are covered with a short thick coat of down, which disappears later in the season and leaves them of a vivid green color."

A little way ahead, the Instructor halted the scouts again. This time it was no pretence on his part when he expressed himself as surprised by what he saw. He stood for a minute or two viewing a tree some thirty feet high, with a score of green prickly burrs scattered here and there among the branches.

"Why are you surprised?" asked the Scout Master.

"Maine lies above the range of the chestnut, though now and then you come upon a specimen in the southern part of the state. That is the first one I have seen in this section and I doubt if another exists. I should be glad to welcome this tree, did I not know that it is already doomed. We have plenty of horse chestnuts, however."

"The chestnuts in the Middle States have suffered a good deal during the last few years," said the Scout Master. "I had a couple of fine ones in my yard at home but some pest attacked them. I called in a tree surgeon, after doing all I could to save them, and he confessed that he was powerless. The disease first appeared in the neighborhood of New

York in 1904. Two years later a hitherto unknown fungus was discovered growing in the substance of the bark of the tree, and it looks to me as if the blight will follow the chestnuts all the way to Tennessee, which is their southern range. Even your horse chestnuts do not escape and the all-pervading spruce is threatened with extinction from a vicious moth."

"That's too bad," commented more than one boy, who recalled the delights of chestnut hunting and the delicious flavor of the fruit itself, both raw and roasted; "we used to have such big crops of chestnuts that it didn't pay the farmers to gather them."

"As plants, flowers and trees increase, so do their enemies," commented Uncle Elk, "until it has become a constant fight for life. But man will always be the victor so long as he does not grow lazy or indifferent. Now we come upon several specimens of the white and the red oak. Will one of you point out the chief differences between them?"

Alvin Landon nudged Mike, who saw that the eyes of the Instructor were fixed upon him.

"You know the two colors; he is expecting you to answer."

Mike promptly fell into the trap.

"One of 'em has red leaves and the other white."

The reproving look of Mike in response to the general merriment caused even Uncle Elk and Scout Master Hall to laugh. Kenneth Henke and Bobby Snow between them explained that the grain of the red oak is hard, strong and coarse but warps and has little value for weather or ground work. Its acorns require two seasons to ripen, whereas those of the white oak mature in one season. The latter is called white because of the pale color of its bark and wood. This kind is fine-grained, heavy, strong, very durable and of great value. When we speak of "hearts of oak" it is always the white variety we have in mind. You know how important it is for ship building and other enterprises. There are too many varieties to be named in this place, and I fear an extended description would prove tedious to you.

Tramping a short distance farther the Inspector directed the attention of the boys to a broad, spreading symmetrical tree fully a hundred feet high and with a trunk more than three feet in diameter. The bark was smooth and ash colored and the foliage purplish. It ranks among the handsomest trees of the American forest and every boy identified it at once as a beech, of the *Fagus* genus of trees. It is so common that I am sure you are all familiar with it. Possibly you are unaware that the roots do not descend deeply into the soil but extend to a considerable distance close under the surface. The beech is a favorite, and several beautiful varieties are cultivated, some displaying purple, silver, and other colored foliage. I recall a beech whose leaves in the autumn, after being touched by frost, were so vivid and blood red, that they resembled a huge cone of flaming fire when seen among the differently tinted foliage.

One of the chief uses of the beech from the viewpoint of boys is to furnish an admirable surface upon which to carve their names with their jack-knives. I cannot compute the number of beech trunks in the woods of my boyhood home which display my initials. Only the other day I came across the bark, now bulging, contorted and overgrown, upon which I broke the blade of my new knife, when I was so young that I didn't know any better than to form two of the letters backward. Moreover, a few feet above my name was that of my grandfather, which he cut into the bark when he was a youngster fully sixty years before.

"The beech," remarked Uncle Elk, "furnishes fire wood, though my preference is apple wood, followed next by hickory, sugar maple and beech."

Uncle Elk was too wise to weary his young friends with much scientific description. As he strolled forward, he made his talk more general and asked fewer questions. He reminded them of the excellent appearance of the white elm, which often grows to a height of a hundred feet or more. It is not valuable, however, because its reddish brown, coarse wood soon rots near the ground. A peculiarity of the sycamore, which often attains a stature of a hundred and fifty feet, is that it sheds its bark as well as its leaves.

The black locust is another tree with which I am sure you are all familiar. You have seen rows of them lining the highways and growing about old lawns. The timber is close grained and tough and good for planking vessels. The mealy fruit is sweet, and we used to try to persuade ourselves that we liked it, but I don't think any of us boys ever wholly succeeded.

When boiled and fermented the juice forms an intoxicating drink resembling beer.

I was always fond of the red and water or swamp maples. The sap from them when boiled down furnishes us the most delicious syrup and sugar in the world. When we seek the sugar, however, it is from the variety known by that name. The manufacture of maple sugar is a leading industry during the spring months in many sections, especially in Vermont, and some parts of New York and other states.

Have you ever taken a hand in the making of maple sugar? If so, you will never forget its delights. In March, when the first signs of thaw appear, you bore only a little way with an auger into the juicy wood, when the sap comes bubbling

down the small wooden spout driven into the opening, and is caught in the trough or kettle waiting below. As these fill up the sweet fluid is carried to a huge iron kettle suspended over a roaring fire, and poured into the vessel. It boils steadily away, but the supply is kept up, the steam diffusing a most fragrant odor through the surrounding atmosphere. The sap slowly grows thicker as the watery part is given off in vapor, until it granulates and syrup and sugar result.

After the thick syrup is poured out of the big kettle there is always a considerable quantity left clinging to the interior. Balancing themselves over the edge of the iron reservoir, the heads of the boys used to disappear with only their feet showing while they scraped off the saccharine coating within and ate and ate until nature protested and we had perforce to cease, but were soon ready to resume our feast at the banquet of the gods.

CHAPTER XI--A Lesson In Trailing

"Halt!" The Boy Scouts were tramping forward, chatting and laughing and paying less attention than at first to the varieties of trees which constantly appeared before them. It was true, as Uncle Elk had seen, that they were a wee bit tired of imbibing knowledge, and disposed to think of the home of the old man which they knew could not be far off. At the sound of his crisp command, the party halted and looked expectantly at him. On his part, he calmly surveyed the array of bright faces as if the sight gave him rare pleasure, as it undoubtedly did. Pausing for a moment, he said, addressing the whole body:

"I wish you to separate and start on a hunt, each for himself. You must not go more than a hundred yards in any direction from where I am standing. Within that area you are to make diligent search for the trail of some animal of the woods that has passed within the last twenty-four hours."

"Is that *all*?" asked Mike loftily.

"No; it will not be enough to discover his tracks, but you must tell me his name and some of his peculiarities."

"Suppose the spalpeen hasn't got any name?" suggested Mike.

"There is no such creature, my lad; to the one who first succeeds I shall give a handsome prize."

There could be no mistaking this direct challenge. The boys looked at one another for a moment and then fell apart as energetically as if a smoking bomb had dropped among them. They were more anxious to win a compliment from their Instructor than to gain anything in the nature of a prize. They had formed not only a deep respect but a real affection for the man; due to his lovable disposition and in a slight degree to the mystery which overshadowed his life.

Had you been a spectator of the picture, you would have thought some valuable jewel or treasure had been lost among the leaves, and every lad was the owner of the same. Never did two score bright eyes scan the ground more closely; the boys seemed oblivious of everything else in the world, and as the minutes passed their earnestness grew tense.

Uncle Elk nodded to Scout Master Hall, and the two sat down on a broad, flat boulder and watched proceedings. When they spoke to each other it was in guarded undertones. That there was a vein of waggery in the old gentleman's makeup was proved by the fact that the Scout Master seemed to be trying hard to repress his merriment over certain remarks which Uncle Elk took pains that no one should overhear. Now and then when one of the boys looked at the couple, Mr. Hall's face assumed a sudden gravity which vanished the instant the lad's attention returned to the task before him. The Instructor easily hid his emotions, since his heavy beard served as a curtain, but his amusement was as great as that of the younger man. In fact, the Scout Master more than once heard a distinct chuckle.

It will be understood that the problem before the scouts was not only a hard one but it grew harder as the search progressed. They could not help disturbing the leaves as they passed to and fro, no matter how careful they were, and this disturbance increased each minute, because the diameter of the space was no more than two hundred yards. It was interesting to observe the care used by each boy not to "jump the reservation." Every now and then, one of them would stop his work, raise his head and locate his comrades. Rather than run the risk of wandering too far, he would edge nearer to the two men seated on the boulder and watching his actions.

Several times a lad uttered an exclamation, believing he had caught sight of the footprints of some denizen of the woods. Instantly, several ran to him and joined in the scrutiny, but in each instance the belief of success became doubtful, finally vanished and the hunt went on as before. Upon many the conviction gradually forced itself that they had essayed that which was impossible.

It was natural perhaps that the attention of the couple on the boulder should center upon Mike Murphy, who was the most ardent searcher of them all. He examined the ground near the spectators, but soon shifted to the periphery, as it may be called, of the big circle. With his buckthorn in hand, he poked among the leaves, so rumpling and overturning them that he would have obscured all the footprints that at first were visible. Unlike the others, Mike made visual search through the branches of the trees. After studying the ground for a while, he would straighten up and peer here and there among the limbs, as if certain that the answer to the problem would there reveal itself.

"I've an idea," he said to himself, "that it's a grizzly bear or a big tiger that is prowling round, and scrooching among the leaves. If he should drop down on me shoulder and begin clawing me head, it would be as bad as when Terry Googan had the coort house fall on top of him--whisht!"

Mike was thrilled at the moment by the discovery of that which he believed was the lost trail. Suppressing his emotions, he first made certain that none of the scouts was looking at him. He was vastly relieved to note that all were so absorbed in their own work that for the time they were oblivious. He did not glance in the direction of the two spectators on the boulder, for they were "out of it."

Devoting several minutes to a closer study of a depression near a decayed stump, Mike poked the leaves gently apart with his cane. Then he chortled, and turning about sauntered indifferently toward his friends, swinging his cane as if it were a swagger stick, and humming softly to himself.

"By the way," remarked Scout Master Hall, as he and his friend heard the soft musical notes, "Alvin and Chester tell me that Mike is gifted with a marvelous voice. A prima donna on the steamer was so impressed by it that she offered to educate him for the operatic stage, but Mike won't think of such a thing."

"Have you ever heard him sing?"

"No, but I intend soon to do so. He is modest with his gift, but is always ready to oblige. He seems to have learned something."

Mike had ceased his humming, and halting a few paces in front of the two made a quick half salute. The Scout Master's face became serious and the manner of Uncle Elk could not have been graver.

"Have you come to make your report, Michael?" he asked.

"I hev, sorr."

"I hope you have been successful."

"I hev, sorr; I've found the futprints of the cratur that is trying to steal into the camp and ate us all up."

"That's fine; but remember you must tell me what kind of a wild animal it is."

"I'm prepared to do the same."

"Well, Mr. Hall and I are listening."

"It's an elephant."

Noting the start of the two, Mike made haste to add:

"I knowed it would astonish ye, but I'm as sartin, as was me mither's second cousin whin he was accused of being the meanest man in siven counties."

"What reason have you for thinking the creature is an elephant?"

"The futprint is the biggest iver made; the elephant is the biggest animal that roams these woods; *therefore* the track is that of one of them craturs."

"Your logic is ingenious, Michael, but you do not produce the elephant."

"I've an idea that he's hiding somewhere in the branches of the trees," was the imperturbable reply of the Irish youth, who glanced up among the nearest limbs as if he expected to see the giant quadruped lurking there.

"Mike," interposed Scout Master Hall, "the elephant is not found in this country; you have made a mistake."

"Why, there isn't a traveling circus that doesn't have a half dozen more or less of 'em; what's to prevint one from bidding good bye to his frinds and starting out to have a shindy with a lot of Boy Scouts?"

By this time, it dawned upon the two men that the whole thing was a jest on the part of Mike. Convinced that neither he nor his companions could find the trail for which they had been searching, he yielded to his waggish propensity, as fully aware of the absurdity of his words as were those to whom he submitted his theory.

The fact that the three persons by the boulder were discussing some interesting question had been observed by the other lads, who began strolling in that direction. Uncle Elk and Mr. Hall kept their seats and looked smilingly up into the expectant faces.

"I am afraid," said the Instructor sighing as if with disappointment, "that you have not been successful in your search."

The unanimous nodding of heads answered his query.

"Shall I tell you why you failed?"

The same response followed.

"It is because you have been hunting for something which doesn't exist; there is no animal's trail within a hundred yards of this spot."

Scout Master Hall made no further effort to restrain his merriment. He turned partly on one side and laughed till he nearly fell off the boulder. Uncle Elk's shoulders bobbed up and down and from behind the thicket of snow white whiskers issued sounds such as are made by water gurgling from the mouth of a bottle. The scouts like sensible lads

enjoyed the joke none the less because they were the victims. They slapped one another on the shoulder, several flung up their hats and shouted, and two of them gave a fine imitation of a Scotchman dancing the Highland Fling.

As might be expected, Mike Murphy was the first to regain his wits. The tempest of jollity had hardly passed, when he said:

"It minds me of the time when I was snoring on board the launch *Deerfut*, draaming of watermelons and praties, whin a spalpeen, without asking me permission, picked me up and flung me overboard where the water was 'leven miles deep and I had niver swum a stroke in me life."

"Did you drown?" asked Isaac Rothstein in pretended dismay.

"I s'pose I oughter done so, but I changed me mind and swum to shore."

(You will recall that, incredible as this may sound, it is precisely what occurred.)

"I don't see the similarity between that incident and this," remarked Chester Haynes.

"For the raison that there isn't any, which is why I call it to mind. Don't ye obsarve that ye have been looking fur that which isn't, as Uncle Elk has explained, and which is the same in me own case? The stoopidity of some folks is scand'lous, as Mickey Shaughnessy said whin his taycher expicted him to know how much two and two make whin the same are added together."

"Well, boys," spoke up the Instructor as he rose to his feet, "there's a time for all things. We have had our jest and now must get down to business again. I suspect you know a little more about our native trees than you did when we left the bungalow, and you may digest that which you have swallowed. As the expression goes, the incident is closed. My next requirement is that you shall join forces and start a fire."

The request was so simple that the boys suspected the old man was indulging in another bit of pleasantry, noting which he added:

"I am in earnest; I wish you to unite your skill and kindle a blaze right in front of the boulder where Mr. Hall and I have been sitting."

Gerald Hume of the Eagle Patrol laughed. "Nothing can be easier. All we have to do is to gather some dry leaves, pine cones and twigs, and touch them off with a match. We are allowed to use no more than two matches, and in a case like this one ought to be enough."

"A condition that I insist upon is that you shall not employ even a single match."

CHAPTER XII--How It Was Done

Scout Master Hall here interposed:

"Uncle Elk, I don't think any of the boys have a flint and steel, and I am sure I do not possess them; matches are so cheap and convenient that we have discarded the method of our grandparents."

"I knew that when I spoke; the conditions are that no match nor flint, steel and tinder shall be called into use. The only artificial helps the scouts can have are their knives, hatchets and such aids as they may carry with them. Come, boys, use your wits and inaugurate the conflagration."

The command or rather proposition stumped the lads, who looked at one another, smiled and shook their heads. Finally Patrol Leader Chase approached the Instructor, who was calmly waiting, saluted and said:

"I suppose all of us, sir, have read in story books that the Indians and other savages often start a fire by rubbing a couple of dry sticks together."

"Have you ever seen it done?"

"No, sir."

"And you never will. No person ever produced a flame by that means, for the reason that he cannot move the sticks fast enough and keep them going. I tried it once till my arms ached and found that I had only succeeded in slightly warming the surfaces of the pieces of pine. I might have kept it up until to-day with no other result."

"What whoppers lots of the story books tell!" commented Colgate Craig.

"We expect them to do that; my only objection is that so many of the yarns are absurd. Will you allow me to diverge for a minute?" added Uncle Elk, with a bow to Scout Master Hall, who nodded.

"You are always interesting, Uncle Elk."

"To illustrate: some of our most popular stories are of hidden treasure and the means used to unearth it, the most interesting yarn being that a key to its location is left which is in so complicated a cipher that its solution baffles every one for a long time. Now why in the name of common sense did Captain Kidd or whoever buried his ill-gotten riches leave any cipher at all? Who taught the ignorant pirate or brigand how to build up a wonderful cryptogram? Why does he leave a riddle for the mere sake of making strangers rack their brains over it? So it is that many of the most successful detective stories of to-day are simply feverish conglomerations of ingenious impossibilities."

Uncle Elk paused and chuckled.

"Excuse those tremendous words,--I forgot myself. Let's get back to the business before us. It is true that Indians obtain fire by means of friction, that is, when they know how to do it, but the majority are ignorant of the secret. Boys," added the Instructor, brightening up, "have you ever reflected upon the almost limitless uses of friction? Life would be impossible without it. When the axle of a railway car uses up its oil the brakeman is notified of the fact by the blaze which speedily follows. The falling stars shooting through space are invisible till they reach our atmosphere, when the friction causes them to glow with heat."

