

BOY SCOUTS
IN THE
WHITE MOUNTAINS



WALTER P. EATON

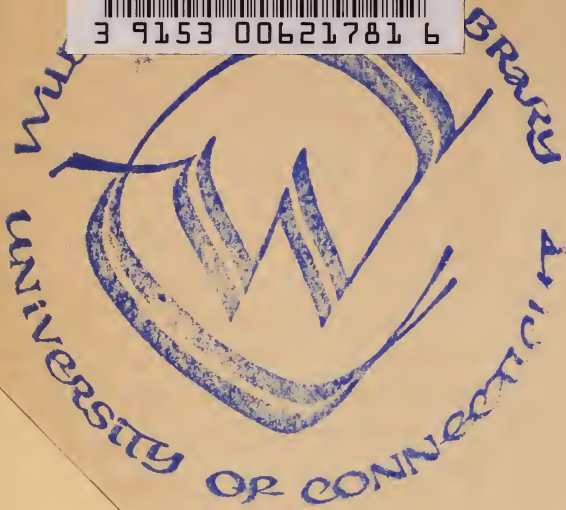
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To Bernice
from
Uncle Arthur

Xmas 1928

BOOKS BY

Walter P. Eaton

THE BOY SCOUTS OF BERKSHIRE. A story of how the Chipmunk Patrol was started, what they did and how they did it.

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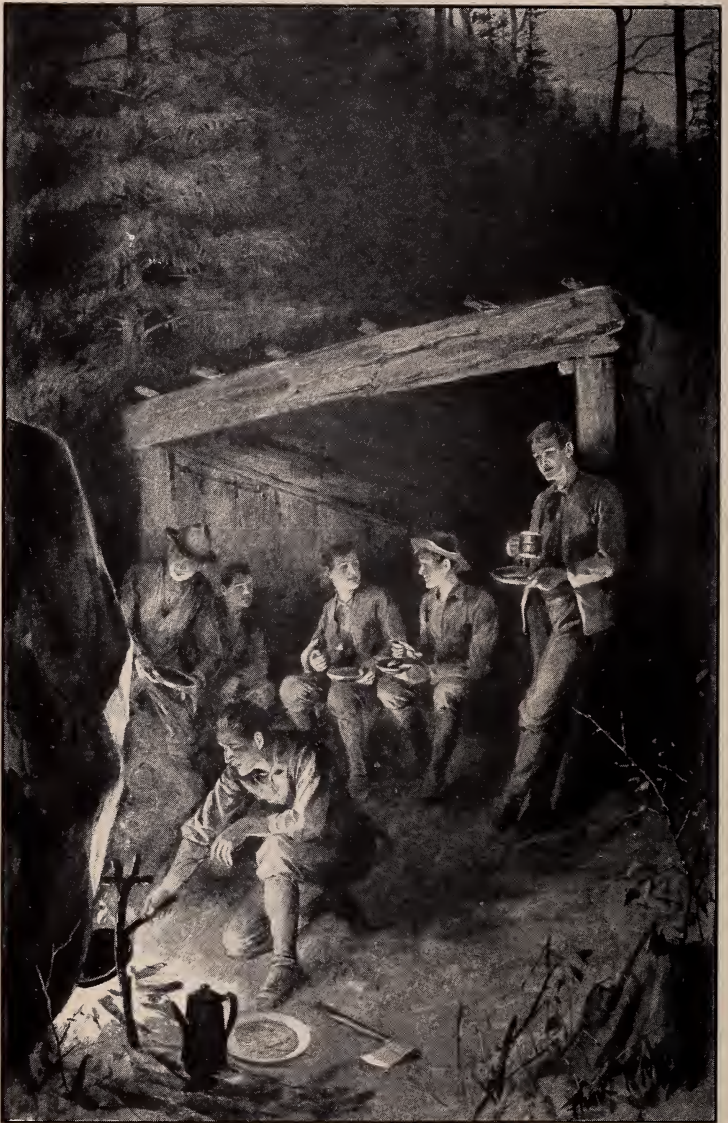
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Boy Scouts in the White Mountains

THE STORY OF A LONG HIKE

By
WALTER PRICHARD EATON

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK T. MERRILL



W. A. WILDE COMPANY

BOSTON

CHICAGO

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BOY SCOUTS IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

NOTE

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To
Sydney Bruce Snow
*In memory of a cheerful fire
and a doleful broken egg
beside the
Lakes of the Clouds*

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Boy Scouts in the White Mountains

CHAPTER I

PEANUT CALLS TO ARMS

NOBODY who had seen Art Bruce in a scout suit would ever have recognized him in his present costume. He had on black silk knee-breeches. On his low shoes were sewed two enormous buckles, cut out of pasteboard, with tinfoil from a paper of sweet chocolate pasted over them to make them look like silver. Instead of a shirt, he wore a woman's white waist, with a lot of lace in front, which stood out, stiff with starch. His jacket was of black velvet. Instead of a collar, he wore a black handkerchief wrapped around like an old-fashioned neck-cloth, the kind you see in pictures of George Washington's time. On his head was a wig, powdered white, with a queue hanging down behind. As he came out of the boys' dressing room into the school auditorium Peanut Morrison emitted a wild whoop.

"Gee, look at Art!" he cried. "He thinks he's

George Washington going to deliver his last message to Congress!"

Everybody looked at Art, and Art turned red. "Shut up," he said. "You wait till *you're* all dolled up, and see what *you* look like!"