"Well, nothing is clearer than that fire can be produced by friction, but, as I said, no man can take two pieces of the dryest wood and evolve a flame without aid. Am I right in saying that none of you know how to generate fire without matches or the old-fashioned flint and steel?"

Unanimous inclination of heads and a general chorus, "You are."

"I propose to teach you the trick. One boy will do, but it is better to have two. Will Corporal Robe and Michael oblige?"

The lads stepped forward and gravely saluted Uncle Elk.

"I observe that the corporal carries his hatchet in the sheath at his belt, but Michael has none."

"I don't need the constant reminder of Gin'ral Washington as he does, to make me stick to the truth," said Mike with a grin and a quickness which was answered by a laugh from all. He added:

"It'll be my pleasure to see that the corporal obeys instructions; I'm not afraid of him if he does carry that axe with him."

"The first thing to do," continued Uncle Elk, "is to cut two pieces of dry cedar, one a foot and a half long and say an inch through, though it does not matter if it is slightly less."

Mike had forgotten everything told the boys by the Instructor regarding the *Juniperus Virginiana*, but from his

manner you would have thought him competent to give points to Uncle Elk himself. I have said that our young Irish friend was gifted with an excellent memory, a fact which he had proved many times, and especially while listening to the words of the hermit in his home the night before. In the latter instance, however, he was deeply interested while he had become a trifle wearied by the dissertations of the Instructor. You know how it is in such circumstances.

None the less, as I said, Mike's manner gave the opposite impression. Assuming the pose of director he walked slightly in advance of the corporal, as the two set out to find the cedar sticks needed. Since all the boys had heard the directions of Uncle Elk, they followed their comrades and joined in the search. Kenneth Henke, prompted by the waggish spirit of Mike, ran a little in advance and halted beside a vigorous maple sapling.

"What do you ask better than this? Aren't we lucky, Mike?"

"That we are, 'tis just what we want, as me cousin Hughey said when his mither set a bushel of peeled praties in front of him for dessert."

And Mike walked up to the maple and tapped it smartly with his buckthorn.

"What are you driving at?" asked the astonished corporal; "that isn't a cedar."

"And who said it was? Why didn't ye wait till I finished my enlightening observation? I was about to say whin ye broke in that it is the very tree that we want to lave alone. What do ye maan by such unseemly levity?" demanded Mike, turning upon the other lads who were laughing at his slip. "Now, corporal, don't try to cut down that cedar wid the back of yer hatchet; the blade will sarve ye much better."

With the keen-edged implement the other youth quickly severed a dry limb from the proper tree and trimmed it to a length of eighteen inches. Having done this, he looked up and saw Uncle Elk and Scout Master Hall among the spectators gathered round him. Robe turned to the old man for further directions.

"Whittle each end to a sharp point."

This was quickly done.

"Cut another stick and hew it flat, with the thickness of the first; make a notch in it and at the end of the small end of the notch a little saucer-like pit."

Let me describe what was done under the direction of the Instructor.

A small pine knot was selected and a little excavation cut in it with the point of the corporal's knife. This was to receive the upper end of the vertical sharpened stick, the knot serving as a cap to hold the upright in position and in which it revolved, after the fashion of the common auger which is worked with one hand. The lower end of the upright fitted in the cavity of the flat stick which lay horizontal on the ground and this revolving point generated the fire.

The one necessity was that the dry, pointed lower extremity should be made to spin around fast enough for the friction to produce a flame. This speed had to be much faster than can be secured by the unaided hand, no matter how swift it may be. The needed velocity is thus secured:

A cedar bow, some two feet long was made. There was no difficulty in doing this, since every patrol of Boy Scouts is sure to be well provided with twine or cord. The bow was bent sufficiently to hold taut the string that is wound once around the upright stick. Then, by drawing the bow back and forth for its whole length, the vertical piece revolved very fast and the necessary friction was secured on the lower point which rested in the cavity of the flat stick lying on the ground.

Before operations began some thin dry cedar shavings, macerated with cedar bark, were rolled into a sphere the size of a billiard ball. This made excellent tinder and all was ready.

Instructed by Uncle Elk, Corporal Robe rested his left hand on the pine knot or cap on the top of the upright stick, so as to hold it in place. He fixed one knee on the flat piece on the ground to keep it from slipping. Then, as indicated, he started the business by drawing the bow its full length back and forth. The drill fairly hummed. It was hardly a minute when the dust thus ground out turned black, smoked and filled the notch. The flat stick was withdrawn and with his hat the corporal fanned the powder, which quickly showed a crimson point. The tinder was gently laid on top of this, the fanning renewed and lo! a glowing flame broke forth. Then followed clapping of hands and compliments.

Although Mike Murphy had played the part of spectator all through, he doffed his hat and bowed low.

"This is so sudden, gintlemen, as Terry O'Brien said whin the lightning knocked him off the church steeple where he was working, but I thank ye all the same."

"It took about three minutes," remarked Uncle Elk, "because the corporal is an apprentice; I have done it in less than a minute. In these modern days it isn't often necessary to know how to start a fire solely by means of friction, but you can see that such knowledge might well prove the means of saving one's life. There isn't a flint and steel in your whole

party, and I presume the same may be said of all troops of Boy Scouts. Suppose that in the depths of the woods, in the middle of winter, a small company finds that every match has been used. The only method of starting a fire is by the means just employed. It is so simple that it is always at command. So many story writers have the habit of saying in their glib, off-hand way that their marooned or astray heroes kindled a flame by rubbing two sticks together that the readers believe it, when the thing is as impossible as perpetual motion. Now, since you have started a fire, your next duty is to put it out."

No water being handy, the few embers were scattered and stamped into the moist earth, until not a spark remained. Addressing the company, Uncle Elk said:

"Ernest Thompson-Seton tells an amusing story which he heard from Walter Hough. An Apache Indian turned up his nose at the matches of the white men and boasted that he could ignite a quantity of sticks quicker than Hough could with matches. It was such, a preposterous claim that Hough challenged him to a trial. It was accepted, they took their positions, the buck gave a few turns, but as the umpire was about to say 'Go!' the Indian called, 'Stop--stop him--no good.' He rearranged the contrivance and Mr. Hough grasped his match.

"'Stop--stop him--no good,' protested the redskin again, demanding a delay a third time before he nodded his head and the umpire called, 'Go!'

"Mr. Hough felt his advantage was so overwhelming that he did not hurry in striking the sputtering match, but hardly had it ignited, when the Apache uttered an exclamation of triumph, for he had produced smoke. This was covered with tinder, fanned a few seconds and broke into a vivid flame before the white man had his sticks ablaze.

"The Indian had won, but it was by a trick. While he appeared to be testing his contrivance the sly rascal was really 'winding it up' and it was a part of his game.

"The Moros of the Philippines have an ingenious way of producing fire. They use a short piece of bamboo, a bit of broken china and tinder. Holding the bamboo firmly in his left hand, the bit of china, with a pinch of tinder between the china and thumb in his right hand, the native strikes a quick downward blow with the china along the bamboo. A long spark follows and ignites the tinder which is readily blown into the blaze."

"Why should the process you describe cause a flame?" asked Scout Master Hall.

"The bamboo is very hard with a glazed surface; the sharp edge of the china pares off a thin strip of the glaze, and the friction of the blow ignites it. The operation is so simple that the Moro children have no trouble with it. But we have no bamboo in our woods, and that method is consequently impossible. The method you have just learned is quite likely to be at your command in all circumstances when lost in the woods and is much more convenient than the other means."

CHAPTER XIII--A Bit of Detective Work

Less than half a mile farther brought the troop of Boy Scouts to the home of Elkanah Sisum, their Instructor in Woodcraft. Naturally he took the lead, with Scout Master Hall next and the youths straggling after them.

Expressions of pleased surprise followed the sight of the log structure in the midst of the neat patch of cultivated ground. Mike Murphy was the only lad who was familiar with the place and he held his peace. While his waggishness was generally irrepressible, he knew when good taste suggested that others do most of the talking.

The party had stood only a few minutes feasting their eyes, when Mr. Hall asked:

"How long have you lived here, Uncle Elk?"

"Some fifteen years, which have been years of quiet meditation and serene enjoyment. While I do not wish to cut myself wholly off from the society of my fellow men and I make occasional visits to Boothbay Harbor and even to Portland, yet my comfort is here among my books with my own thoughts and in communion with my Maker, tending the piece of ground, fishing, and hunting for the smaller game that is found in this part of Maine."

A slight but significant fact must be recorded. It was at this time that Scout Master Hall noticed a vague peculiarity in the manner of the old man which he would have found it hard to describe. It appeared in his manner and very faintly in his voice. The leader was the only one who detected it and he made no reference to it until long afterward.

The survey was brief when their guide walked forward to the open space in front of his dwelling, where he again halted and spoke to those gathered about him:

"When I finished building my cabin, the only lock I placed on the door was the old-fashioned latch. I shoved the leathern string through the auger hole above it, so that it hung outside, and never since then by night or day, in sunshine or storm, through winter or summer, has it been drawn inside. I keep open house and every one who chooses to honor me with a call is welcome."

"Do you have many visitors?" asked Alvin Landon.

"Weeks have passed without bringing one; then I have had as many as two in twenty-four hours. I have lately had that number. The first was Michael last night and the second a stranger whom I have never seen, but who called this forenoon after I left home."

The old man enjoyed the astonishment of his visitors.

"If you have never seen him how do you know he has been here?" was the natural question of Patrol Leader Chase.

"I saw the proof in the same moment that I reached the clearing. He came across the lake in a canoe, walked up the path, entered the house, stayed a little while and then left. You being strangers in this section could hardly be expected to discover the shadowy impressions of his shoe here and there, especially since your failure a little while ago to find the trail of the wild animal prowling in your neighborhood."

"Ye will not forgit, Uncle Elk, that it was mesilf that told ye about the beast that took a promenade by the spot," reminded Mike Murphy.

"No; I am not likely to forget that, but I *am* forgetting the claims of hospitality. I can't offer you the elbow room you have at the clubhouse, but you are none the less welcome."

He twitched the latchstring, the door being so balanced on its hinges that it swung inward of itself. He stepped across the threshold to the mantel where Scout Master Hall was sure he saw him take a small article, glance at it and then shove it into his pocket. Facing about he called to his friends to enter.

They crowded into the room. The host did not draw aside the curtain which shut off the other half of the lower floor and which was his sleeping quarters.

You have read a partial description of the home of the hermit,—the most surprising feature of which was the well-thumbed volumes of scientific and scholarly works, in addition to several high class magazines and publications. Mr. Hall noticed that while the visitors were gazing around with natural curiosity, Uncle Elk stopped for a moment in front of his book shelf, glanced at the volumes and then quickly stooping, picked up what seemed to be a speck of dust from the bare floor. It was all done so quickly that the Scout Master would never have recalled it but for that which followed.

There were not enough seats for a third of the company and the youths kept their feet. Perhaps it was a harmless touch of vanity, with which all of us are more or less endowed, that led Uncle Elk to make a display of his skill as a detective.

"Yes," he added a few minutes later; "there has been a caller here during my absence this forenoon."

Scout Master Hall had the tact to humor the harmless weakness of the old man.

"Can you tell me whether he was an Indian or a white man?"

"He was of the same race as ourselves and is about forty years old. He carried no weapon,--nothing more than a fishing tackle. He is well off in the world's goods, has been three days in the neighborhood and is friendly toward me."

"I could have told ye the last, Uncle Elk," said Mike, "for there isn't anybody who doesn't feel that way."

"Well said," commented Scout Master Hall, "and it is true."

The old gentleman bowed in acknowledgment of the compliment.

"You may suspect I am guessing, but I am not. When the man entered and saw that the owner was absent, he made himself at home, as I wish every one to do while awaiting my return. I suppose it was natural that he should be struck by my little library. He examined some of the books, and while doing so used the fingers of his right hand to scratch his beard, as a man often does unconsciously. He withdrew four of the volumes from the shelf, but was not much interested in them, for he replaced them, lighted a perfecto cigar, sat down in my easy chair, smoked a little while, with the chair gently rocking, then with his cigar half consumed, he passed out of the door and down the path to where he had left his canoe and paddled across the lake."

Even with the assurance given by Uncle Elk, some of his listeners found it hard to credit all he said. He looked calmly into the array of faces, well aware of what was in the minds of his callers. He expected a question and Mr. Hall asked it:

"We know that all you have told us is true, because you said it was. They recall so vividly some of the 'deductions' of Sherlock Holmes that I hope you will enlighten us as to your methods."

"What doubt has occurred to you?"

"You detected the faint disturbances made by the visitor's feet, where he did not keep to the middle of the path. These told you the shoes were those of a white man, because, I presume of their fashionable make, and they showed that he came from and returned to the lake, but what warrant have you for saying he carried a rod?"

"He leaned it against the front of the house at the side of the steps where the imprint plainly shows. It was natural for him to do that instead of carrying it inside."

"Why do you decide that he is a man in middle life?"

Uncle Elk was manifestly pleased by the chance to display his ingenuity.

"Let me explain several deductions of rather evident facts. At the right hand end of the upper shelf of books are four volumes: Fiske's 'Cosmic Philosophy'; James' 'Pragmatism' and 'Pluralistic Universe,' and Henri Bergson's 'Creative Evolution.' These books are a trifle out of alignment,--just enough so to show it was caused by some one else. Therefore he took them from their places. In returning the books to the shelf, he changed the places of Prof. James' two works,--another proof if it were needed of the accuracy of my deduction. He must have stood exactly in front of that side of the book shelves, for on the floor to the right of such position are several short hairs, some black and some gray. They would not have fallen of themselves and must have been displaced by his fingers. They tell me his beard was grizzled or mixed and consequently he was in middle life."

"Your explanation is based on the theory that he is right handed," said the Scout Master; "are you not guessing there, Uncle Elk?"

"No; standing directly in front of the four volumes, the few threads of hair fell still further to the right. Their texture shows they came from his beard and not the crown of his head. They would not have fallen as they did unless they were displaced by the hand on that side of the man."

"It seems to me," continued the Scout Master, "that in so trifling a matter a person would make no distinction in the use of his hands. Besides, some persons are ambidextrous."

"In certain circumstances he would use either hand, but the position of the outermost volume shows that it was shoved back by the same hand that loosened the two or three strands from his beard. When a man uses the same hand to do both of those things, it is good proof that he is right handed."

"I am at a loss to understand how the position of the books shows that your visitor employed his right hand in restoring them to their places." Uncle Elk's eyes twinkled as he grew more subtle.

"You may think my explanation fine spun, but it is absolutely logical. It happens that 'Pragmatism' is the least interesting volume to me. I have not opened it for several weeks. A slight film of dust has gathered on the upper gilt edges. In withdrawing the book I rest my thumb against the upper part of the back and my first two fingers on the top; so every one does. Observe."

Uncle Elk illustrated his words. With the book in his hand he shifted it about so that the sunlight was reflected from the bright yellow.

"There are the marks made by the first two fingers of a man's hand, but the disturbance of the fine layer of dust clearly shows that the finger to the right was longer than the other. That is to say, it was the right hand: do I make myself clear?"

"You do how do you know the man sat down in your chair and rocked back and forth?"

"That is the simplest matter of all. I suppose that living as I do I become more or less a crank. One of my notions is never to leave the house without seeing that the left rocker of my chair is exactly over and in a line with that crack in the floor. Notice now and you will see that it rests diagonally across the crack. Do you ask anything plainer than that?"

It was Bobby Rice who made the natural remark:

"I don't see why a rocking chair should shift about."

"Arrah now, have ye no sinse?" asked Mike Murphy reprovingly; "Uncle Elk didn't say *why* a rocking chair kicks up its heels, but ye ought to know that the cratur's always do so without giving any reason or excuse. Haven't I tried to use me mither's chair at home wid the result that it always hitches through the dure whin I'm not thinking and gives me a back somersault? Ye surprise me by your stupidity, as Jim Hooligan said whin his taycher remarked he could not see what plisure a lad found in fighting two ither lads."

"Why were you so quick to say your visitor is a man in good circumstances?" asked Scout Master Hall.

"Because he smokes fifteen-cent cigars. Most campers out are fond of the brier-wood pipe, but when they use cigars they don't buy expensive ones unless they can afford it, and not always then."

"What fact gives you so much confidence in their quality?"

"I know the brand, for I have smoked them myself; I caught the fragrance the moment I opened the door; the silken ashes which he flipped off in the fireplace is another proof if you wish it. Michael, are you satisfied?"

"I couldn't do better mesilf, but ye haven't completed yer rivelations."

"What is lacking?"

"I demand that ye give us the name of the gintleman that ye niver met or heard of and that spint a part of to-day at yer risidence."

"He is a physician named Wilson Spellman."

The boys stared at one another, with expressions of incredulity. It sounded as if Uncle Elk was presuming too far upon their simplicity. By way of answer he drew a card from his pocket and held it up so that those nearest readily read the name engraved thereon. Below it were the pencilled words:

"Come and see me at my camp on the upper side of the lake."

Scout Master Hall recalled the crossing of the floor by Uncle Elk, when he opened the door, as well as his quick scrutiny of the book shelves.

"The message written below shows the doctor's friendly disposition, and is a further proof--which was not needed--that he is a white man. Since he has waived ceremony and called upon me, I shall not wait long before returning the courtesy."

"He has been in the neighborhood for three days?" said the Scout Master inquiringly.

"Yes; I saw the smoke of his camp-fire three mornings ago. We should have seen him paddling across the lake this morning, had we not all been so far in the woods."

The Boy Scouts now wandered over the grounds, under the direction of their owner, who suggested that as it was near noon, they should use their lines and prepare a fish dinner as his guests. The Scout Master thanked him but amended by proposing that they should all go back to the clubhouse, where they had abundant supplies and every needed convenience, and that he should favor them with his presence. He finally decided to stay in his own home until late in the afternoon, when he would join them for supper. He agreed to this the more readily since it was understood that Mike Murphy was to be initiated as a Tenderfoot Scout,--that is provided he could pass the necessary examination. No one except he and Uncle Elk knew the thorough instruction he had received and the boys, including the Scout Master, thought it hardly possible for the youth to answer the questions, unless they were made specially easy. It was the self-confidence of Mike himself that permitted the test to go on.

"Don't let up aither," he said to the leader; "soak it into me the best ye know how. If I'm to be squashed, I want to be squashed fair and square, as Pat Rooney said whin three automobiles ran over him."

The balmy afternoon passed rapidly, with several of the boys fishing from the canoes along shore and others wandering through the woods, brightening their knowledge of the different trees and studying the birds, of which only a moderate number were observed.

Scout Master Hall saw in Mike Murphy the making of a model Boy Scout. It may be said that when the troop convened that evening, chiefly by the glow of the oil lamp suspended overhead from a beam in the middle of the ceiling, the meeting was a special one, called for the purpose of helping a young tenderfoot along the trail. The proceedings may not have been strictly regular, but no criticism could be made upon their spirit.

Uncle Elk was invited to occupy the seat of honor as it may be called, but he preferred to remain in the background as observer and listener. The night was cool enough to make enjoyable the crackling logs on the broad hearth and to add to the illumination of the spacious apartment. There was considerable rain and cool weather in August that year.

At about eight o'clock, Scout Master Hall opened the session with a commendation of the Boy Scout organization and a compliment to those who wished to join it. As it was impossible to have the examination conducted as prescribed by the Court of Honor, the Scout Master assumed the duty himself.

The second step would have been the collection of observation lists for future use, but this was omitted, as was the call for drill formation. The National Flag was displayed and the scout salute and sign followed, winding up with two good yells which made the rafters of the bungalow ring.

Mike was now questioned as to his knowledge of our banner. He was entitled to a written examination, but declined it and again urged his examiner to show no mercy. Standing in the middle of the room the candidate amazed his listeners. Not only did he promptly answer every prescribed question, but he interjected many facts that were new to nearly all who heard them. I have already hinted of several, such, for instance, as that our flag throughout the War of 1812 bore fifteen instead of thirteen stripes, and that Congress restored the original number in 1818, knowing that otherwise the beautiful symmetry of the emblem would be destroyed by the increase in the number of States.

"Michael," said the Instructor from where he was sitting; "can you tell us to whom the credit belongs for the present pattern of our flag?"

"To Captain Samuel C. Reid--God bless his memory!"

"And who was Captain Samuel C. Reid?"

"He commanded the American privateer, *General Armstrong*, which knocked the iver-lasting stuffing out of a British squadron of three vessels and two thousand men, while he had less than a hundred heroes. Worra, worra, what a shindy that must have been!"

And then Mike impressively repeated the lines that Uncle Elk had taught him:

"Tell the story to your sons
Of the gallant days of yore,
When the brig of seven guns
Fought the fleet of seven score.
From the set of sun till morn, through the long September night--
Ninety men against two thousand, and the ninety won the fight--
In the harbor of Fayal in the Azore."

By this time, the Scout Master and everyone of the boys were convinced of the truth. They knew the theme that had engaged Uncle Elk and Mike the evening before, and had they felt any doubt on that point it would have been quenched by the sly glances that flitted between the couple.

The next requirement was for the candidate to step to the table in the middle of the room, where two pieces of hempen cord had been laid, and to tie at least four of the eight knots which have been already explained. He held up the pieces, like a magician about to give an exhibition of his skill, and tied every one with a deft quickness that brought a hum of admiration.

Then he took the scout oath, explaining all its provisions in his own language or rather in that of his brilliant teacher, not forgetting the significance of the scout badge and that which is worn by the tenderfoot. The Scout Master pinned the badge over the left upper pocket of his coat. The whole company clapped their hands.

"I am delighted, Mike," said Mr. Hall; "I never knew any one to acquit himself so admirably. If the opportunity presents itself, you will make as creditable a Second Class and finally a First Class Scout, with no end of merit badges. You know you must serve a month before you are eligible for the next grade. Our stay in Maine will be no longer than that and I shall not have the pleasure, therefore, of witnessing your advancement. Your home is in this State and you will probably demit from our Patrol and join some other more convenient. I understand that Rev. Mr. Brown, the Methodist

minister at Boothbay Harbor, has organized a fine company of Boy Scouts, and they will be glad to welcome you to their ranks. I wonder, even when I know the circumstances, how you acquired such a knowledge of the duties of a tenderfoot."

"Begging yer pardon," replied Mike with a grin; "there's no cause fur wonder. The knowledge of which ye spake and which passed through me noddle, come from *him*."

And he pointed at Uncle Elk, sitting behind the others, who so far as his beard permitted one to see, smiled and said nothing.

CHAPTER XIV--The Story of Johnny Appleseed

It has already been made clear to you that the sojourn of the troop of Boy Scouts in the southern Maine woods during this summer was simply a vacation in which there was a relaxation of rigid discipline such as attended their hikes and what may be called business outings. A certain part of each week-day was devoted to drill; the bugle was sounded morning and evening; the National Flag was saluted; yells practiced and so on. The leader simply kept the youngsters on edge, as may be said. They were given full liberty most of the time, with freedom to use the canoes for fishing in the lake, or to wander in the woods studying trees, bird and insect life, as the varying tastes of the boys prompted. One of the most enjoyable treats of the boys was that of story telling. This took place in the evening after supper, the extinguishment of the outdoor fires, the putting away of the dishes and the setting of things to rights. Scout Master Hall was never at a loss for an instructive or amusing "yarn," but was too wise to give the boys a surfeit. He encouraged them in the discussion of different subjects, to explain what they had read and to try their own skill at story telling.

"Never hurry in relating anything," said he, "for to do so is to weaken its effect and cause impatience on the part of your listeners. Try to bring out all the points; don't grow garrulous or wander from the main thread; don't preach, or fish for a moral where there isn't any, and finally stop when you are through.

"Now, nothing is more certain than that Uncle Elk has an exhaustless fund of stories in his wealth of knowledge and experience. You have me with you always--or at least a good deal of the time--while we shall not have him half as much as we wish. Let us, therefore, use him while we can. Uncle Elk, tell us a story."

Every boy clapped his hands and looked expectantly at the old gentleman sitting modestly in the background. He bowed in recognition, while those who were seated in chairs shifted them around and those on the floor adjusted their positions so as to face him.

"As Michael would say, this is so sudden that I am uncertain for the moment how best to comply with your wishes; but while listening to the examination of our young friend and the well chosen words of Mr. Hall, I called to mind the record of a man who lived and died many years before any of you were born, and who in many respects will serve as a model for all Boy Scouts."

And this is the story which Uncle Elk told, and concerning which I wish merely to say that it is strictly true in every particular:

"One of the strangest characters who had to do with the settlement of the Middle West was Jonathan Chapman, born in New England in 1770. He was of gentle birth, and well educated, but was ill treated by a young woman. I have never heard the particulars, but it is said she turned him away in favor of another person, and Chapman felt so bad he made an exile of himself.

"Now, boys, quite likely when you become a few years older, you will meet some young woman who you will feel sure is the finest person of her sex that ever lived, and perhaps you will think life isn't worth while unless you can win her love. I hope you will have no such disappointments, but, if you do, don't let it break your heart. You have heard the old saying that there are as fine fish in the sea as ever were caught. So there are thousands of excellent girls and if you don't gain the first one you fix your affections upon, brace up and look around for another."

"And 'spose she likewise turns ye down, as was the case wid Tim O'Shaughnessy in Ireland, who was rejected by more young leddies than he could kaap count of?" gravely inquired Mike Murphy.

"Stick to it; never give up the ship."

"I'll sind yer advice to Tim, though I misgive me that he will die of old age while the search is still going on, but he must find enjoyment in coorting or he wouldn't keep at it as he does and smile all the time."

"Well, to go back to Jonathan Chapman. He felt so bad that he packed up his belongings and left New England forever. He started for the West as it was then called and the next heard of him was in what are now the states of Ohio, Illinois and Kentucky, which at that time formed a part of the vast, wild Northwest Territory. He tramped by himself among the scattered settlements and visited the different tribes of Indians, who in those years were continually on the war path; but no red man, no matter how fierce, ever tried to harm Chapman."

"How was that?" asked Alvin Landon, voicing the surprise of the other boys.

"The Indians believe that any one whose brain is unbalanced, or who is seemingly lacking in some of his mental faculties, is under the special care of the Great Spirit, and instead of trying to injure such a person they will befriend him."

Mike nudged Alvin and said in an undertone which, however, every one heard:

"Ye needn't be afear'd, me friend, to spend your days among the same red gintlemen."

Alvin shook his fist at his friend, who dodged an imaginary blow. Uncle Elk smiled at the by-play and continued:

"In some respects Chapman was a model Scout, for no kinder hearted man ever lived. He would never kill an animal unless to save his own life and even then he grieved over the necessity which made him do it. When he almost stepped upon a coiled rattler, he would turn aside and leave him unharmed. One cold night he started a fire at the base of a huge oak in the woods. A few minutes later he heard a great scratching inside the hollow trunk and the snout of a she-bear was thrust out of the opening above his head. She and her cubs were alarmed by the unusual proceeding and she seemed to be getting ready to make a change of quarters with her family. Chapman instantly kicked apart the burning brands and left. The story is that he sat and shivered in other quarters the night through, but I can't see the necessity for that and I must think he kindled a new fire after making sure he did not disturb any wild creature.

"Chapman is remembered in the history of the Middle West as 'Johnny Appleseed,' because he thought it was his mission to distribute apple seeds among the settlers and Indians, asking only that they should be planted and the king of all fruits cultivated. With a bag thus filled and slung over his shoulder, he tramped for hundreds of miles through all sorts of weather, sometimes paddling down or up a river, sleeping wherever night overtook him, often in Indian lodges and again in the lonely cabin of some settler, or by the camp fire of a party of scouts far in the depths of the wilderness. Whoever his hosts might be he presented them with handfuls of seeds and made them promise to plant and tend the fruit. Very few failed to keep their promise to him.

"You will not be surprised when I add that Johnny Appleseed was deeply religious. He spent hours in prayer and tried to employ his waking time just as he believed his Heavenly Father wished him to use it. He was a Swedenborgian in faith, and in addition to the stock of appleseeds he always carried a number of tracts which he distributed among his friends. Since the Indians could not read the printed words, he told them of the Great Spirit as he believed him to be, and who shall say that such precious seed did not bear fruitage?

"When his supply of tracts ran low, he tore them into separate sheets and divided them among the scouts and settlers accompanying them with a few words of counsel. The hardy men might jest with him at times but they never purposely hurt his feelings. Simon Kenton, one of the greatest of all the western scouts, kept for years the tracts which he received from Johnny Appleseed. You may not know it, but Kenton in his later days became a humble Christian. He had a fine voice and often led the singing at the famous camp meetings in the West.

"But to return to Johnny Appleseed. Year after year, in summer and winter, in storm and sunshine, he tramped the lonely wilderness, or guided his dugout up and down the rivers and streams, distributing tracts and seeds, giving good advice and showing by his conduct that he lived as close to his Saviour as mortal man can live.

"One summer afternoon he landed on the shore of the Ohio, and with his plump bag of seeds over his shoulder, plunged into the woods. He was on his way to a village of Wyandots, where he was sure of welcome. Before he reached the place, he came upon nearly a hundred warriors gathered in a large natural clearing. They were running races, wrestling, throwing the tomahawk and firing at targets. Moreover, their faces were daubed with black and red paint.

"The first glance told Johnny the truth. These red men were about to go on the war path. A raid had been planned upon the frontier settlements, and fire, destruction and massacre would again sweep along the border as it had done many times. Did Johnny argue or plead with them? He was too wise to do that. He passed in and out among the fierce bucks, addressing the leaders by name, giving them handfuls of seeds and saying something pleasant to each. He even stood by and praised their skill in marksmanship and athletic sports. Not an Indian showed the slightest distrust, but treated him with as much kindness as if he belonged to their own race and meant to take part with them in the raid near at hand.

"Johnny stayed with them for more than an hour, then said good bye and with the bag over his shoulder strolled toward the river bank where he had left his dugout. As soon as he was beyond sight, he dropped his burden to the ground and ran like a deer. Leaping into the crude craft, he sent it skimming over the water like a swallow, never pausing until he had gone five or six miles. Then he caught sight of that for which he was hunting,—the gleam of a tiny point of light in the dense undergrowth along shore. He sped like an arrow to it and hardly paused to draw his boat on the bank when he dashed to the camp fire with a shout. Had he not called out his name, he probably would have been shot by one of the three scouts who were broiling their evening meal, for the rule with those hardy fellows was to shoot first and investigate afterward.

"One of the party was Simon Kenton. They were out on a scout because of rumors of impending trouble among the Shawnees, Wyandots and other tribes. The story which Johnny Appleseed told made further scouting on their part unnecessary: the red men were about to start on the war path and no time was to be lost in warning the settlements and

exposed pioneers.

"Ten minutes after the arrival of the messenger the four had scattered, all taking different directions and hurrying with the speed of the wind through the dark wilderness. It would have been throwing effort away to keep together or to travel in couples. By breaking apart they could reach as many different points without unnecessary delay and thus make the warning more general.

"Now, while Kenton and each of his comrades made all haste toward the settlements, Johnny Appleseed put forth every effort to reach the home of a pioneer acquaintance who lived by himself with his wife and two small children. It was only a few miles off and was certain to be visited by a small party of Wyandots, who would draw away from the main band long enough to destroy the family that, having no suspicion of their danger, would be caught unawares.

"The incident which followed sounds unbelievable and yet it was only one of several similar ones. Despite Johnny's haste when he reached the clearing in front of the cabin, he discovered a party of a dozen Wyandots, in the act of surrounding the house with the intention of setting it on fire and burning the inmates to death. The red men were too powerful and well prepared to be beaten off by the single defender. Johnny carried no gun, his only weapon being a large knife, which he used in preparing food or his camp fire. Besides, he was ready at any time to give up his life rather than fight.

"What he did do was to rush in among the painted warriors and address them like some inspired prophet sent of heaven. He told them the Great Spirit would be angry if they harmed the white man who had always been their friend, and that disaster would assuredly overtake them in their more important attack upon the settlements. His message was from the Great Spirit and woe to them if they closed their ears to his warning words!

"Well, he must have had a hard time of it, but he played his part to perfection. In the end, the band of redskins drew off and went back to the main company, the settler whom Johnny had saved never dreaming of his danger or suspecting what had taken place, until Johnny told him the story many years afterwards. I may add that the main campaign proved what they called in those days a 'flash in the pan,' since the message of Johnny Appleseed gave Kenton and his two companions just enough time in which to reach the stockades that otherwise might have been captured.

"I might tell you many stories of the remarkable man known as Johnny Appleseed, who spent his life in doing good in his own peculiar way. As I said at the beginning, he was an ideal Boy Scout grown to maturity, whose sole purpose was to help his fellow men. *That* is the basis of our organization. Every boy and girl, every man and woman, can do something, and God judges you only by the improvement you make of your opportunities. It may not be yours to wander through the woods, distributing seeds and tracts and giving good counsel, but you can speak the cheering word, encourage the discouraged one, cheerfully obey your parents and teachers, help the feeble and downhearted and do hundreds of things which, small of themselves, amount in the end to more than you can estimate. The consciousness that comes to you when you do something of that kind repays you a hundred fold.

"Some folks say that Jonathan Chapman or Johnny Appleseed was crazy. Measured according to our standards, perhaps he was mentally unbalanced, but I have sometimes fancied that he was one of the sanest of men, for he gave his all for humanity. He thought and cared nothing for his own comfort. He often went hungry, shivered with cold or panted with heat, but so long as life lasted he never fainted by the way."

"How long did he live?" asked the Scout Master.

"Until about three-score and ten. The last picture that we have of him is standing on an eminence and looking down with radiant face on one of the most beautiful panoramas that mind can picture. His long thin gray hair dangled over his shoulders, his beard was white and scraggling, he had no cap or coat, the only garment being a shaggy buffalo skin wrapped about his gaunt body, with his legs below his knees bare. One of the leather bags was slung over his shoulder, and a staff was in his hand.

"He died in 1847, and of him it may be said his labors bore fruit over a hundred thousand square miles of territory. Limitless acres of choicest apples in the Middle West sprang from the seeds which he scattered over that vast region. His birthday--January 15--will always be honored by the pomological societies of America."