"Yes, and you'd better be getting dressed right away," said one of the teachers to Peanut, who scampered off laughing.

Art stood about, very uncomfortable, watching the other boys and girls come from the dressing rooms, in their costumes. It was the dress rehearsal for a Colonial pageant the Southmead High School was going to present. They were going to sing a lot of old-time songs, and dance old-time dances (the girls doing most of the dancing). The stage was supposed to represent a Colonial parlor. Several people had loaned the school old mahogany furniture, the light was to come largely from candles, and finally, while the party was supposed to be in full blast, a messenger was going to dash in, breathless, announce the Battle of Lexington, and call the men-folks of Southmead to arms. Then the men would run for their guns, say good-bye to the women, and march off. Art couldn't see why they should march off in all their best clothes, and had said so to the teacher who got up the play, but she had pointed out that they couldn't afford to hire two costumes for all the boys, so they'd just have to pre-

tend they went home for their other clothes. Art was not yet satisfied, however.

The girls were in funny old costumes with wide skirts and powdered hair. They were all having a much better time than Art was.

"Gee, they *like* to dress up," thought Art, as he watched Lucy Parker practicing a courtesy before her own reflection in a glass door, and patting her hair.

Peanut didn't have to dress up in these elaborate clothes. He was the messenger who rushed in to announce the call to arms. He was also his own horse. Putting a board across two chairs just behind the door leading to the stage, he took a couple of drumsticks and imitated a galloping horse, beginning softly, as if the horse was far away, and drumming louder and louder till the horse was supposed to reach the door. Then he cried "Whoa!", dropped the drumsticks, and dashed out upon the stage. Peanut had been rehearsing his part at home, and the imitation of the galloping horse was really very good.

As soon as everybody was dressed, the rehearsal began, with the music teacher at the piano, and the other teachers running about getting the actors into place. Lucy Parker was supposed to be giving the party in her house, and the other characters came on one by one, or in couples, while Lucy courtesied to each of them. The girls courtesied back, while

the men were supposed to make low bows. There weren't many lines to speak, but Dennie O'Brien was supposed to be a visiting French count, with very gallant manners, and he had to say "Bon soir, Mademoiselle Parker" (Lucy's ancestors had lived in Southmead during the Revolution, so she kept her own name in the play), and then he had to lift her hand and kiss it. Dennie had never been able to do this at any of the rehearsals yet without giggling, and setting everybody else to giggling. But this time the teacher in charge spoke severely.

"Now, Dennis," she said, "this is a dress rehearsal. You go through your part right!"

"Yes'm," Dennie answered, feeling of the little black goatee stuck on his chin to see if it was on firm, and trying to keep his face straight.

When his turn came to enter, he got off his "Bon soir, Mademoiselle Parker" all right, and bowed over her hand without a snicker. But, just as he kissed her fingers, his goatee came off and fell to the floor. Everybody laughed, except Lucy. She was mad at him, because she wanted the play to be a great success, and before he could lift his face, she brought her hand up quickly and slapped his cheek a good, sounding whack.

Dennie jumped back, surprised. Then he picked up his goatee, while Lucy stamped her foot. "You great clumsy—*boy!*" she exclaimed.

"Serves you right, Dennis," said the teacher.

"Well, I can't help it if it won't stick," Dennie answered. "Gee, I'll *bite* your old hand next time!" he muttered to Lucy.

She ignored him, and the rehearsal proceeded. Art entered next, with Mary Pearson on his arm. Mary dropped a courtesy, and Art bowed.

The teacher clapped her hands for the rehearsal to stop. "Oh, Arthur," she said, "don't bow as if you had a ramrod down your back!"

"Well, I feel's if I had," said Art.

"But don't act so!" the teacher laughed. "Now, try it again."

Art tried once more to put his hand on his breast, and bow gracefully, but he certainly felt like a fool in these clothes, and made a poor success of it.

"Boys are *all* clumsy," he heard Lucy whisper to one of the other girls.

After the guests had all arrived, they sang several old-time songs, and then four boys and four girls danced the minuet. Art didn't have to take part in this. He was supposed to sit and chat in the background, which was easy. After the minuet, however, everybody had to get up and dance a Virginia Reel. While they were in the middle of the dance, Peanut's galloping horse was heard; the dance stopped, the cry of "Whoa!" was shouted at the door, and Peanut, in clothes made dusty by sprin-

pling flour on them, dashed into the room, breathless, and panted, "War has begun! We have fought the British at Lexington and Concord! Every man to arms! The enemy must be driven out of Boston!"

There was nothing stiff about Peanut, and nobody laughed when he came on covered with flour. He was really panting. He gasped out his first sentence, and ended with a thrilling shout. Then he dashed forth again, and his horse was heard galloping rapidly away.

"Peanut has the artistic temperament," one of the teachers whispered to another, who nodded.

No sooner had Peanut gone than the men on the stage piled after him, and while the women huddled whispering in excited groups, they grabbed guns and came back on the stage, when there were good-byes and pretended tears, and Lou Merritt, dressed up like a Revolutionary minister, gave the departing soldiers his blessing.

"Just the same, it's silly," Art cried, as the rehearsal was over. "Nobody ever marched off to war in silk pants and pumps. Why can't we put on our own old clothes, with high boots, when we go for the guns? Even if we don't have Continental uniforms, the old clothes will look more sensible than these things."