CHAPTER XV--Other Neighbors

Uncle Elk declined the invitation of Scout Master Hall to stay over night at the bungalow, and bidding his friends good bye, with the promise soon to see them again, he went forth staff in hand into the dim woods on his tramp to his lonely home to the eastward.

It cannot be said of any portion of our country that it enjoys a perfect climate, though some sections are highly favored in that respect. Maine is an ideal summer resort, with its crystal waters, its cool breezes and its pure air. When people were panting with intolerable heat in many cities, I have never known an uncomfortable night or oppressive midday in the southern part of the Pine Tree State.

All the same, the weather at times on the seacoast is about as disagreeable as it can well be. Drizzling rain and mists, dank, impenetrable fogs and chilling winds make a roaring fire attractive, and cause many a person to long for his city home, where every convenience and luxury are at command. I make no reference to the winter season, except to say that there is no better State in the Union to avoid unless you have a fondness for arctic exploration.

The morning succeeding Uncle Elk's last call brought lowering skies. The chill in the air presaged an unwelcome change, when the bungalow would prove far more inviting than the open woods, even though the Boy Scouts were provided with tents and all the protection possible against climatic severity. Since, however, the dismal shift was not likely to come for several hours, our young friends determined to make the best use possible of the hours at their command. So, as they had done before, they separated into small groups, most of which took different directions in the woods. Scout Master Hall went with Chase his leader and Robe his corporal on a hunt for birds, or rather to study their peculiarities. Nearly all the scouts were amateur ornithologists, and there was no little rivalry among them as to who could discover the greater variety of feathered songsters.

I am sure you will agree with me that this field is one of the most fascinating in natural history. I should like to copy the report which Patrol Leader Chase and three of the other boys read at the following business meeting of the troop, but I think we have dipped far enough into scientific matters for the present, and shall defer the treat to another season. If you feel like making an effort to learn about our "little brothers of the air," I commend the following table from the official Handbook of the Boy Scouts:

1. Description. (Size, form, color, and markings.)
2. Haunts. (Upland, lowland, lakes, rivers, woods, fields, etc.)
3. Movements. (Slow or active, hops, walks, creeps, swims, tail wagged, etc.)
4. Appearance. (Alert, listless, crest erect, tail dropped, etc.)
5. Disposition. (Solitary, flocking, wary, unsuspecting, etc.)
6. Flight. (Slow, rapid, direct, undulating, soaring, sailing, flapping, etc.)
7. Song. (Pleasing, unattractive, long, short, loud, faint, sung from the ground, from a perch, in the air, etc. Season of song.)
8. Call notes. (Of surprise, alarm, protest, warning, signaling, etc.)
9. Season. (Spring, fall, summer, winter, with times of arrival and departure and variations in numbers.)
10. Food. (Berries, insects, seeds, etc.; how secured.)
11. Mating. (Habits during courtship.)
12. Nesting. (Choice of site, material, construction, eggs, incubation, etc.)
13. The young. (Food and care of, time in the nest, notes, actions, flight, etc.)

Alvin Landon, Chester Haynes and Mike Murphy decided to borrow one of the canoes belonging to the clubhouse, paddle across the lake and call upon Doctor Spellman, who had dropped into the home of Uncle Elk the day before. The weather was favorable for fishing, the game being abundant in Gosling Lake, but such sport could wait, and the lads agreed that nothing ought to divert them from their social obligations.

The three had gained more or less experience in the management of canoes during their stay on Southport Island. Alvin was the most and Mike the least expert, though the latter was not as awkward as would be supposed. Two paddles belonged to each craft, the third being taken from the second boat, so that all the youths were provided. These implements were about four feet long and were broadened at one end into a thin but tough blade and at the other into a comfortable hand grip. Seated on the wicker seats and facing forward, the task of driving the canoe may be continued a

long while before it becomes tiresome.

An axiom is that no person should ever enter a canoe when it is not afloat, on account of its frailty. Grasping the curving bow with one hand, Alvin drew the craft alongside the bank where the water was several feet deep, and held it steady while his friends stepped carefully in and seated themselves, Alvin at the stern, which was a counterpart of the bow, while Chester located himself on the forward seat and Mike in the middle.

"I'm to serve as a balance wheel," he said as they moved gingerly out from shore; "the same being what me mither's cousin Tom remarked when he was bouncing over the cobble stones with his fut fast in the stirrup of the donkey he had fell from; I'll hev an eye on both of ye and don't forgit I'm still first mate."

"You were first mate of the *Deerfoot*, not of a canoe," said Alvin.

"The *Deerfut* gave me the training fur the harder work of managing this ship."

Our friends would have had to search for the camp which they intended to visit, but for the guidance given by a thin wavering column of smoke which filtered upwards from among the trees a short distance back from the shore of the lake, where the camp itself was hidden by the foliage. The distance to be passed was a little less than a mile and the youths rippled smoothly forward with their eyes fixed on their destination. As they drew near, they observed a smaller canoe than their own drawn a little way up the shingle. It was the craft used by Doctor Spellman when fishing or exploring the sheet of water. Since the owner was not in sight, it was fair to suppose he was at home unless perhaps he was absent on an excursion in the woods.

In due time the canoe was driven alongside the other and drawn far enough up the shore to be secure against drifting away. The three stepped ashore, and followed a faintly worn path up the slight incline among the trees and undergrowth with Alvin in the lead. Less than a hundred yards took them to a pleasant scene, all of whose points they learned a short time afterward.

It may be said that Doctor Spellman used the last thing in the way of an improved dwelling in the wilderness. This was a portable house, and consisted of two rooms, the side walls formed of screen cloth protected inside when necessary by canvas drops, pierced with small windows of a flexible transparent material. Outside were canvas drops which could be lowered if the occupants wished to shut up the house and which when raised formed projecting awnings where one was well protected by the shade thus provided. There were two windows at either end of the house and a front door.

Should you ever indulge in a few weeks' outing in the woods, take no furniture with you that will not fold and no article that is not indispensable. Folding cots, a table, and the same kind of camp chairs can be packed in a small space and cost little to move. The doctor had sets of three folding canvas shelves fastened to wooden slats which could be stowed in a few inches of space, water proof canvas buckets holding three gallons each which folded compactly; waterproof canvas folding basins and folding rubber bathtubs, while a packing box with the addition of a shelf made a fine dresser. Extra shelves were put up by the doctor when he laid the floor of his dwelling and hooked the different parts together. Finally he provided himself with a hammock which was hung between two sturdy saplings, and brought with him only unbreakable dishes.

Most people in such situations bring a cheap wood or oil stove, but Doctor Spellman used the primitive contrivance already described, which consisted of big properly arranged stones.

On one of the camp chairs sat Doctor Spellman smoking one of the expensive cigars to which Uncle Elk had alluded. He wore white flannels turned up at the bottom, high tan shoes and a soft Panama hat. The boys noticed his full, grizzled beard and recalled the declaration of their Instructor concerning his age. He had a newspaper which he was reading when he heard the approaching footsteps, but laid it on his knee and removing his eye-glasses faced his callers.

Nearby sat Mrs. Spellman, a charming and strikingly beautiful woman of a decided brunette type. Her dark eyes were set in a face of Grecian regularity of feature, softened by her olive skin and crowned by dusky hair filled with lights and shadows. She was clad in sensible woods costume of blouse and short skirt which revealed her small feet encased in hunting boots.

The moment the boys appeared, the host and hostess rose to greet them. Each lad removed his hat and respectfully bowed, Alvin acting as spokesman:

"Good morning; I hope we are not intruding."

"Visitors are too few in this part of the world," replied the doctor, "for them to be otherwise than welcome. I am Doctor Spellman from Boston; this is Mrs. Spellman; we have a third member of our family, but she seems to be invisible at this moment. Pray be seated."

Of course the boys declined the chairs offered since it would leave the host and hostess without any support of that nature. The callers sat down on a log, in the butt was an axe of which the blade had been buried with the handle sloping upward.

Alvin in turn introduced himself and companions and all were at ease.

"You are with the party stopping at the clubhouse on the other side of the lake? I judge from the display of flags and a glimpse of you through my binoculars that you are a troop of Boy Scouts on a vacation."

"Yes; we expect to stay there through the month of August."

"Since you came last it was my duty to call upon you and I should have done so to-day had not the weather been threatening a little while ago."

"We can afford to waive ceremony while in the woods," replied Alvin; "we shall count upon seeing you both quite often."

"You certainly shall. To-morrow is Sunday, and if it clears up you may expect me and possibly Mrs. Spellman and our little one."

In answer to the inquiring look of her husband the wife nodded.

"Don't fancy that you can do your visiting without taking me along. You left me home yesterday."

"That, my dear, was unintentional; I had no thought of stopping at the cabin of the hermit until I had been out some time in the canoe and noticed the path leading to his cabin."

Alvin related the particulars of the call of himself and friends upon Uncle Elk and the clever manner in which he penetrated the personality of Doctor Spellman.

"Are you acquainted with him?" asked Chester Haynes of their host.

"Only by reputation. He is known as Elkanah Sisum, though I have a suspicion--perhaps not well founded--that that is not his right name. I have been told that he is a man of superior culture. In fact, a glance at his book shelves proves that. It is said that a great sorrow drove him into the wilderness and made an exile of him. I have no knowledge of its nature, but of course," added the doctor with a wink, "some woman was at the bottom of it."

"An unnecessary remark," replied the wife, "since that is rarely true."

Alvin and Chester glanced significantly at each other and the former said:

"Isn't it singular that he should have told us last night the story of a man who more than a hundred years ago became an exile and wanderer because the woman whom he loved rejected him for another? There must have been a resemblance between the case and his own."

"You are alluding to Johnny Appleseed, and it is another coincidence that wife and I were talking about that strange character last evening, probably at the very time you were listening to the old man's account. I believe there was a remote relationship between wife's ancestors and Jonathan Chapman's, which explains why we are familiar with a story that is not generally known."

"It was certainly new to all of us and Uncle Elk, as he likes to be called, related it with rare skill."

"He has never hinted anything of the facts of his own case?"

"No, and of course we cannot question him."

"The truth will become known sooner or later. There are several old persons in Portland who can clear up the mystery, which, however, may wait. While I think of it, I wish to tender you my professional services should they be needed, which I sincerely hope they will not. I have brought my case of instruments and a few simple remedies with me, more as a matter of prudence regarding my own family."

"That is very kind of you, and your offer is appreciated."

"I believe the Boy Scouts are pretty well instructed as to first aid to the injured, but accidents are always liable to happen. I wish you and your friends to feel free to call upon me at any time, with the understanding that no fee is involved. I did not come into the Maine woods to earn a living."

"But to benefit his city patients," remarked his wife; "when we return home we shall find them nearly all recovered."

"Hardly possible, since I have turned them over to my brother practitioners."

"Which makes the probability the greater."

The boys joined in the laugh at the physician's expense, and he, rising from his camp stool, bowed profoundly to his better half.

"The team which brought our stuff over the new road through the woods is the same that I understand brings your supplies. I expected from the way we were hauled and flung about in the plunging of the horses that I should have

several cases of broken necks to look after, but we got through better than I expected."

"Doother, don't ye think *I* look pale?"

CHAPTER XVI--The Sunbeam of Gosling Lake

The lugubrious voice of Mike Murphy accompanied as it was by a faint moan, drew every eye upon him. The sight of his red, freckled face and robust looks caused the others to break into laughter, which was renewed when he gazed reprovingly in turn at each.

"I see there's no use of me craving sympathy, as Mart Coogan said when he broke through the floor overhead onto the table where the sewing society were drinking tay."

"Doctor," said his wife when she regained her self-command, "if all your patients were like him, we should die of starvation."

"What caused your misgiving regarding your health?" gravely inquired the medical man.

"It wasn't any partic'lar ailing, but the alarming loss of me appetite."

"I should explain," said Alvin, "that that never occurs until he leaves the table, which is generally about all that he does leave."

"What am I to understand by *that*?" demanded Mike apparently in high dudgeon; "it sounds like a slur upon me truthfulness, as Jim Finnegan said when his friend called him a liar."

"What are you all making so much noise about?"

It would be putting it mildly to say that the three youths were startled by this unexpected question. Around the corner of the house dashed a little girl, some four or five years old, who asked the peremptory question. She was dressed in a short khaki dress, with high tan shoes, and her abundant hair was gathered loosely by a red ribbon tied behind her neck. She wore no hat and in face and feature was a replica of her handsome mother, with a complexion more darkly tinted, not only on the face but on the chubby arms that were bare to the elbows. If Mike Murphy typified vigorous young manhood, this little one was an equally marked example of a perfectly healthy child.

The Irish youth was the first to break the brief silence which followed her question.

"Won't ye come and shake hands wid me, Dorothy?"

Without stirring, she looked sharply at him.

"What makes you call me Dorothy? That isn't my name."

"I've been told that out of ivery ten little girls born in this counthry since Cleveland was President, nine of the same are named Dorothy; I beg yer pardon fur not knowing ye were the tenth."

The picture of the pretty child was so winsome that Alvin and Chester each held out his hands invitingly, accompanying the gesture with a smile that was meant to be irresistible. The girl hesitated a moment, father and mother watching her, and then made a dive down the slight slope as if she intended to plunge into the lake, but her course led her between Alvin and Chester and into the arms of Mike, who gently lifted her upon his knee.

"What a sinsible young lady ye be! Thus airly do ye admire manly beauty and high moral worth. May I have the honor to touch me lips to yer cheeks, if I promise not to rub off the pink from the same?"

Guessing his meaning, she turned her face sideways, while the others smilingly looked on and listened. Mike had won the good will of the parents by his cheek salute, for they never failed to let it be known that it was against their wishes that any one, no matter who, touched his or her lips to those of the child. Some have advocated the same style for adults, but I fear the plan will never be popular.

"My name is Ruth," said the little one artlessly; "that is, they sometimes call me that, but it isn't my right name."

"What is your right name?"

"Stubby,--I guess papa calls me that because I sometimes stub my toe when I run too fast. Folks that love me call me 'Stubby.'"

"Then it's mesilf that shall know ye as 'Stubby.' When these young chaps wid me presooms to addriss ye as 'Ruth,' have nought to do wid 'em, but come to me who knows how to traat ye respectful. But I'm going to give ye anither name, wid the permission of your father and mither."

"What's that?"

"The Sunbeam of Gosling Lake: how do you like it?"

Stubby was puzzled. With the end of her forefinger thrust in the corner of her mouth, she said doubtfully:

"I don't know; it sounds awfully funny; what do you think?" she asked turning to her parents.

"It is poetical and truthful, but rather too long to be used most of the time," said the mother.

"It might be saved for court occasions; Uncle Elk always calls me Michael, he being the only one of me acquaintance that has a true sense of the fitness of things. But I would respectfully suggest that the word 'Sunbeam' would serve."

"It certainly is better than 'Stubby'," remarked the father, "but it will be hard to displace the homely original."

"Mike means well," said Alvin, "though it is sometimes hard to understand him. Now, Sunbeam, I think you ought to sit on my knee for a little while."

He reached out his arms to help her across, but she held back.

"I like Mike better."

"It is rare that ye observe so much in one of her tender years," and the Irish youth said to the child:

"Owing to me careful thraining they're both purty fair lads, but I warn ye aginst trusting them too far. When ye naad a friend ye will not fail to come to me."

"Yes, indeedy, 'cause you are a good deal better looking than they----"

"Another illustration of disarmint; Sunbeam, I'm going to ask yer father and mither to loan ye to us for several days."

The little one did not quite grasp the meaning of this.

"Where do you live, Cousin Mike?"

And she clapped her hands with delight over the happy title that had flashed upon her without any thought on her part.

"That's it!" exclaimed the Irish laddie; "we're cousins for the rist of our lives."

"What about them?" she asked darting her chubby forefinger at Alvin and Chester.

"It will be the right thing to call one of 'em yer grandad and the ither yer grand-mither: that's the best use ye can put 'em to."

"That'll be splendid!" she added again clapping her hands and kicking her feet; "can I go with Cousin Mike, mother?"

"Some day when it is pleasant we'll loan you to him and his friends, but it must be when the sun is shining."

"As if ye didn't take the sunshine wid ye at all times," commented Mike.

"And you'll come for me, Cousin Mike?"

"Why, Sunbeam, I'd go a thousand miles to borry ye for an hour. Maybe a better plan will be fur yer father and mither to paddle across the lake wid ye, and whin they go back they can forgit all about ye and we'll keep ye till we git tired of ye and then fetch you back. How will that work?"

"When will you get tired of me?"

"Never," was the reply, and Alvin and Chester nodded their heads.

Thus the chatter ran on for an hour or more, during which Sunbeam, at the suggestion of her mother, perched for a little while on the knee of Alvin and of Chester, but soon returned to Mike, for whom she displayed a marked affection. It has been shown elsewhere that the Irish lad had the gift of winning the high regard of nearly every one with whom he came in contact. No person could fail to be attracted by the innocent, trusting nature of the little child, and the visitors pictured the delight with which she would be welcomed by the Boy Scouts.

"I came into this section," the physician explained, "for the sake of my wife and myself, I have had a pretty hard season and this is my first outing in two years. Mrs. Spellman was worn out by months of attendance upon her mother, who rallied sufficiently to sail for Europe some weeks ago. Although we have been here only a few days, we have been vastly benefited, and our vacation is sure to do us both a world of good. The only objection is that at times it becomes rather lonely, especially during rainy weather."

"What do you do with yourselves?"

"Wife finds occupation in her sewing, in cooking and in household duties, while I haven't as yet finished reading the 'Six Best Sellers'; I smoke and nap and yawn and gabble with Ruth and her mother, or paddle about the lake and fish. I brought along my rifle and revolver, with little promise of having any use for either weapon. This is not only the close season, but to find larger game we must go a good deal farther north. I hope to make such an excursion during the coming winter. Have you any firearms in your company?"

"I believe there are one or two revolvers but none of us three carries a weapon."

"Should you ever find yourselves in need of my services it will be easy to signal with one of the pistols, and I shall lose no time in hurrying to you."

"You are kind; suppose we say three reports in succession from one of the revolvers means that you are urgently wanted?"

"A good plan; if there is no wind the sound will carry well."

"What signal will you use in calling us?"

"I do not think the necessity can ever arise."

"But it may: who shall say?"

"I brought some sky rockets with other fireworks to amuse Ruth; three of those sent up will serve provided some one happens to be looking this way; otherwise I shall fire my rifle three times,—the same as you will do with your smaller weapon."

"Then that is the understanding between us."

CHAPTER XVII--An "Injin" Story

The doctor and his little daughter stood at the landing, the mother remaining at the house, and watched the canoe as it put out from the shore and headed toward the bungalow on the other side of the lake. The fact that the boys had to sit facing the other way did not prevent them from turning their heads several times and waving a hand or paddle in response to the good-bye greeting of Sunbeam. Mike having no paddling to do indulged in the exchange much more than his companions.

By and by the girl at the request of her father ran to the house and brought back his powerful telescope, which he pointed at the boat. Unaware of this, and carrying no binoculars, the lads did not know how distinctly they remained in the field of vision of their friends and naturally the signalling between the parties stopped.

The clearing of the skies proved only temporary and our young friends had not paddled half the distance when they saw they were in for a wetting. A cold, drizzling rain set in and was steadily falling when they drew the canoe up the bank and hurried into the building, whose shelter was most welcome. The other Boy Scouts, who had been taught considerable in the way of reading weather signs, had made haste to return from their wanderings, none being so far off that he did not get back in time.

Of course even had the party been camping out of doors, they would have been well guarded against so disagreeable a change, but they were better shielded with so roomy a structure at their command. They prepared supper in the big fireplace, and found the warmth of the crackling logs very acceptable. Everything having been adjusted for the night, several of the troop straightway notified Scout Master Hall that, inasmuch as he had shifted the responsibility of telling a good story upon Uncle Elk, he could do so no longer, but must now "come down" with one of his best. The demand quickly became unanimous, and the good-natured leader saw no way for him to escape.

There was equal unanimity that the story should be an "Injin" one, for you know boys will never lose their fondness for that kind of yarn and Mr. Hall also conceded the point.

"Due mainly to the fact that I don't see any way of dodging it. An Indian or adventure story, to be fully enjoyed, should be told round a camp fire in the depth of the woods; but as that is impractical to-night, let us imagine that the blazing hickory there is kindled miles from anything resembling a human habitation.

"You know how prone every one is to declare some incident 'funny,' when he should say it is strange or remarkable. I heard a woman at home the other day say that 'it was the funniest thing in the world' that she had to attend three funerals in a single week. All the same, there is something funny in your request, for I was about to ask whether you had any objections to my switching off from the usual run of yarns and telling one about Indians."

He looked into the glowing faces. It was Mike Murphy who gravely replied:

"I'm sorry to say, Scout Master, I have a sorerful 'bjection to your telling us such a yarn."

"What is that?"

"My 'bjection is to the wurrad 'one'; I move to amind the same by saying ye shall relate eliven of 'em before ye puts the brake on. The first Injin I obsarved in this country was a wooden one in front of a cigar store in Boston town; I tried to open a playsant conversation with him, but he was as glum as Chester or Alvin after I've run 'em a fut race."

Inasmuch as Mike's legs were so short that there wasn't a boy in camp who could not leave him far behind in a contest of speed, a general smile followed his sober words.

"Last spring," began Scout Master Hall, "I made a trip to Denver, Colorado, and took a run down to Trinidad, in the southern part of the State. While there I noticed a handsome monument surmounting one of the hills surrounding the city. The rocky point is known as 'Simpson's Rest,' and the story connected with it is one of the most extraordinary of the many that marked the early days of that region. Bear in mind, my young friends, that that which I tell you is true in every particular. There is no need of my relating fiction, when fact is much more interesting.

"It is now more than sixty years since John Simpson built a cabin on the present site of Trinidad, which was then on the old Santa Fe trail. Times without number he sat in his little front door, smoking his pipe and watching the strings of prairie schooners that passed on their way to or from Santa Fe. The trail makes a sharp turn to the south not far from where the Simpson cabin stood, and after climbing the precipitous Raton Mountains, on what is now the Colorado line, the gold hunters found themselves at the door of their El Dorado.

"Simpson was one of the greatest hunters, trappers and Indian fighters of his day. He and the renowned Kit Carson, who was the guide of Fremont the explorer, were intimate comrades and had many thrilling adventures together. In the days of which I speak, the Ute and Cheyenne Indians had their hunting grounds in the foothills adjoining the Rockies,

and did not as a rule harass the settlers. But Simpson could never be quite easy regarding them, for his long experience with red men warned him always to be on the alert, though for several years his family suffered no disturbance during his absences, which were sometimes extended for weeks.

"In the month of May, 1855, Simpson came back from one of his hunting expeditions. He hurried his return, for he had heard that the Utes and Cheyennes were on the war path and he knew his home would be one of the first to receive attention. He hoped that his presence and reputation as a dangerous Indian fighter would keep the redskins from molesting him.

"He had two children, Bob aged fifteen and Nora two years younger. They were bright, affectionate and as fond of each other as of their parents. On this morning in spring the brother and sister started to go to a small stream of water which ran near their cabin. They had not reached it when they were startled to see a party of dusky horsemen galloping toward them at a terrific pace. The riders brandished their lances and filled the air with shouts. They were still a considerable distance away, and the children were more astonished than alarmed.

"While staring at the party, they heard the shout of their father, and turning their heads, saw him running toward them, rifle in hand, and beckoning to them to hurry to the house. You may be sure they lost no time in obeying, while he with loaded weapon confronted the dusky horsemen. I suppose there must have been near a score of them, but every buck of the crowd knew the white man was a dead shot and never shrank from a fight, no matter how desperate, and they hesitated.

"You may set it down as a fact that no matter how numerous a band of Indians may be, when they are morally certain that the first two or three to rush forward will be shot down, those two or three will never make such a rush. You have read in your history of colonial days, of Mr. Dunston of New Hampshire, who stood off a party of marauding Indians simply by threatening to shoot the foremost, until his children made their escape. Something of the kind happened in the case of Simpson. As he walked slowly backward, he held his deadly rifle grasped with both hands, and ready to raise and fire on the instant needed. He never once removed his keen gaze and his enemies did not even fire at him. They yearned to do so, but dared not take the fearful risk.

"When Simpson reached his cabin, he found his terrified wife and children making ready to leave. He told them the Indians had massacred several families on the Arkansas River, they would soon be joined by more warriors, and it was impossible to defend the place against their enemies. Their only hope was to reach the top of a hill near the house. There they would have the advantage of a naturally strong defense, and might be able to hold off the redskins until help came to the whites.

"Two burros were hastily loaded with provisions and a keg of water, and Simpson stowed about him all the ammunition he possessed. This took but a few minutes, during which the redskins galloped back and forth and hovered in the neighborhood, eager to attack and yet afraid to do so.

"'Off with you,' he said to his wife and children, 'go as fast as you can and I'll stand 'em off till you're at the top of the hill.'

"He used the same maneuver as before and the whole party safely reached the refuge. Nothing better intended for defense can be imagined. The summit of the hill is flat and surrounded by a high rocky wall. The only way to reach the top is by means of a single narrow, stony path. It made me pant to climb it last spring, and I wondered how those burros succeeded with their heavy burdens; but you know they are used to such work and no doubt did as well as the defenders of the natural fort. At any rate, all, including the burros, reached the refuge and were quickly joined by Simpson, who had held the Indians at bay. So long as he was unhurt and his ammunition lasted, he could defend that pass against double the number that had attacked him.

"It proved just as he said it would, for they had been only a few minutes on the flat surface of the hill when the second party to which Simpson had referred were seen approaching in the distance, shouting and brandishing their spears and as eager to attack the whites as the others had been.

"'We're in for it,' said the father grimly, as he scanned the new party of horsemen, 'but they haven't caught us yet.'

"The fortress of the little company could not have been better had it been constructed by a party of army engineers. The Indians may have believed they would be able to rush the defenders, but it would be desperate work. Several of them, led by their chief, clambered up the narrow, rocky passage as if they meant to make a friendly call. Standing at the top, loaded rifle in hand, Simpson waited until they had come quite near when he shouted to them to halt. The leader, who could speak English, urged the white man to surrender, assuring him that no harm should be done to him or his family. Such treachery is common on the part of Indians, who are quick to violate their most solemn pledge the moment they can gain the chance. Simpson was too much of a veteran to be deceived by so simple a ruse. Pointing his weapon at the chief, he called:

"'Get, or I'll shoot!'

"The whole band made a rush down the path, tumbling over on another, each fearful of being winged by the terrible white man above. They were aflame with rage, and gathering at the bottom of the hill made preparations to overwhelm the brave defenders by a resistless charge,—something which they would not have done except for the humiliation that had just been put upon them.

"You may be sure that Simpson did not remain idle or throw away any precautions. With wife and children helping, he rolled several boulders to the head of the path, and held them poised until the warriors were quite near. Then the huge masses of stone were rolled over and went bounding and crashing among the yelling bucks who were scattered right and left, with several badly hurt and one or two picked off by the pioneer with his rifle. He fired as fast as he could aim and reload, and repulsed the hostiles so decisively that they did not again try to storm the fort.

"One recourse remained to them: that was to reduce the fort by regular siege. It was clear that the garrison dare not come out of the defenses, and sooner or later their provisions would be eaten. Starvation is a foe against which no bravery can avail. All the Indians had to do was to wait until the food was gone and they were brought to the last extremity."

"What about water?" asked one of the boys.

"It is harder to bear thirst than hunger, and yet it may be said that our friends never suffered that torture. Before the keg was exhausted several showers of rain fell. The tops of the rocks which formed the wall had quite a number of depressions and cavities which held a goodly quantity of the precious fluid. The besieged were devoutly thankful for this mercy. The matter of food, however, was different. There could be no renewing of that, but, as I told you, they had brought considerable with them. This was doled out, each content with what the head of the family gave her or him, especially when they saw that he ate less than any one of them.

"As the stress tightened, Simpson shot one of the burros and they feasted upon his raw flesh, since there was no way of kindling a fire. In due time the second animal followed the first, he forming the last reserve. Two burros can be made to last four persons a long while, if their flesh is sparingly used, and the family underwent no real hunger until at the last.

"I doubt whether the history of the West contains so strange an episode as that of the siege of John Simpson, his wife and two children. They took turns in keeping watch, for the red man is subtle by nature and they could be counted upon to test thoroughly the vigilance of the little company. More than once several of the Utes or Cheyennes stole as noiselessly as shadows up the flinty path, but before they could do any harm the crack of the deadly rifle sent them skurrying to the bottom. Simpson always stood guard through the night, for he knew that was the time of greatest peril. He gained the needed sleep during the day, when his wife and children could act as sentinels and if necessary rouse him from slumber. Sometimes, by way of variety he exchanged shots with the besiegers below, and they quickly learned the wisdom of keeping out of range of the white man who had a way of always hitting that at which he aimed his rifle.

"That remarkable siege lasted for five weeks. By that time, despite the parsimony in the use of food, not a particle remained. All the Indians had to do was to wait until the family fell like ripe fruit into their grasp. Simpson said little and never once hinted at the dreadful fate which impended. Nor did any one speak of it, for the fearful theme was in all their thoughts and there was no need of doing so.

"It was near the end of the fifth week, that the besieging red men suddenly grouped their ponies together and with shrill cries dashed off at full speed. They had seen the approach of a troop of cavalry from Fort Lyon, a hundred and fifty miles distant, and very much preferred their room to their company. Simpson and his family were rescued and to-day you will find quite a number of their descendants living near Trinidad. The hero certainly deserved the tribute of the pretty monument that has been built upon that memorable spot.

"Such is my 'Injin' story," added Scout Master Hall with a smile; "I can claim two merits for it: it is true and it has a pleasant ending, but I am compelled to add one unpleasant fact. The monument has been so defaced and mutilated by relic hunters that it is ruined. One person has had the unspeakable cheek to daub his sprawling initials with a paint brush all over the tomb, earning for himself a reputation that no one envies."

CHAPTER XVIII--The Echo of a World Tragedy

Sunday proved the most dismal day during the outing of the Boy Scouts in the woods of Southern Maine. The rain which set in on the previous evening continued, with only an occasional let-up, until late at night. So dense a fog overhung the lake that not once was the party able to detect the opposite shore, where Doctor Spellman and his family passed the dreary hours as best they could. The Sabbath was always observed by the Boy Scouts. Had the weather been good, they would have refrained from making excursions through the forest, fishing or anything in the nature of amusement. While Scout Master Hall might be regarded by some as puritanical in a few of his ideas, he was broad minded and held a wholesome broadness of views, with a full sympathy for boyhood which explained his popularity among his younger associates.

As has been intimated, the troop contained lads of the Jewish, the Catholic and the Protestant faith, but all were bound together by a generous charity that could never wound the feelings of the most sensitive. There may have been some chaffing over the work of the national political conventions at Chicago and Baltimore, but it was good natured and left no sting behind. If, as once or twice occurred, the discussion threatened to become too warm, the Scout Master interposed with a few words which made all serene again.

It was the custom of the leader to give his boys a talk every Sunday evening. Of course it was appropriate for the day and beneficial to every one, for no counsel could be sounder and no appeal more persuasive and in accordance with the great Teacher of all.

Thus it came about that when the long day had worn away, the last meal had been eaten, the dishes put by and nothing further remained to be done, the party gathered in the spacious sitting room of the bungalow, where most of them took easy positions on the floor, while a few, including the Scout Master, were seated in chairs. The air continued so chilly that the big fire on the hearth was kept ablaze, and diffused a genial, welcome warmth. The hanging lamp was not lighted, for the flame gave abundant illumination in which every one could recognize the faces of his comrades.

"Boys," said the leader, "my thoughts this afternoon have been drawn toward the greatest tragedy of the sea in all history,--the sinking of the *Titanic* one April by collision with an iceberg in the northern Atlantic. None of you can forget the terrifying calamity, the like of which, as I have said, the world has never known. There are many features of the catastrophe of which I shall not speak more than to refer to the criminal neglect to provide enough life boats, the reckless driving ahead when it was known icebergs were near, the foolish belief that the *Titanic* was unsinkable.

"But there are other facts connected with the tragedy upon which it is well to dwell for a few minutes. In the first place, few persons comprehend the stupendous bulk of the *Titanic* and her sister ship the *Olympic*. I ask you for a moment to fix in your minds a clear idea of the distance of a sixth of a mile. You can readily do so. Starting from this bungalow, picture how far such a walk along shore would take you."

The Scout Master paused for a moment and resumed:

"Such was the length of the *Titanic*, whose sides towered more than seventy feet above the surface of the ocean. One of our biggest express railway trains would look like a toy placed alongside of her. Viewed from a brief distance, the steamer gave you no idea of its overwhelming proportions. You must stand close beside such a craft, walk the deck, and compare it with other vessels near at hand.

"Such is the leviathan which is plunging westward at almost express train speed through the night, with nearly three thousand human beings on board. Then comes the crash with the ice mountain, which inflicts a mortal wound, and this supposed unsinkable monster begins settling where she shall dive for two miles before finding her eternal grave at the bottom of the sea.

"Who can forget the thrilling heroism displayed by men and women when they knew they had but a few more minutes to live. It has been said, and doubtless it is true, that many of those who stood by and helped the women into the few life boats, believed they were safer on the steamer than in the small craft. One of the survivors told me he was ashamed to leave and would not have done so, except for the urgency of his wife. Even then he was sure of soon returning and being laughed at by those who had not left the steamer at all.

"It is probable, I say, that this was true to a greater or less extent, but the fact remains that, when the awful doom became certain, the highest heroism was displayed by women and men from many of whom the world expected no such sublime sacrifice. The men helped the women to places in the hurriedly launched boats, husbands literally forced their wives to leave, embraced and kissed them good-bye, fearing they would never meet again in this world, and still spoke cheering words.

"I cannot express my emotions when I read of the last scene of all. Think of the eight musicians, who at first in the hope

of infusing courage into the hearts of the doomed multitude, played inspiring airs, but when the grim shadow settled over them and the merciless tread of Death was heard hurrying over the deck, shifted to the hymn 'Nearer, my God, to Thee,' and continued playing with exquisite, unflinching skill until the inrushing sweep of waves palsied each hand and tongue and huddled all into eternity.