"Sure!" cried Peanut, to the teacher. "Look

here, Miss Eldridge, here's a picture of the Concord statue of the Minute Man. Just long pants stuck into his boots. Let 'em just do that, and sling blanket rolls over their shoulders, like Scouts. Then they'll look like business."

"I guess you are right, boys," she said. "Well, try it again. Who lives nearest? You, Joe, and you, Bert. Run and borrow a few old blankets from your mothers."

Ten minutes later Peanut once more galloped up to interrupt the Virginia Reel, the men rushed out for their guns, and pulled on their own trousers, slung blanket rolls over their shoulders, discarded their powdered wigs, and came back looking much more like minute men going to war. They formed a strong contrast now to the girls, in their fine clothes. Art felt easy at last, with a blanket roll covering his frilled shirt and a gun in his hand. He gave commands to his company in a firm voice, no longer halting and awkward. He even had a sudden inspiration, which undoubtedly improved the play, though that wasn't why he carried it out.

Lucy Parker, she who had been so contemptuous of boys, was acting for all she was worth in this scene. Prattie was supposed to be her lover, and she was clinging to him with one hand while bidding him good-bye, and mopping her eyes with the other. Art, as captain of the minute men, suddenly strode

over to her, grabbed Prattie, dragged him away, and put him into line with the other soldiers. Lucy looked indignant, and forgot to wipe her eyes. Art glanced at her triumphantly, and Miss Eldridge cried, "Do that on the night of the play, Arthur! That's fine—only don't glare at Lucy."

This inspiration rather restored Art's spirits. He had got square with Lucy Parker, anyhow! He and Peanut dressed as quickly as they could, and left the school building, walking home up the village street, where sleigh-bells were jingling. Art grew glum again.

"Hang the old rehearsals!" said he. "It's too late to go skating."

"I like 'em," Peanut replied. "It's lots o' fun."

"You're an actor, I guess," said Art. "Gee, you come puffing in just as if you were really out of breath!"

"I *am*," said Peanut. "I get to thinking about galloping up on the horse so hard while I'm drumming that I really get excited. Why, how can you help it?"

"Guess *you* can't," Art answered. "But I can. I'm not built that way. Play acting doesn't seem real to me, it seems sort of—sort of girls' stuff."

"Thank you," said Peanut.

"Oh, I don't mean you, of course," Art laughed. "But dancing, and all that—golly, I feel as if I was

wasting time. Wish vacation was here, so we could get away somewhere into the wilds again."

"Sure, so do I," answered Peanut, "but me for having all the fun I can while I'm in civilization. Where are we going to hike this summer, by the way?"

"I've been thinking about that," said Art. "I was thinking about it in study period—that's why I flunked my history recitation. Got a good idea, too."

"Out with it," said Peanut.

"The White Mountains," said Art. "It came to me while I was looking at that picture of the Alps which hangs on the side wall. These mountains about Southmead, they're not really mountains—only hills. But we've had a lot of fun climbing 'em. Think what fun it would be to climb *real* mountains. We can't get to the Alps or the Rockies, but Mr. Rogers told me once it wouldn't cost any more to hike over the White Mountains than it cost us to go to the Dismal Swamp."

"Me for them," cried Peanut. "That means saving twenty-five dollars between now and July. Wow! I'll have to do some hustling!"

"You'll have to cut out some candy," laughed Art.

"I've not bought any candy since—since yesterday," the other replied. "Whom'll we take with us on this hike?"

"Anybody that will go," said Art. "Guess I'd better call a scout meeting right away, and put it up to the fellers."

"Sure, to-night," cried Peanut. "I'm going home now to see if the old hen's laid an egg to sell!"

"You'll need a lot of eggs to save twenty-five dollars," said Art.

"Not so many, with eggs at fifty-five cents a dozen," Peanut replied. Then he turned in at his gate, and began to skip sideways up the path, hitting the soles of his shoes together in such a way that he exactly imitated the galloping of a horse. "Whoa!" he cried at the door, and as he entered the house, Art could hear him shouting at his mother, "To arms! The war has begun. We have fought the British at Lexington and Concord!"

Then Art grinned as he heard Mrs. Morrison reply, "Have you? Well, now you split some kindlings."

CHAPTER II

GETTING READY FOR THE HIKE

FOR the next few months several of the Scouts saved up money for the White Mountain hike. Art, as patrol leader, and as originator of the idea, felt that it was up to him to do all in his power to encourage the plan, so he borrowed Rob Everts' radiopticon (Rob himself was away at college now), and secured from Mr. Rogers, the Scout Master, who had been to the White Mountains many times, a bunch of picture post-cards and photographs, showing all kinds of views from that region—the Old Man of the Mountain, the clouds seen from the top of Mount Washington, the Great Gulf between Washington and the northern peaks, the snow arch in Tuckerman's Ravine, and so on. Mr. Rogers himself came to the meeting and explained the pictures, describing the places enthusiastically. Some of his own photographs were taken at very steep places on the trails, and here some of the boys gasped. One picture in particular showed Mr. Rogers himself climbing a ledge, almost as steep as the side of a house, with a pack on his back and a blanket roll over his shoulder.

"Gee, do you have to carry all that weight up those places?" demanded Prattie.

"You do if you want to eat and keep warm when you get to the top," Mr. Rogers laughed.

"Me for little old Southmead," Prattie replied.

"Yes, you stay right here, and dance the minuet with Lucy Parker," said Art scornfully. "You big, lazy tub!"

Prattie bristled up, but the other Scouts laughed him down. However, there were several more who seemed, as time went on, to feel rather as Prattie did toward the White Mountain hike. Some of them got discouraged at the task of saving up so much money. Besides, it was easier, when spring came, to go out and play baseball than it was to work for a few pennies, which had to be put in a bank and saved for summer—a long way off. Others didn't see the trip in the light Art and Peanut saw it. It seemed too hard work to them.

"They make me tired," Art declared one spring afternoon. "They haven't any gumption."

"Boys are something like men, I guess," Peanut answered sagely. "Some men get out and do things, an' get rich or go to Congress, while others don't. Look right here in Southmead. There's Tom Perkins, he's got everything you want in his store, from sponges to snow-shoes, and he's rich. Bill Green, who might do just as well as he does,

don't care whether he sells you anything or not ; he's too lazy to stock up with fresh goods all the while, and he's poor and don't amount to much. I guess when Tom Perkins was our age he'd have gone to the White Mountains with us, and Bill Green wouldn't."

"Probably," said Art, "but there are too many Bill Greens in the world!"

"Right-o," said Peanut. "I'll tell you something else, Art. Some of the fellers' folks won't let 'em go. I was talking with Dennie's old man the other day. Gee, he's got money enough! He could *give* Dennie twenty-five dollars and never know it. He said, 'What's the matter with you boys? Ain't Southmead good enough for you, that you want to go hikin' off a thousand miles?' He got my goat, and I just came back at him!"

"What did you say?" asked Art.

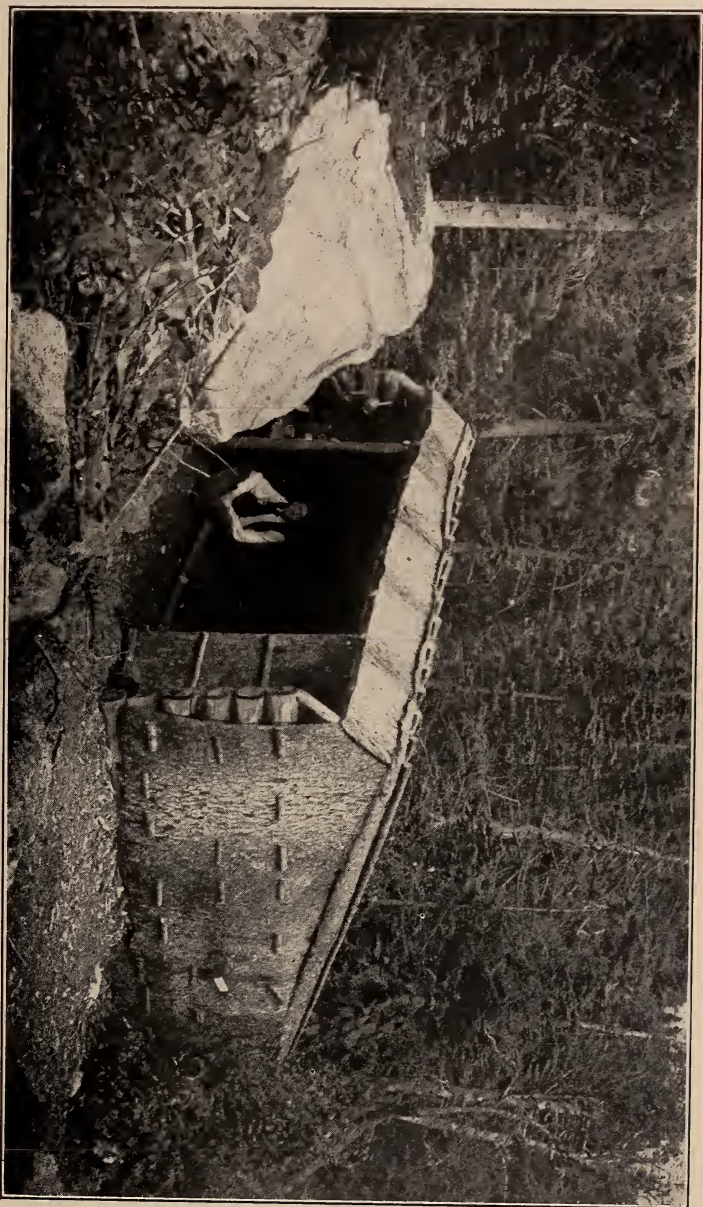
Peanut chuckled. "I wasn't exactly polite," he answered. "'Mr. O'Brien,' said I, 'if you'd been off more, you'd know that one of the best ways to get an education is to travel. Southmead's only a little corner of a big world.' 'Well, it's big enough for me, and for Dennis,' he says, and I answered, 'It's too big for you. You're so small you'd rattle 'round in a pea-pod.'"

"And then what happened?" asked Art.

"Then I ran," Peanut laughed. "Gee, he was

mad! Old tightwad! Dennie wants to go, awful bad."