"I have been told that while they were playing, scores of passengers gathered round and joined in singing the hymn. They were led by a man with a rich tenor voice, who calmly beat time with one upraised hand as he looked unwaveringly into the white faces of his doomed companions. He sang without the tremor of a note to the end.

"Michael, will you please sing those words for us?"

Mike was sitting on the floor, beside Isaac Rothstein near the fireplace, absorbed as was every one in the vivid picture which Scout Master Hall drew of the tragedy of the centuries. All held their breath, and they seemed to see the plunge of the *Titanic* to her grave at the bottom of the tempestuous Atlantic.

The call upon Mike was so unexpected by him that he did not stir for a moment. Then he slowly rose to his feet, cleared his throat and sang in that marvelous voice, whose sweetness surpassed anything that Scout Master or Boy Scout had ever heard:

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me!
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
"Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!"

Before the singer had finished the first verse there was not a dry eye in the room. Several boys swallowed hard and tried to hide their emotion, but it was useless.

It was all Mike could do to keep to his task, for the spell of the Scout Master's words was upon him and he could not wholly resist the enthrallment of his own voice. At the moment of finishing the second verse, Isaac Rothstein hurriedly covered his face with his hands and sobbed as if his heart was breaking. His grief was so deep that the others looked pityingly toward him, and the singer himself was overcome for the moment. He started on the third stanza, but his voice broke, and he stood trying bravely to pull himself together.

Young Rothstein, with one hand over his face reached up the other and seized the fingers of Mike. Amid his sobs he faltered:

"That man who led the singing was my father!"

Mike placed one arm over the shoulder of the stricken lad and sat down beside him.

"Can ye forgive me?" he tenderly asked; "I didn't dream of anything of the kind?"

"Go on!--sing the rest," moaned the Jewish youth.

Mike rose to his feet, and with tears streaming down his cheeks tried hard to comply with the request. But he could not; he dropped down more hastily than before and covering his own face shook with sympathetic grief and the same may be said of every one in the room.

Sunshine and storm commingle and strive for mastery; tears bedew the cheek of laughter; the peal of the wedding bells changes to tolling for the dead; grief treads on the heels of rejoicing, and Life and Death with hands forever clasped wander up and down the earth, and may God pity us all!

CHAPTER XIX--A Queen And Her Subjects

The skies cleared during the night, and the day which succeeded was perfect. Not a cloud rift obscured the sun, while the air was crystalline, free from moisture and with enough coolness to be invigorating to the last degree. It would not be pleasant for some hours to stroll through the woods because of their wetness, but a trifle like that did not check the exuberant youngsters, who began dividing into small parties as before,--some to delve into bird lore, some to study trees and others to fish. Breakfast was prepared out doors, for the food could not help tasting better than if cooked in the bungalow.

Mike Murphy, Alvin Landon and Chester Haynes, because of their former association in many adventures, still chummed. While they were on the most amicable terms with all the other Boy Scouts, they naturally drew more closely toward one another. It was creditable to the lads that every little company invited Isaac Rothstein to become a member of it for the time. The lad was more quiet and reserved than usual, but he appreciated this special kindness shown him. He accepted the invitation of the Eagle Patrol, which was his own and with whose members he was more intimately acquainted.

The breakfast having been eaten and the morning chores finished, the troop gathered on the beach in front of the clubhouse, where Scout Master Hall called out:

"We are going to have visitors; all must stay and give them a welcome."

They saw a canoe paddled by one man, with a woman sitting in the middle, while in the bow sat a little girl waving her hand at the group of boys.

"It's Sunbeam!" exclaimed the delighted Mike, "and her father and mither. That explains why the sun shines brighter this morning than iver befoore, as the folks used to say whin thay obsarved me strolling down the road."

There could be no mistake as to the identity of the callers. The doctor smiled as he deftly plied the paddle and the boat headed straight for the small landing.

"Hello, Cousin Mike! Are you glad to see me?" shouted an infantile voice.

Mike yanked off his hat and waved it.

"If ye hev any doubt of the same I'll not wait fur ye to come ashore, but will swim out and shake hands wid ye," was his cheery reply as he made a pretense of stepping into the water.

"Don't do that; I'll be there in a minute."

Alvin and Chester seized the bow of the frail craft and drew it slightly up the beach. While they were doing this, Sunbeam made a leap and would have fallen into the lake, had not the watchful Mike caught her. Her mother sharply chided her and her "cousin" was ready with an excuse.

"She obsarved me waiting fur her and catched me wink, which asked her to jump."

The doctor and his wife shook hands with the three youths that had called upon them, and Alvin introduced them to Scout Master Hall and the Boy Patrols, who promptly drew up in line and saluted the visitors.

"You are as welcome as the flowers in spring," said Mr. Hall; "and must not think of leaving until after dinner at least and not then unless you must."

"You are kind," said Mrs. Spellman, smiling into the bright faces, "but we have stopped this time merely to leave Ruth for the day, unless she will be in the way of the boys."

"Do ye hear *that*?" asked the aggrieved Mike; "it's our intuition to kaap her a waak at least and longer if her folks will consint."

"This time she is to spend the day."

"A day is twenty-four hours long," insinuated the Scout Master.

"But a work day is half or less than half of that," insisted the mother.

"This isn't going to be a *work* day but a *play* day, as Jerry Donovan said after the bull had chased him a mile and was gaining on him all the time."

"I guess we shall have to compromise, wife," remarked the husband, "and leave Stubby here until to-morrow."

"I am afraid there is no way of escaping it; Mike, you hear the agreement; you and Alvin and Chester must bring Ruth home to-morrow at this hour."

"Ye hev me promise," and the other two bowed their heads.

"We are on our way to meet Uncle Elk, as I believe you call him," added the physician; "he should drop in on us but, as has been said, we can afford to waive ceremony when in the backwoods. Mrs. Spellman has never seen him--nor have I for that matter--and we want to make his acquaintance."

"You will find him one of nature's noblemen; we are likely to see him here at any time."

The leader looked toward the margin of the woods, as if he expected the coming of their Instructor in Woodcraft, but he did not appear. The mother gave a few words of advice to her child, who did not seem to hear or at least to understand one of them, and then was assisted into the canoe, followed by her husband and the couple took their departure, heading eastward.

Before leaving, the physician repeated his proffer of services should any of the party find himself in need of them. The Scouts cheered him and his wife as they glided along the shore of the lake, the daughter withdrawing her attention from her new friends long enough to blow kisses to her parents.

Cousin Mike naturally took charge of Sunbeam, who as naturally gave herself over to his care, although the others postponed their departure to their fields of exploration and amusement for the sake of enjoying her company for the time.

When Corporal George Robe came forward to speak to the child, Mike waved him off.

"Howld on, me bye; ye haven't been properly inthrodooed to the young leddy, who is Queen of Gosling Lake."

The good-natured corporal looked inquiringly into the grave face of the guardian.

"If ye hev no objection, Sunbeam," said Mike, in his loftiest manner, "I take the liberty of presinting Corporal Robe of the Wolf Patrol to yer leddyship. He isn't half as purty as he thinks he is, which is the difference between him and mesilf."

The smiling corporal offered his hand to Ruth, who looked shyly up at him and startled every one by the abrupt question: "Can you stand on your head?"

"Of course he can," Mike hastened to answer; "he prefers to stand on his head instid of his feet; whin he slaaps at night he always rists his shoes aginst the ceiling with his head on the flure, which is that soft it sarves fur a piller. Corporal, stand on yer head fur the Queen."

The lad tried to back out, but all the others were vociferously insistent and he was wise enough to make a virtue of necessity.

"I'll do anything for you," said he cheerfully; "give me room, boys."

All stepped back, leaving an open space on the beach for Robe to exhibit his acrobatic skill. He laid aside his hat, examined the ground for a few seconds, walked a pace or two and then, amid the hush, leaned over with the palms of his hands on the earth. He rested the crown of his head against the ground, his body being curved like a horseshoe, and then gently pushed upward with his toes.

At first he did not rise far enough, and dropped back again, but he kept up the effort, coming nearer and nearer the perpendicular, but still falling a little short.

"Put more power in yer legs," called Mike, "and don't be so top-heavy."

"You are not half trying!" shouted several of the spectators; "there isn't so much of you to lift from the ground."

Spurred by the taunts, the corporal made so vigorous an effort that he went too far and landed on his back with a thump that made him grunt. Sunbeam clapped her hands and all laughed. The corporal did not crack so much as a smile, but instantly renewed his efforts with the resolution to do or die. Paying no heed to the vehement suggestions, he solved the problem by clutching the grass with each hand and holding fast. Thus when his legs pointed skyward, he was able to preserve his balance and maintain a wabbling verticality. He wavered for a time but finally got the right pose and cracked the heels of his shoes together in triumph. Then proudly bounding to his feet and clapping on his hat he called to Mike:

"Now, let's see *you* do better than that."

"I could do the same wid me eyes shet and me hands tied behind me, but it would not be fitting to me dignity; I'm superintendent and give orders. What would the Queen like to hev done nixt?"

She was puzzled for a moment.

"Can you run fast?" she asked.

"I'm the champion of Gosling Lake; I run so fast that out of pity for these lumbering coal carts I save their feelings by refusing to run with 'em. Would ye like to observe a foot race?"

"Yes,--oh yes; I'll run with you all."

The thought had come to the girl like an inspiration, as she showed by her favorite act of clapping her hands and laughing.

The whole party were filled with delight.

"I must tell you that I can run awful fast," warned Sunbeam, as preparations were begun for the test of speed; "I beat my father and mother every time we race."

"Ye don't till me!" exclaimed Mike as if frightened; "we'll hev to do our darnedst, and angels could do no more; but, Sunbeam," he added impressively, "ye mustn't let up, but show us no mercy."

"I'll try," she said with a shake of her head.

The preparations were simple and soon completed. Scout Master Hall was requested to act as umpire and complied. The beach sloped gently with a varying width of a rod or more. In order to give play to legs and arms, Mike arranged the contestants in two lines, one behind the other. Then he gravely paced off a distance of about a hundred yards, drawing a deep line in the earth by a sweep of the toe of his shoe, to mark the terminus of the course. Umpire Hall stationed himself a short distance back of this, so as not to be in the way of the runners. Mike next placed Sunbeam in front of the two lines and gave his final orders.

"Mr. Hall will count one-two-three, and at the last word all will start and run like blazes for the line I marked with my toe. Ye must overtake and pass Sunbeam in order to win the race, and I wish to add--"

Here he stepped to the eager forms and lowered his voice so that Ruth could not hear his words----

"It is unnecessary on my part to warn ye that if by any trickery, deceit, chicanery, or unfair means, one of ye should overtake the Queen, the aforesaid villain will have only two minutes to live. Mind, this is to be an honest race, as Tom Mugges said when he chased a railroad train."

A general nodding of heads showed that all "caught on."

One of the necessities when a lad engages in a desperate foot race is first to spit on his hands and rub the palms together. Every Boy Scout went through that preliminary, grunted, inched forward, crowded his companions on the right and left, spoke sharp words of reproach and intently watched the distant umpire for the word. Since he was master of ceremonies, Mike took no part in the contest, but stepped aside and watched proceedings, so as to make sure his warning was heeded.

"Patrol Leader Chase, I observe that ye are grinning, showing the same weakness that the girls do when they see me approaching. Iron out yer face."

The Patrol Leader did his best to obey, but could not quite succeed.

"Captain Landon, ye have turned the toe of yer right foot in, which is against the rules; point the same outward, and save me the necessity of mashing it. Second Mate Haynes, I saw ye take off yer hat just now and scratch yer hid; don't do it agin, though of course it's solid. Corporal Robe, ye still seem to think ye are standing on yer head. Bear in mind that ye're right side up and it depends upon yerself how long ye stay so."

Mike made clear the understanding to Sunbeam, who laughingly nodded several times, glanced over her shoulder and was in a tremor of excitement. Then he waved his hand to the umpire who from his station a hundred yards away was watching proceedings.

"Are you ready?" called Scout Master Hall.

"Riddy," replied Mike.

In a loud voice the umpire shouted--

"One--two--three!"

And immediately the race was on. Sunbeam came flying like a bird down the course, her small feet twinkling as they doubled swiftly under her, her hair streaming straight away, while she struck a speed which in the circumstances was remarkable.

And how those Boy Scouts did exert themselves! Every one grunted; most of the eyes seemed to be popping out of their heads; a good many held their breath or tried to do so, and all appeared to be putting forth the most strenuous exertions to overtake the fawn-like figure darting down the course, continually glancing behind her, and not forgetting to scream with delight, for she was certainly holding her own, and strive as much as they might, there wasn't a lad that

seemed able to lessen the distance between himself and the little one.

Somehow or other, the stocky form of Corporal Robe drew slightly ahead of the others. This was strange, for, with the exception of Mike Murphy, he was the slowest sprinter in the whole troop. The director was able to keep pace beside the boys, and observing the shameful trickery of the corporal, shook his fist at him.

Just then Robe stubbed his toe--or seemed to do so--tumbled on his hands and knees and rolled over. Kenneth Henke right behind him, knew no better than to dive in a heap over him; Ernest Oberlander and Colgate Craig then mixed in, and after them came Kenneth Mitchell, Alvin Landon, Bobby Snow, Hubert Wood, Bobby Rice, Chester Haynes, Harold Hopkins and so many others that it isn't worth while to mention their names. In fact, it looked as if it were a football game in which the corporal was heading for the goal posts when he was downed and all the rest of the players piled on top of him.

By the time the mass could disentangle itself and the dazed runners resume their wild dash for victory, Sunbeam bounded across the line, whirled about and, jumping up and down, clapped her hands and of course screamed with joy.

Scout Master Hall stood like a sphinx until the rabble came plunging down the track and drew up in a disorderly crowd in front of him. Then he raised his hand for silence and called out in a loud voice:

"Sunbeam wins! You boys ought to be ashamed of yourselves."

The youths tried hard to look as if they were dejected over their disgrace. Several gouged their eyes; others muttered their discontent, and Chester Haynes had the audacity to declare loud enough for all to hear:

"Looks very much as if the 'empire' had money on the race."

Scout Master Hall must have heard the insulting words, but, if so, he showed no evidence of it. Then the defeated runners recovered from their humiliation sufficiently to crowd around the victor and congratulate her on her success.

"It's larned 'em a lesson," said Mike, "which the same is not to be so cocksure of their smartness whin they haven't got any smartness to be cocksure of. But for this desarved defeat some of 'em would have the imperdence to challenge *me* to a foot race."

The Boy Scouts were so charmed by the sweet innocence of the "Queen" that all remained at home for the remainder of the forenoon. Alvin drew funny pictures for her on large sheets of paper; Chester showed no little ingenuity in cutting out dolls and odd figures; most of the other boys went through scandalous antics for the sole purpose of winning her applause, while Mike sang some of the lullabies and folk songs he had learned in Ireland. When he did this, everything else was hushed and all became listeners, for the charm of that wonderful voice was irresistible.

At the dinner table the guest was set in a chair elevated for the occasion, and presided like a veritable queen. Every hearer bowed his head when she folded her hands, closed her eyes, looked upward and said:

"O Lord, who giveth all things good,
To whom the ravens look for food,
Deign to look on us from heaven,
And bless the food that thou hast given."

There was a general scattering of the boys in the afternoon, though Mike, Alvin, Chester and Mr. Hall remained behind with their visitor, it not being thought prudent to take her on a ramble in the woods, while they were so damp.

It was a rare treat in the evening, when by the light of the fire and the lamp overhead, all the company gave themselves up to amusing and being amused by their Queen, Scout Master Hall pleased the lads no less than the girl by his fairy stories, and again Mike sang with inimitable sweetness. Thus it went on until the "sandman" called on Sunbeam and she drowsily said she guessed it was time for her to sleep. The most luxurious couch in the bungalow was set apart for her; the leader and Mike gave what slight help she needed in preparing for bed, and she said her prayers at the knee of the Irish youth, who tenderly laid his hand on the silken mass of hair and murmured:

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

CHAPTER XX--What Did It Mean?

Meanwhile a singular experience befell Dr. Spellman and his wife. After their departure from the bungalow, they glided smoothly in the canoe toward the eastern end of Gosling Lake, keeping a little way off shore where though the water was crystalline the depth was too great to allow them to see the pebbly bottom. The woman sat forward, gazing with tranquil enjoyment upon the soothing picture before them. The husband, facing in the same direction, was in the stern of the craft, so that the balance was nicely adjusted. Swinging the paddle well forward, he took the water with a long easy stroke, finishing with an inward turn of the wrist that kept the canoe on a straight course.

They had set out to call upon Uncle Elk the hermit. While etiquette, as has been said, demanded that it should be the other way, especially since the physician had already left his card at the log cabin, the matter was too trifling to be regarded. The stories which the couple had heard of the strange old man stirred their curiosity, and it was in accord with the sympathetic nature of the woman that she believed she might do a little to cheer the exile in his loneliness.

The short voyage soon ended. Dr. Spellman guided his boat to the edge of the wood where Uncle Elk made a practice of landing, and from which a well marked path wound its way among the trees to the dwelling that was invisible from the lake. The canoe of the Instructor in Woodcraft was drawn up the bank and turned over bottom up.