As vacation time drew near in June, the number of Scouts who were going to be able to make the trip had boiled down to four—Art and Peanut, of course, with Frank Nichols and Lou Merritt. Those readers who have also read "The Boy Scouts of Berkshire" will recall that Lou Merritt was the boy who had started in as a sneak and a liar. But that time was long since past. He had lived with Miss Swain now for several years; he took care of her garden for her, and made some money for himself besides, raising lettuce, radishes, cauliflowers and other vegetables. He was in the high school, and was going from there to the Amherst Agricultural College. Lou was now one of the most respected boys in town, and Miss Swain was so fond of him that she had practically ordered him to go on the hike, for he had worked hard in the garden all the spring, besides studying evenings. She was going to hire a gardener while he was away, but the money for the trip he had earned himself. In addition to these four there was, of course, Mr. Rogers, the Scout Master, and Rob Everts, who would be back from college in a week or two now, and was going on the hike for a vacation, before he started in summer work in his father's bank. That made a party of six, which Mr. Rogers declared was, after all, enough.



The Appalachian Mountain Club camp in Tuckerman's Ravine

"Just a good, chummy number," he said. "The Appalachian camps will hold us without overcrowding, and we won't always be worrying about stragglers getting lost."

"What are the Appalachian camps?" asked Art.

"The Appalachian Club is a club of men, with headquarters in Boston," Mr. Rogers answered, "and they do more than anybody else to make hiking in the White Mountains possible. They have built dozens and dozens of trails, which they keep cleaned out and marked clearly, and at several strategic points they have built shelters where you can camp over night or get in out of the storm. They have a stone hut on the col between Mounts Madison and Adams, a shelter in the Great Gulf, another in Tuckerman's Ravine, and so on. I've been mighty glad to get to some of these shelters, I can tell you."

"Gee, those names—Great Gulf—Tuckerman's Ravine—make you want to get to 'em in a hurry!" cried Peanut. "Let's plan an equipment right off."

"That is pretty important," said Mr. Rogers. "We want to go as light as we can, and yet we've got to keep warm. I've been in a snow-storm on Mount Washington in the middle of August."

"Whew!" said Peanut.

So the four Scouts began planning, at their shoes, where plans for every hike ought to begin. As Mr.

Rogers put it, "a soldier is no better than his feet." Each boy got out his stoutest boots, made sure that the linings were sound so there would be no rough places to chafe the feet, and took them to the cobbler's. If the soles had worn thin, the cobbler resoled them, and in all of them he put hobnails, so they would grip the steep rocks without slipping.

None of the Southmead Scouts wore the kind of scout uniform which has short knee pants and socks instead of stockings. As most of their hikes were through woods, this uniform would have been highly unpractical, resulting in scratched legs. Besides, all the larger Scouts, like Art and Peanut, said it was too much like the clothes rich little children wear! Instead, the Southmead troop generally wore khaki trousers and leggings.

"I think leggings are going to be too hot for this trip," Mr. Rogers said. "We'll have very little brush work to do. Suppose we cut out the leggings in favor of long khaki trousers. We'll each want an extra pair of heavy socks, and you, Lou, bring along a needle and plenty of darning cotton, to repair holes. Then we'll want an extra shirt and set of underclothes apiece, so we can change in camp after a sweaty climb. Also, we'll all want sweaters and a blanket."

"How about food?" asked Art.

"And cooking kits?" asked Peanut.

"And my camera?" said Frank.

"One camera only!" laughed Mr. Rogers. "You can settle whose that'll be between you. Most of our food we'll get as we go along. But it would be just as well if we got a few things before we start, such as salt and a few soup sticks and some dehydrated vegetables, such as spinach, and maybe some army emergency rations."

"Brr," said Peanut. "Art and I tried them once. Taste like—well, I'm too polite to tell you."

"Nevertheless, you can put a small can in your pocket and go off for a day without toting a whole kitchen along," Mr. Rogers answered, "and that's a help when you are climbing."

"All right," said Peanut, "but I'd rather chew raisins."

"He'll eat it just the same, when he gets hungry," put in Art. "Now, about kits. Can't we divide up? We oughtn't to need much stuff for only six."

"I've got two kettles, that nest, one inside the other," said Peanut, "and a small frying-pan."

"I've got a good sized fry pan," said Frank.

"And I've got a wire broiler, that shuts up and fits into my pocket," said Mr. Rogers.

"And I've got a collapsible camp lantern, that you can see to shut it up by," said Lou.

"Then we'll do with just those things," Art said.

"Of course, everybody'll bring his own cup and

knife and spoon. Oh, and how about maps and compasses, Mr. Rogers? Will we need compasses?"

"You bet, we'll *all* take compasses. Everybody's got to have a compass in his pocket before we start."

"Why?" asked Frank. "Can't you always see where you are going on a mountain? Those pictures of Washington you showed us looked as if the mountain was all bare rock."

"That's just why we need the compasses," Mr. Rogers answered. "You can follow a path through woods, no matter how thick a cloud you may be in, but when you get up on the bare ledges of the Presidentials, the path is marked only by little piles of stones, called cairns, every fifty feet or so, and when a cloud comes up you can't see, often, from one to the next, and if you once get away from the path and started in a wrong direction, you are lost. Many people have been lost on Mount Washington just that way, and either starved or frozen to death. If you have a compass, you can steer a compass line down the mountain till you come to water, and follow the brook out toward the north where there are houses at the base. But if you haven't a compass, and get to going south, you get into a wilderness, and it would go hard with you. Mount Washington is really a dangerous mountain, even if it is only 6,293 feet high. The storms come quickly and often without warning, and it can get very cold up there,

as I told you, even in midsummer. Yes, sir, we'll all take compasses, and before we tackle the old boy we'll have some lectures, too, on how to act in case of cloud!"