"That looks as if we shall find him at home," remarked the wife, as she stepped lightly ashore and was followed by her husband, who pulled the craft far enough to hold it secure during their absence.

"It may be he is off on a tramp with no telling when he will return. He seems to be as fond of the Boy Scouts as they are of him, and it is likely he has gone to the clubhouse to spend the day with them."

The man took the lead and walked up the path used on his previous call, with his wife a few paces behind him. On the edge of the clearing, they stood for a minute or two contemplating the pleasing picture. No signs of life were visible, but from where they stood they could see the leathern string dangling outside the door, as if inviting every one who chose to enter.

Dr. Spellman gently twitched the string and the door swung inward. As he stepped across the threshold, his wife followed and the two looked around them. The room was precisely as when the physician called before and has already been described, but the owner of the premises was not in sight. No fire smouldered on the hearth and the stillness of the tomb brooded over everything. It was natural that so excellent a housekeeper as Mrs. Spellman should exclaim:

"All is as neat as a pin; Uncle Elk needs no one to teach him how to keep a model home."

They walked forward and stood in front of the shelves with their remarkable array of books. The woman, who was known for her excellent literary taste, commented upon the high character of the volumes, but neither laid hands on them. She seated herself in the rocking chair while her husband stood near.

"The question is whether we shall wait here until he comes back," said the latter.

"How can we know when he will return?"

"We don't; it may be within an hour or not until night. It isn't worth while to stay; I can leave my card as before."

He drew the pasteboard from his pocket and wrote a few pleasant words, reminding Uncle Elk of his obligations to his callers, and urging him to visit the house at the other side of the lake as soon as possible and spend the day and evening with them.

While the husband sat at the table in the middle of the room, writing his hurried message, his wife faced the curtain which shut off the other half of the cabin and behind which neither of the callers thought of intruding or peeping. Suddenly a queer thrill passed through her, for she was sure she saw the curtains move,—so slightly indeed that had she not been looking directly at it she would not have detected the stir. She said nothing and of course her husband had no suspicion.

The wife gazed intently at the spot where she had noticed the slight agitation and listened keenly, but heard nothing nor did she detect any disturbance. She quietly rose to her feet.

"We may as well go; the day is too lovely to stay within doors."

"Which probably explains why Uncle Elk is not at home. Do you know, my dear, I half envy him his life. He is out of the hurly-burly of politics, strife, and the endless vexations that we who live in cities cannot escape."

"And yet you would not be willing to pay the price that he does."

"No," was the thoughtful reply of the husband, as he led the way across the threshold, carefully closed the door, and passed down the path to their canoe. "There is such a thing as paying too much for what we get."

When the craft had been paddled some distance, the wife turned her head.

"Wilson, do you know where Uncle Elk is?"

"I haven't the remotest idea."

"I can tell you: he is in his cabin and was there all the time we were inside."

"What do you mean?" asked the husband, so astonished that he ceased paddling and stared at her.

"While you sat at the table writing your note to him, he moved the curtain; I saw it."

She related what she had witnessed when not dreaming of anything of the kind.

"The agitation may have been caused by a draft of air."

"I thought that, but the windows were closed in the room where we sat."

"There are windows in the other room."

"But, if either was open, there was nothing to make a draft. There is no mistake about it;--Uncle Elk was within a few feet of us all the time."

The wife was so positive that her husband was brought to her way of thinking.

"Strange as it seems, you are right. There can be no doubt now that he doesn't wish to meet us. He must have known of our camp on the other side of the lake and ought to have paid his respects to us. More than that, he ignored my invitation, though the time is so brief since it was made that that of itself is not conclusive. Well, all we can do is to accept the facts and leave him to himself."

"He has been represented as the soul of hospitality. Why should he be repelled by us? Why did he not pull in his latchstring?"

"He was not expecting us or he might have done so."

The doctor resumed his deliberate paddling and a minute later his wife asked:

"Have you any suspicion of the reason for his acting as he did?"

"It is a mystery to me. He and I have never met, and I cannot fancy any cause for his antipathy. Whatever the reason, it surely is unjustifiable and I am sorry we did not have the chance to demand an explanation. I think I shall tell what has happened to Scout Master Hall, and get him to make some guarded inquiries. I cannot rest content until this misunderstanding is cleared up."

The couple returned to their home after fishing awhile, and did not leave again during the day. Neither would confess the fact to the other, but they missed their child so keenly that they would have paddled to the other side of the lake and brought her home, had they not felt ashamed of such weakness. The doctor read, slept, smoked and yawned and was sure he had never started in on so long an afternoon.

It was not to pass, however, without incident. He stretched in his hammock, one leg hanging out so that the tip of his tan shoe touched the ground and gave him enough leverage to sway gently back and forth, while he smoked his perfecto and longed for the morning when "Stubby" would be with them again. The wife was seated in the small dwelling, busy with crochet work, and thinking pretty much as did her husband, when both were startled by the greeting in a gruff voice that evidently was meant to be conciliatory:

"Good artemoon, lady and gentleman."

With a faint gasp, the wife looked up, while the doctor swung both feet so as to rest them on the ground, sat upright, checked the swaying of the hammock and picked up his hat which had fallen to the ground.

"Hello! where did *you* come from?"

Two frowsy, villainous looking tramps had come out of the woods, walking so softly in their dilapidated gum shoes that they were not heard until they spoke. These gentry as a rule do not abound in Maine, but no section of our country is absolutely free of them. The two were burly vagrants with matted hair, spiky beards, and hickory shirts, much in need of washing and without collars. One supported his patched trousers by means of a single soiled suspender which, crossing the shoulder, was skewered in front by a wooden peg. His companion obtained the same result by means of a leathern belt buckled around his waist. They were innocent of stockings and wore straw hats, one of which lacked a crown, and the other was minus one half of its original brim. Both doffed their head gear and assumed the cringing attitude of all members of the begging fraternity.

Dr. Spellman was anything but pleased with his callers. He had hoped he was rid of the tribe, but here were a couple of them and he faced the situation.

"We ambled all the way, sir, from Bath since morning," was the reply of the one who stood nearest the doctor.

"No you didn't; the distance is too far and none of your kind could be persuaded to step aside into a place with such a name as Bath."

One of the scraggly rogues turned to his companion.

"Say, Saxy, was the last town, where we spent a week at the leading hotel, Bath or Christmas Cove?"

"Naw; it was Boothby Harbor--what guff are ye giving us?"

"It is a small matter," said the doctor; "what is your purpose in calling here?"

"Jes' to show our respects, boss; we haven't our cards wid us, but me name is Buzy Biggs and my valet here is Saxy Hutt, late from Washington, where he's been serving as aide to the President."

"Whither are you bound?"

"We haven't made up our minds whether to accept a invite to lecture afore the Boston Lyceum or to go on to New York and give the folks a talk on the Whichness of the Which. But that ain't nyther here nur there. We have been walking since daylight and hain't had a mouthful of grub since yesterday afternoon."

"We cannot let any one go away from our door hungry," broke in Mrs. Spellman, laying aside her fancy work and flitting into the kitchen department.

"I don't see how you're going to help it," called her husband, "when you undertake to give a couple of tramps all they can eat. They are like dogs--always hungry."

"Ain't ye a little rough, boss, on a gentleman?" asked Biggs, with an ominous glint in his piglike eyes.

"Produce the gentleman and I'll reply."

The physician's dislike of the nuisances was so strong that he could not pretend to hide it. Sharp words might have been followed by something regrettable, had not the wife come out at this moment bearing a couple of enormous ham sandwiches. The men again doffed their fragmentary hats, bowed and mumbled their thanks.

"*There's* the gentleman," said Biggs, nodding toward the smiling woman and addressing her husband, "which you was saying you would like to see. These be fine sandwiches and will sarve us very well for starters."

"That's what they are meant to do," said the doctor; "you may start at once and need not show yourselves here again."

"Oh, I don't know," said Biggs, speaking with his mouth stuffed full of meat and bread; "I reckon you don't own the lake and this part of the State."

"I own enough to warn you to keep your distance; we choose our friends."

"Mebbe we may take a notion to drop in on ye bime by; with thanks, mum, we now sagaciate."

Dr. Spellman was a man of quick temper, and felt so incensed by the smirking glance of the scamp at his wife, that he bounded from his hammock and into the house for his revolver. Suspecting his purpose, his wife interposed:

"What are you going to do, Wilson?"

"Shoot that scoundrel! Let me get my pistol."

"You shall do nothing of the kind; the man hasn't done me any harm and is leaving. He doesn't deserve another thought."

"He deserves what he will get if he ever dares to show himself here again."

The doctor had the good habit of yielding to the domination of his much better tempered partner. He turned round without his weapon and resumed his seat in the hammock which he nervously rocked, thereby helping to soothe his anger. His wife sat on a camp stool and did not speak but looked at him with a smile whose significance was that of many words.

"Don't," he protested; "pitch in and scold all you wish, but don't look at me like that--hello! hark!"

From across the lake came the faint, dull report of a revolver. The doctor raised his hand and whispered:

"Listen!"

In a few seconds, a second report traveled over the water to their ears. If that was all, it would mean nothing, but with the same interval, the third sound reached the startled couple.

"It is a call for help!" exclaimed the doctor bounding to his feet; "I am wanted at once by the Boy Scouts."

The wife turned white and gasped: "Something has happened to Ruth!"

"We can't know until we reach camp; come on!"

He dashed into the house, caught up his case of instruments and revolver, but left his rifle. Quick as he was, she was at the shore ahead of him and had grasped the canoe to shove it into the water. At the moment the craft was floating clear and the doctor caught up the paddle, they heard again the triple reports of the revolver,--one after the other and with but an interval of a second or two between the shots.

And then Dr. Spellman paddled as he had never paddled before, for no more powerful motive could have stirred all the strength and energy of his nature.

CHAPTER XXI--How It Happened

Jack Crandall, Arthur Mitchell and Gerald Hume were members of the Stag Patrol, and the age of each was slightly more than fourteen years. Jack was tall, muscular and had an inclination to stoop, due probably to his rapid growth. He was somewhat reserved by nature, but his good disposition made him one of the most popular of the Boy Scouts. What distinguished him among his comrades was his fondness for bird lore. He had been dubbed the official ornithologist and his note books, which he had filled with "pointers" picked up on his excursions in the woods at home, were of the most interesting nature. Sometimes by invitation of Scout Master Hall, he read from them in the evening when the company gathered around the camp fire for reports and gossip. He not only investigated, but studied text books on the subject. No intelligent lad can follow such a course without becoming well informed in any branch of knowledge. It gave him pleasure to answer questions, of which many were asked, and it was universally agreed that he was one of the most valuable members of the troop that was spending the month of August in the woods of southern Maine.

All that I have to tell about Jack was to his credit. He had no brothers and but one sister, two years younger than himself. His mother was a widow in straitened circumstances, who would have had a hard time to get on, but for the cheerful help of Jack, who loved her and Maggie with a devotion that could not be surpassed. One fact will tell more than could be given in a dozen paragraphs. He wrote a letter to his mother, with a message inclosed to his sister, on every day he was absent from home. Since the wagon with supplies labored through the forest only twice a week, the dear ones had the pleasure of receiving two or three of his cheery missives by the same mail, after waiting several days for them. I need not say that those at home were equally faithful.

Now on the afternoon following the visit of little "Sunbeam" to the bungalow on the shore of Gosling Lake, more than half the boys, as you may remember, divided into small parties and set off on a ramble through the wilderness. The three whom I have named took a southern course which led them into a lonely section and expected to be absent all the afternoon. Five minutes after starting they were out of sight of their friends.

You would not be interested in a detailed account of what was done during most of the afternoon. Later on I may have something to tell you of the birds found in that part of our country.

No boy or man pays much attention to the passage of the hours when absorbed in a pleasant task. The three youths were surprised when the approaching twilight warned them that the long summer day was drawing to a close.

"Gee!" exclaimed Gerald Hume; "it's time we hiked for home."

Jack was the only one who carried a watch. It was a cheap pattern but a good one. He drew it out and looked at it.

"It is ten minutes to seven. To-day is Monday, the fifth of August, and the sun sets in sixteen minutes past seven. It will be dark when we get to headquarters."

"How far do you think it is?"

"We have followed such an aimless course that it is hard to tell, but it must be a mile at least; what do you think, Arthur?"

"I should say it is a good deal more than that, but what's the odds? We're not likely to meet any Indians or to run afoul any wild beasts."

"We must keep to the right course, however," said Gerald, "or we shall have to camp out."

"It won't hurt us if we do, even when we have made no preparations," replied Jack, who added:

"We went south from the lake, but the points of the compass are all twisted."

"It would do us no good if they weren't, for we haven't an instrument with us."

"Yes; we have," remarked Jack, who still held his watch in hand. "Have you forgotten that a watch is a good compass when the sun is shining?"

"Mr. Hall showed us while we were on our way here," laughed Arthur, "but I have forgotten what he said."

"So have I," added Gerald.

"Luckily, I have had to test it before, and after seeing me use that means I know you will remember it."

Jack pointed the hour hand to the sun already low in the horizon and explained:

"If it were forenoon, half way between the hour hand and noon is due south. But it is afternoon and I must reckon half way backward. Notice,--I point the hour hand at a fraction before seven. Now divide the distance between that point and the figure 12 into halves and take the midway point: there you are--that indicates south."

"Suppose the sun wasn't shining, Jack?"

"If the clouds were too dense to allow you to locate the sun, your watch would be useless as a compass, but that isn't often the case. You should stand in the open where no shadow falls upon you, and hold your knife point upright on your watch dial. Almost always you can see a dim shadow which shows where the sun is."

"But," inquired Arthur with a laugh; "now that we know the points of the compass what good will it do us?"

Gerald took it upon himself to answer:

"If we went south from the lake all we have to do is to go north to get back to it."

"Yes, *if* we did that, but we have paid no attention to our course and may be east or west of the bungalow."

Jack interposed with the good sense which rarely forsook him:

"While it is impossible that we should have held a direct southern line, I believe we nearly did so and by going north we shall not stray far from the right path. At any rate, we have only to try it. If we get lost we can yell for help."

Jack took the lead, but had not gone a hundred yards when he stopped with an exclamation:

"Look at that!"

He pointed to the upper branches of a tall pine, betraying an excitement that was new to him. His companions followed the direction of the extended finger.

"I don't see anything but a lot of branches," replied Gerald, after a brief scrutiny.

"Nor do I," added Arthur.

"Are you blind? On that limb that puts out to the right is a bird's nest."

"Well, what of it? This isn't nesting time; there are no birds there now," said Arthur after he had located the dark bunch of twigs and grass, well out on a long slender branch.

"I must have a look at the nest; it is a different pattern from any I have seen since coming to Maine."

"Well, take your look and we'll pass on."

"That won't do; I must have a peep inside."

And to the astonishment of his companions, Jack flung aside the staff he had been carrying and began climbing the long, smooth trunk. To Gerald and Arthur nothing could have been more foolish, but they understood their friend too well to object.

"Did you ever see any one like him?" asked the former disgustedly.

All the two could do was to watch their chum as he shinned up the tree with the nimbleness of a sailor climbing a ship's mast without help of rope or stay.

Jack had an ascent of fully twenty-five feet before he reached the first limb. The object which drew him upward like a magnet attracting a bit of iron was several feet higher, but the young athlete did not hesitate. It was still so light that he could be plainly seen as he began making his way along the frail support, which bent under his weight.

"I hope Jack knows enough not to run too much risk," remarked Gerald with a thrill of misgiving; "pine wood has a way of breaking when you don't expect it."

"He has had enough experience to remember that."

"But he is so set on examining that old nest that he's likely to forget--*Gracious!*"

Both gasped, for while the words were in Gerald's mouth, the limb along which Jack Crandall was making his way snapped off like a pipe stem. He was seen to throw out his arms in an instinctive effort to save himself, but there was nothing he could seize and he shot downward, without having time to straighten his body. He fell sideways, striking the ground with a violent thump which caused his hat to fly off and forced a cry of pain from him. Although stunned by the shock, he instantly tried to rise, only to fall back with a groan.

Gerald and Arthur ran forward and bent over him.

"Are you much hurt, Jack?" they asked.

"I'm afraid so; look out; don't try to lift me."

With a gasp of pitying fright, both boys saw that Jack's right limb below the knee was bent midway at a sharp angle. There could be no mistaking what *that* meant.

"Your leg is broken!" exclaimed Gerald.

"Thank God it isn't my neck!" replied the brave sufferer.

That was sound Christian philosophy. How true it is that there are few afflictions in this life that couldn't be worse.

Jack with help rose on one elbow and looked at his leg. Its appearance showed that both the tibia and the fibula had been snapped apart, for the foot lay limp at an angle from the upper portion that it never could have assumed if sound.

Arthur dropped down by him in a twinkling and took off the legging. The skin had not been broken, but the sight of the jagged points pressing against it caused a momentary faintness on the part of the two, from which they quickly rallied.

"Don't be scared, boys," said Jack; "it hurts like all creation and I don't think I shall climb many more trees for a few weeks to come."

"Well, Gerald, let's get down to business," said Arthur briskly.