"Don't we want maps, too?" said Art. "Gee, it sounds more exciting every minute!"

"I have the maps," Mr. Rogers said. "Here are the government maps of the Presidentials, and here is the little Appalachian Club book, with maps and trails."

He brought out a small book in a green leather cover like a pocketbook, and opened it, unfolding two maps of the Presidential range, like big blueprints.

The boys leaned their heads together over it, and began to spell out the trails.

"Gulf Side Trail," cried Art. "That sounds good."

"Here's the Crawford Bridle Path—that's a long one—shall we go up that?" asked Lou.

Mr. Rogers nodded. "That's the way we'll get up Washington," he said.

"Hi, I like this one!" Peanut exclaimed. "Six Husbands' Trail! She goes down—or *he* does, seeing it's husbands—into the Great Gulf, and then up again—let's see—up Jefferson. Wow, by the contour intervals it looks like a steep one!"

"It is a steep one—wait till you see it," said Mr. Rogers.

Art had now turned back from the map into the reading matter.

“Listen to this!” he exclaimed. “Here’s a description of the Tuckerman Ravine path up Mount Washington. It’s three and six-tenth miles, and the time given for it is four hours and fifteen minutes. That’s less than a mile an hour. Gee, I call that pretty slow!”

“Do you?” laughed the Scout Master. “Well, if we average a mile an hour on the steep trails, I’ll be satisfied. You wait till you hit the head wall with a pack on your back, and a blanket on your shoulder, and see how many miles an hour you want to travel!”

“Keeps sounding better and better!” cried Peanut. “Golly, I can’t wait! When do we start?”

It was agreed, as soon as Rob got home from college, to start the day before the Fourth of July, and celebrate the Fourth in the mountains. Rob suspected that Mr. Rogers suggested this date partially in order to keep Peanut from getting into trouble “the night before,” as Peanut was always a leader in the attempts to ring the Congregational church bell, and this year the sheriff had declared he’d arrest any boy he caught near the steeple. But Peanut was too excited over the mountain hike to worry much at losing the night before fun. On the afternoon of the second, all five Scouts had their equip-

ments ready, and brought them to Mr. Rogers' house, which was nearest to the station. The next morning they were on hand half an hour before train time, and marched to the station with a flag flying, for Peanut declared, as he unfurled it, that he was going to plant Old Glory on the top of something on the Fourth of July.

Two hours later they changed cars for the White Mountain express, at Springfield, and soon were rolling up the Connecticut valley, through country which was strange to them.

CHAPTER III

FOURTH OF JULY ON KINSMAN

AS the train passed along the high embankment above the village of Deerfield, Massachusetts, the boys crowded to the windows on the left side of the car, and gazed out upon the meadows where they had camped at the turning point of their first long hike, several years before. The village looked sleepy and quiet, under its great trees.

"Golly, they need waking up again!" Peanut laughed. "Remember how we trimmed 'em in baseball? There's the field we played on, too."

But almost before the rest could follow Peanut's beckoning finger, the train was past. Deerfield was the last familiar spot they saw. Their way led northward, mile after mile, beside the Connecticut River, and they began to get a pretty good idea of what a lengthy thing a big river is.

"Take a good look at that river, boys," said Mr. Rogers, "because in a few days we are going to eat our lunch at one of its head waters, and you can see what little beginnings big things have."

In the afternoon, they came in sight of Mount Ascutney, close to the river in Windsor, Vermont.

"That's only the height of Greylock, which we've climbed," Mr. Rogers told them. "But you'll begin to see some of the big fellows pretty soon."

Sure enough, it was not long before Art, who was looking out of the eastern window, gave a cry. "There's a big blue lump, with what looks like a house on top!"

Mr. Rogers looked. "You're right, it's a big lump, all right! That's the second one we'll climb. It's Moosilauke." He peered sharply out of the window. "There," he added, "do you see a saddleback mountain beyond it, which looks like Greylock? That's Kinsman. We'll celebrate the Fourth to-morrow, on top of him."

"Hooray!" cried Peanut. "I got two packs of firecrackers in my kettle!"

"How high is it?" asked Frank.

"About 4,200 feet," Mr. Rogers answered. "That's only 700 feet higher than Greylock, but I can promise you it will seem more, and there'll be a different view."

Peanut was running from one side of the car to the other, trying to see everything. But the nearer they got to the mountains, the less of the mountains they saw. After the train turned up the narrow valley of the Ammonoosuc, at Woodsville, in fact, they saw no more mountains at all. An hour later they got off the train at the Sugar Hill station. So

did a great many other people. There were many motors and mountain wagons waiting to carry off the new arrivals. The boys, at Art's suggestion, let these get out of the way before they started, so the dust would have a chance to settle. It was late in the afternoon when they finally set out.

"How far have we got to go?" asked Frank.

"Seven or eight miles," Mr. Rogers answered, "if we want to camp at the base of Kinsman. If you'd rather walk it in the morning, we can camp along this road."

"No, let's get there to-night! Don't care if I starve, I'm going to keep on till I see the mountains," cried Peanut.