"Yes," remarked Jack with a smile, "you've got a big baby on your hands; and if we don't find our way back to camp it won't prove the jolliest night of my life."

"You can give us help."

"How?"

"Hold us to a straight course."

"That is, you wish me to boss the job; I'll try to do my duty."

This is what the two Boy Scouts now did, as deftly and surely as if they had rehearsed the act, though it was the first time they had undertaken such a duty:

Gerald and Arthur took off their coats, turned the sleeves inside out and placed them on the ground with their lower sides touching each other. Gerald first compared the staff he had been carrying with Jack's which lay near, and finding the latter the stronger passed it through the sleeves on one side and flung away his own staff, while Arthur shoved his through the sleeves of his own coat. The two garments were then buttoned with the button side down and the stretcher was ready.

Jack, who was striving to repress all signs of the anguish he suffered, was then deposited gently on the support, one of his friends between and at either end of the two handles. As they stepped off, they adopted a precaution which is worth remembering, should you ever be called upon to act the good Samaritan in similar circumstances. Gerald first reached out with his right foot, observing which Arthur at the same moment advanced his left. They were careful thus to keep out of step, thereby saving the patient from the jouncing that otherwise would have been added to his distress.

The carriers could not know whether Jack was suffering much or little or not at all, for he was by far the most cheerful of the three. They managed to roll a part of the garments so as to stuff them under his head and thereby partly raise it. This gave him a view of the woods directly in front, of which knowledge he made good use.

"Gee!" he called to Gerald who was acting as the leader; "bear a little more to the right."

The lad obeyed and a few minutes later Jack called:

"Haw! not so much--Gee a little--that's it; keep it up."

"I think it would be well if I cut a gad for you," suggested Arthur from the rear; "you can whack him on the side you wish him to turn."

"It would be a good idea," replied Jack, "but I'll give him a chance to save himself by doing what I order him to do. If he refuses, it will be at his peril."

"I'll do my best," Gerald meekly called back.

All three showed a sturdy readiness that did them credit. It cannot be doubted that Jack Crandall was suffering keenly, but he would have collapsed before letting his companions know it, while they on their part gave no hint of the discouraging prospect before them. Each youth had to carry a dead weight of sixty pounds or more. That of itself was of small moment, for they could rest whenever they chose, but night was at hand and they were not only a good way from camp but could not tell when they would reach it. As has already been said, there was nothing to frighten them in the prospect of spending the night in the woods, during dog days, even if the climate in southern Maine is cool, at least after the sun goes down.

But their anxiety was for their chum with the broken leg. That ought to receive surgical attention with the least possible delay. Fortunately a skilful physician was within call from the clubhouse, but when could the latter be reached, and what would happen to Jack if they should go hopelessly astray?

It was this fear which caused the bearers distress. They would have discussed the important question, but could not

well talk over the head of the sufferer, so they held their peace and strode on.

"You mustn't tire yourselves out," protested Jack from his couch; "you have traveled far enough for a good rest."

"What do you say, Art?" asked Gerald.

"This is just fun; it beats baseball."

"And will beat you if you try to keep it up. I insist that you stop awhile; don't drop me like a hot potato though, but gently as it were."

The support was slowly lowered and the bearers mopped their foreheads.

"How are you feeling, Jack?" asked Gerald.

"I could feel a good deal worse and also somewhat better."

"You bear it like a hero; now I hope that we shall not miss the bungalow, for it won't be any fun for you to stay out doors till morning."

"We're not going to miss the house," replied Jack so decisively that his friends looked questioningly at him.

"What makes you positive of that point?"

"We hit the right course; don't you recognize signs about you?"

"No, and I don't believe you do."

"Do you remember that big white oak with the gnarled limb that put out a short distance from the base of the trunk?"

"You mean the knot that you said would bring a good price from any one of the ship builders at Bath?" asked Gerald in turn.

"Yes."

"It is not too dark for you to see a little way. Just to the left is a similar white oak; do you notice it?"

The two scrutinized the huge tree and Arthur exclaimed:

"It looks exactly like it."

"Of course, for it is the same one."

When the tree was examined more closely further doubt was removed.

"What a piece of good fortune! Why, we saw that only a few minutes after leaving home."

"Of course; we are within a hundred yards of headquarters."

"Thank Providence; we dared not hope it. Jack, you know more about woodcraft than we do."

"Which isn't saying much," replied Jack, catching the cheerful spirits of his friends, who now picked him up as tenderly as before, and did not pause until they emerged from the woods and made their way to the porch, where they set down their burden and Gerald hurried to make known the mishap. By that time night had fully come and all the boys were inside enjoying the society of Sunbeam, as she sat and chatted on the knee of Mike Murphy. Pausing in the door, Arthur beckoned to Scout Master Hall, who excused himself and hastened outside. There when told the truth, he bent over Jack, took his hand and expressed his sympathy.

"We must get word to Dr. Spellman at once," said the leader; "I will borrow Gordon Calhoun's revolver and signal to him. Meanwhile, take Jack inside."

"Hadn't you better wait, so as not to scare the little girl?" was the thoughtful question of the patient.

"There is nothing to scare her; carry him in, boys."

Jack was carefully taken through the opened door and deposited on the nearest bunk. A few moments were all that was necessary to explain the mishap to the party. Sunbeam or Stubby or Ruth, as you prefer, was full of tender sympathy, but the full extent of the lad's injuries was kept from her, and a few minutes later she was laid in her couch, as has been related, and almost immediately she closed her eyes.

Mike asked for the revolver, and walking to the edge of the lake pointed it upward and discharged three more chambers. He went back into the house where he cheered Jack by his waggery for some time. Then he reloaded the weapon and again moved to the water's edge, with the intention of calling the physician a third time. Before doing so, he listened. Through the stillness he heard the dip of a paddle and knew the doctor was hurrying to the clubhouse, eager to do what he could for whoever needed his help.

Alvin and Chester followed Mike and stood by his side. There was no moon as yet in the sky, but the stars gleamed

brilliantly and they could see for a considerable distance over the placid surface of the beautiful sheet of water. The sound of the paddle grew more distinct, and by and by a swiftly approaching canoe took form in the obscurity.

Not until the voice of the wife broke upon the quiet did it occur to any one of the boys that the physician was likely to associate the call with his own child. And yet what was more natural than that he should do so?

"Is anything the matter with Ruth?" asked the mother, the instant she caught the dim outlines of the boys.

"Nothing at all," replied Alvin; "she is in her bed and asleep."

"Thank heaven!" was the grateful exclamation as the woman sank back and clasped her hands. Her husband had held the paddle suspended until he heard the reply. Now he dipped the implement deep and with a couple of vigorous strokes sent the craft with a bump against the beach.

"What's the trouble, Alvin?" he asked while helping his wife out and drawing the canoe a little way up the bank.

"One of the boys fell out of a tree this afternoon and broke his leg."

"I am sorry to hear that; I shan't need my instruments," he remarked in the cool business tone of the professional man; "lead the way, boys."

Scout Master Hall and several of the boys had come out on the porch and all welcomed the physician and his wife.

"Business first and pleasure afterward," remarked the medical man as he stepped across the threshold and went to the bunk in which Jack Crandall had been lifted. The blazing wood in the fireplace and the bright lamp overhead filled the room with light as bright as day. Jack looked up and smiled, with an apology for the trouble he was causing the doctor, who without replying to his words, made a quick but thorough examination of the hurt.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" he exclaimed; "it is one of the most beautiful fractures I ever saw."

It sounded odd, but it was professional.

CHAPTER XXII--Sunshine

Amid the tense stillness, with the group of sympathetic spectators motionless and attentive, the surgeon performed his duty with the deftness and skill of long experience. Jack compressed his lips, when his attendant said with cheerful gentleness:

"Brace yourself; it will be over in a minute."

The adjustment of the fractured bones caused shooting pangs of pain, but the patient did not flinch.

"Good for you!" said the doctor; "you are a hero; the worst is over."

Then followed the application of splints and bandages and the little niceties of a scientific operation. The doctor, making sure everything was right, drew down the coverlet over the shapeless leg and sat back in his chair, and then Mike Murphy spoke with the gravity of an owl:

"Dochter, ye were just saying that one broken leg looks beautiful; then two broken legs would look twice as purty; so why not bust t'other leg, so Jack will have a pair of 'em?"

The astounding question broke the spell that had weighed down all. Dr. Spellman laughed, Scout Master Hall chuckled, and every Boy Scout grinned appreciatively, excepting of course the youth who had asked the amazing question. His freckled countenance could not have looked graver had the occasion been a funeral.

"I'm afeard me wisdom is throwed away, as Tim Flanagan said whin he suggisted to his taycher that he tie tails to the boys the better to yank 'em back whin they tried to jump out the windys."

Even Jack Crandall's white face lighted up at the whimsicalities of the irrepressible wag. Dr. Spellman said:

"I think I shall appoint you nurse, Mike; you will do Jack more good than I can by any further services."

"It will give me plisure, dochter,--more I reckon than it will Jack."

The physician issued his final directions. Having set the leg, all subsequent work must be done by nature, which was sure to do it well. The bones would speedily knit and though the patient would have to suffer more or less pain during the process, the progress would be steady. All the lad had to do was "suffer and be strong," which as has been said is only a poetical variation of the homely injunction "grin and bear it."

"How long shall I have to lie here?" asked Jack.

"If all goes well--and there is no reason why it should not--you will be promenading along Gosling Lake on crutches in three weeks. After that your recovery will be rapid."

"You would not advise our sending him home?" asked Scout Master Hall, who could have answered the question himself.

"Nothing could be more ill-advised. It would torture him, even if he were carried on a litter over the rough road to the highway and thence to Boothbay Harbor, with the long railway or steamboat journey home. There is no better place in the world for him than right here in this pure air, surrounded by friends ready to do all they can for his comfort and to administer to his every want. I shall drop in to-morrow and keep track of my Jack."

The doctor shook hands with the lad, who thanked him for his kindness. Then husband and wife passed to the couch where their little one was sleeping. She lay on one dimpled arm, her gentle breath issuing from the rosy lips without the slightest sound. Each parent leaned over and touched his and her lips to the pink cheek. Ruth opened her eyes, recognized them and, childlike, threw her arms around the neck of her mother and asked to be taken home.

"I don't see how I consented to part with you for one night," replied the parent; "you shall go with us." So her clothing was donned, and, lifting the little one in his arms, the father bade his friends good night and carried her down to the waiting canoe.

The Boy Scouts gave a fine exhibition of the spirit which dominates that admirable organization. There was not one of them who was not eager to do everything in his power for the comfort of the member who had suffered his mishap. Scout Master Hall arranged that two of them should be on watch all the time, he insisting upon taking his turn, and that he should be called, if asleep, should there seem to be a necessity for it. They were to watch during periods of two hours each, thus making sure of their wakefulness. This was to be the rule night and day. The little, round alarm clock that the Scout Master had brought with him sat on the mantel over the fireplace, where the hands and figures showed in the yellow illumination of lamp and hearth fire.

Mike and Alvin assumed guard from nine to eleven, when they were to be succeeded by Chester and Gerald for the

same period, and so on. In the bigness of his heart, Mike proposed that when the hour hand had crept close to the characters "XI," they should stop the clock and continue on duty till daylight. While Alvin was quite willing, he decided it was better to obey in spirit and letter the instructions of their leader.

On the morrow, Jack's face was flushed and he showed signs of a fever, but the doctor, when he arrived early in the day, assured his friends that that was to be expected and was not alarming. The leg was examined and pronounced in the best condition possible. The skilled cooks, of whom there were several in the troop, prepared the dishes prescribed by the doctor and filled the room with hope and cheerfulness.

"The conditions could not be more favorable," said the medical man; "the weather is perfect, the air full of ozone, the water as pure as that at Poland Springs or even Squirrel Island, which goes Poland one degree better, and the companionship of the boys helps to make the situation ideal for a convalescing patient. Do you think of sending for his friends?"

"Far from it; Jack has a sister and widowed mother; he would not alarm them for the world; they will never know what has befallen him until he returns home."

It may as well be said that this took place. Jack wrote to his loved ones every day and never were his letters more cheerful. He told them of the fragrant leafy woods, the song birds, the crystalline lake, the invigorating air, his keen appetite and nutritious food, and above all the genial companionship of the Boy Scouts.

"It strikes me, mother," he wrote, "that for twenty youngsters to be thrown together as intimately as we have been, without a hasty word being spoken by a single one, and with all trying for a chance to do a good turn,—it strikes me, I say, that that's pretty good:—what do *you* think?"

Mother agreed with her son.

All physicians will tell you that the best medicine for the sick room is cheerfulness. Moral sunshine has far more to do with ultimate recovery than all the medicaments that were ever compounded. Jack Crandall was never without optimistic companions. When he opened his eyes in the middle of the night, two of them sat almost within arm's reach, ready to anticipate his slightest wish. Earlier in the evening, before the hour for retiring, the room was full of happy youngsters, who under the vigilant eye of Scout Master Hall never overdid things. All were in overflowing spirits, and Jack could not help imbibing the benign tonic.

As may be supposed, the particular star at these times was Mike Murphy. Never did he so abound with waggishness, humor and wit. When called upon, he sang songs always of a bright or humorous turn. He did not utilize hymns except on Sunday afternoons or evenings, and then he made sure they were not lugubrious but overflowing with Christian hope.

Not even Alvin and Chester, who thought they knew him well, suspected the limitless extent of their chum's imagination. Some of the yarns he spun fairly took away his listener's breath, while his whimsies in their way were irresistible. The solemn gravity with which his most humorous fancies were uttered added to their effect. Thus one evening as the Scouts were gathered in the room where Jack Crandall lay, he said:

"Since the docther robbed us of our Sunbeam, I've made it me dooty to drop in at his home nearly ivery day to make sure her father and mither are treating her right."

"Did you find they are doing so?" gravely asked Scout Master Hall.

"I 'spose they're doing as well as could be icipcted. I tried to impriss upon them that it was their dooty niver to refuse Sunbeam anything,—no matter what she asked. I've been trying to do the same wid dad and me mither as to mesilf, but haven't been able to bring them to my way of thinking. I paddled over this morning and had a talk wid the docther about Jack's game leg."

"And what did he say?" inquired the subject of the query.

Mike sighed as if loath to reply.

"I asked him whither it didn't sometimes happen whin a felly had his leg broke and it was mended that it was longer or shorter than t'other, to which he replied, yis. I then said if the same was found to be the case wid Jack, he oughter saw off the longer leg so as to make itself aven with t'other and Jack wouldn't hev to limp."

"How did the idea strike him?" asked the grinning boy on his couch.

"He was much imprissed, as Larry Coogan said whin a keg of nails dropped from the roof onto his head. I offered to taich Jack the words of a song I heerd some time ago, which, he is to sing while the wrong leg is being made right."

"What is that?"

"Just Tell 'Em that you Saw Me."

All laughed except the perpetrator of the jest who added:

"Anither thing is that the crutches which ye use, Jack, is to hev a contrivance fixed to the same so that ye can climb trees to peep into birds' nists, without using yer legs at all."

"I never heard of such a thing," remarked Jack.

"Of course not; it's an idea of me own."

This time will serve as well as any for a statement which it gives me pleasure to make. It was told me in confidence by Dr. Spellman, with the understanding that in no circumstances was I to repeat it. You will accept it as confidential and make sure that it goes no farther.

The credit of the incident belongs to Alvin Landon. A few days after the accident to Jack Crandall, Alvin told Scout Master Hall that he thought it would be a good thing for the other Boy Scouts to unite and buy a pair of crutches and present them to Jack, as soon as the doctor gave him permission to use them.

"Capital!" exclaimed the Scout Master; "I am glad it occurred to you; take charge of the matter, Alvin, and let me lead off with my contribution."

"I shall arrange to have Dr. Spellman buy the crutches, he knows the size needed, what the quality should be and where to get them. With your permission, I'll attend to the matter."

The next day Alvin told the leader that the doctor was much pleased and would send to Boston at once for the aids, so they should be ready when needed. One dollar apiece from the Boy Scouts was all that was required and it was best that the contribution should be the same in each case. This amount was cheerfully provided, each lad insisting that he should be allowed to give more if the amount ran short. Alvin promised his friends to call upon them if necessary.

Now the secret which Dr. Spellman told me is this: The dollar apiece did not pay one-half the cost of the implements, for they were made of maple--the best material--and were silver mounted, with a suitable inscription engraved in the metal. The extra cost was paid by Alvin, who perhaps after all did not deserve special praise, inasmuch as he was the son of a millionaire who was as pleased as he to do such charitable acts, especially where a Boy Scout was concerned. All the same, as you learned long ago, Alvin was one of the kindest hearted of youths.

On Thursday, the 22d of August, Jack Crandall, happy and grateful, walked across the floor and out of doors on his new crutches.

Here it is well that I lay down my pen, or rather stop the clicking of my typewriter. Sunshine bathed wood and lake and enfolded the clubhouse which the Boy Scouts made their headquarters during those memorable summer days in Southern Maine.

None dreamed of the cloud that was already gathering over that joyous camp, and which was to bring an experience to all that they will remember as long as they live. That experience and its strange series of adventures will be fully told in "*The Boy Patrol Around the Council Fire*," the concluding volume of the "Boy Patrol Series."