The rest were equally eager, so up the road they plodded, a road which mounted steadily through second growth timber, mile after mile, with scarce a house on it. After an hour or more, they came in sight of Sugar Hill village, one street of houses straggling up a hill ahead. They increased their pace, and soon Peanut, who was leading, gave a cry which startled several people walking on the sidewalk. The rest hurried up. Peanut had come to the top of the road, and was looking off eastward excitedly. There were the mountains! Near at hand, hardly a stone's throw, it seemed, across the valley below, lay a long, forest-clad bulwark, rising into domes. Beyond that shot up a larger rampart,

sharply peaked, of naked rock. Off to the left, beyond that, growing bluer and bluer into the distance, was a billowing sea of mountains, and very far off, to the northwest, almost like a mist on the horizon, lay the biggest pyramid of all, which Mr. Rogers told them was Mount Washington.

"Some mountains, those!" Peanut exclaimed. "Gee, I guess we won't climb 'em all in two weeks!"

"I guess not," Rob laughed.

They turned to the right now, passing a big hotel on the very crest of the hill, and as they passed, the setting sun behind them turned all the mountains a bright amethyst, so that they looked, as Lou put it, "like great big jewels."

"It's beautiful!" he added, enthusiastically.

"Make a poem about it," said Peanut. "Say, Mr. Rogers, Lou writes poetry. You oughter read it! He wrote a poem to Lucy Parker one day, didn't you, Lou?"

"Shut up," said Lou, turning red.

"Well, if I could write poetry, this view would make me do it, all right," Rob put in. "Now where to, Mr. Rogers?"

"Getting hungry?" said the Scout Master.

"I sure am."

"Well, in an hour we'll be at camp. All downhill, too."

"Hooray!" cried Art. "This pack is getting heavy."

The party now turned sharply down the hill toward the east, and the great double range of the Franconia Mountains, which Mr. Rogers named for them. The highest peak on the north of the farther range was Lafayette, 5,200 feet high. The northern peak of the first range was Cannon Mountain, the Old Man's face being on the farther side of it. To the south the twin summits, like a saddleback, were the two peaks of Kinsman, which they would climb in the morning. As they dropped rapidly down the hill, they suddenly saw to the south, in the fading light, a huge bulk of a mountain filling up the vista. "That's Moosilauke," Mr. Rogers said. "We tackle him day after to-morrow."

It was almost dark when they reached the valley, and turned south along a sandy road with the big black wall of Cannon seeming to tower over them. It grew quite dark while they were still tramping.

"Hope you know your way, Mr. Scout Master," said Peanut, who had ceased to run on ahead.

"Half a mile more," Mr. Rogers laughed.

Presently they heard a brook, and a moment later stood on a bridge. The brook was evidently coming down from that great black bulk of Cannon to the left, which lifted its dome up to the stars.

"Halt!" Mr. Rogers cried. "Here's Copper Mine Brook."

He led the way through the fence side of the brook, and two minutes later the party stood in a pine grove, carpeted with soft needles.

"Camp!" said the Scout Master. "Art, you and the rest get a fire going. Take Lou's lantern and find some stones. There are plenty right in the bed of the brook—nothing but. Peanut, come with me."

The Scout Master led Peanut out of the grove to the south, and up over a pasture knoll a few hundred feet. At the top of the knoll they saw a white house below them, a big barn, and a cottage. Descending quickly, Mr. Rogers led Peanut through the wood-shed, as if it were his own house, and knocked at the kitchen door.

As the Scout Master and Peanut entered, a man and a little boy arose, the man's face expressing first astonishment and then joyous welcome.

"Well, of all things!" he cried. "Did you drop out of the sky?"

"Mr. Sheldon, this is Bobbie Morrison, otherwise known as Peanut," said Mr. Rogers. "And how is your Bobbie?"

The little fellow came forward from behind his father's leg, and shook hands. But what interested him most was Peanut's sheath hatchet. In two

minutes he had it out, and was trying to demolish the wood-box with it—not trying, succeeding! His father had to take it away.

The Sheldon family all came to welcome Mr. Rogers, and when he and Peanut returned to camp they carried milk and eggs and doughnuts.

“That farm,” Mr. Rogers said, “is about the best place I know of to come to stay, if you want to tramp around for a week or a month.”

“They kind of like you, I guess,” said Peanut.

“That’s the kind of folks they are,” answered the Scout Master.

Back at camp, the Scouts had a fire going briskly, and soon supper was sizzling, and the smell of coffee, made from the pure water of Copper Mine Brook, was mingling with the fragrance of the pines, and with another smell the boys at first did not recognize till Art examined a small tree close to the fire, and discovered that it was balsam. They were in the midst of their feast, when Mr. Sheldon appeared, and sat down with them.

“You oughtn’t to take ’em away from here without showing ’em the falls,” he said to the Scout Master. “They are full now—lots of water coming over—and I cut out the trail fresh this last winter. You can do it in the morning and still make Kinsman, easily. At least, you can if they are strong boys,” he added with a wink.

"Humph!" said Peanut, "I guess we're as strong as the next."

Then he realized that Mr. Sheldon had got a rise out of him, and grinned.

"What's the weather going to be to-morrow?" asked the Scout Master.

"Clear," the other man replied. "I didn't hear the mountain talking as I came across the knoll."

"The mountain *what?*" said Rob.

"Talking, we say. You get it real still down here sometimes in the valley, and way up on top there, if you listen sharp, you can hear the wind rushing through the trees. Then we look out for bad weather."

"That's a funny way to put it," Lou mused. "It makes the mountains seem sort of human."

"Well, you get to know 'em pretty well, living under 'em all the time, that's a fact," the man answered. "A good sleep to you."

"Good-night," called the Scouts, as he disappeared.

As soon as the supper things were washed, they were ready for bed, curling up in their blankets around the fire, for it was chilly here, even though it was the night before the Fourth—a fact Peanut quite forgot till he had rolled himself all up for the night. He crawled out again, set off a couple of firecrackers, and came back to bed.

"Gee, this is the stillest night before *I* ever saw!" he exclaimed.

"It *would* be, if you'd shut up," grunted Art, sleepily.

The next morning Art, as always, was the first up. He rose from his blanket, aware that it was dawn, and rubbed his eyes. Where was the dim black wall of the mountain which had gone up against the stars the night before? He ran out of the grove into a clear space and gazed up Copper Mine Brook into a white wall of cloud. Back the other way, he saw that the narrow valley in which they were was hung along the surface with white mist, as the water of the Lake of the Dismal Swamp used to be; and the western hills beyond it were in cloud. Yet overhead the dawn sky appeared to be blue.

"Guess we're in for a bad day," he muttered, peeling off his clothes and tumbling into the shallow, swift waters of the brook. He emitted a loud "Wow!" as he fell into the deepest pool he could find. Was this ice water? He got out again as quickly as possible, and began hopping up and down to dry himself, his body pink with the reaction.

His "Wow!" had wakened the camp, and the rest were soon beside him.

"How's the water?" asked Peanut.

"Fine!" said Art, winking at Mr. Rogers.

Peanut, without a word, rolled over the bank. His "Wow!" sounded like a wildcat in distress.

"Cold?" asked Rob.

"Oh, n-n-no," said Peanut emerging with chattering teeth. "W-w-warm as t-t-t-toast."

The rest decided to cut out the morning bath, in spite of Art's jeers. Even Mr. Rogers balked at ice water. They were all looking, with much disappointment, at the cloud-covered mountain above them.

"Wait a bit," said the Scout Master. "This is going to be a fine day—you'll see."

Even as they were going back to camp for breakfast, the hills to the west, touched now with the sun, began to emerge from the mist, or rather the mist seemed to roll up their sides like the curtain at a play. By the time breakfast was over, the sun had appeared over Cannon, and the clouds had mysteriously vanished into a few thin shreds of vapor, like veils far up in the tree tops. It was a splendid day.

"Well, I'll be switched!" said Art.

"The mountains almost always gather clouds, like a dew, at night in summer," the Scout Master said. "Well, boys, do you feel up to tackling Bridal Veil Falls before we tackle Kinsman?"

There came a "Yes!" in unison. All packs and equipment were left in camp, and shortly after six the party set out in light marching trim up a logging road which followed the brook bed. It led over a

high pasture, and finally plunged into a thick second growth forest, where the dew on the branches soaked everybody, but particularly Peanut, who was leading and got the first of it. The path crossed the brook several times on old corduroy log bridges, now nearly rotted away, and grew constantly steeper. The boys were panting a bit. They hadn't got their mountain wind yet. After two miles, during which, but for the steepness, they might have been leagues from any mountain for all they could see, they began to hear a roaring in the woods above them. They hastened on, and suddenly, right ahead, they saw a smooth, inclined plane of rock, thirty or forty feet long, with the water slipping down over it like running glass, and above it they saw a sheer precipice sixty feet high, with a V-shaped cut in the centre. Through the bottom of this V the brook came pouring, and tumbled headlong to the ledge below.

"Up we go!" cried Peanut, tackling the smooth sloping ledge at a dry strip on the side. He got a few feet, and began to slip back.

The rest laughed, and tackled the slide at various spots. Only the Scout Master, with a grin, went way to the right and climbed easily up by a hidden path on the side ledge. He got to the base of the falls before the boys did.

"A picture, a picture!" cried Frank, as the rest

finally arrived. All the party but Frank scrambled up on a slippery boulder, drenched with spray, beside the falls, and Frank mounted his tripod and took them, having to use a time exposure, as there was no sun down under the precipice.

"Now, let's get to the top of the falls!" cried Peanut. "Is there a path?"

"Yes, there's a path, but it's roundabout, and we haven't time," the Scout Master answered.

"Ho, we don't need a path, I guess," Peanut added. "Just go right up those rocks over there, clinging to the little hemlocks."

He jumped across the brook from boulder to boulder, and started to scramble up the precipice, on what looked like rocks covered with mossy soil and young trees. He got about six feet, when all the soil came off under his feet, the little tree he was hanging to came off on top of him, and he descended in a shower of mould, moss, mud and evergreen.

"Guess again, Peanut," the Scout Master laughed, when he saw the boy rise, unharmed. "You can't climb safely over wet moss, you know—or you didn't know."

"I guess you're right," said Peanut, ruefully regarding the precipice. "But I did want to get up there."

"Forward march for Kinsman, I say," Art put in. "That's the business of the day."

They started down. At the inclined plane Peanut decided to slide. He crouched on his heels upon the smooth rock, and began to descend. But the rock sloped inward almost imperceptibly. Half-way down he was on the edge of the water, two feet more and he was in the water. His feet went out from under him, and sitting in the stream (which was only about three inches deep over the slide) he went down like lightning, into the brook below!

The rest set up a shout. Peanut got up upon the farther bank, and stood dripping in the path. He was soaked from the waist down. "Ho, what do I care? It's a warm day," said he. But he pulled off his boots and emptied the water out of them, and then wrung out his stockings and trousers. The rest didn't wait. They went laughing down the path, and Peanut had to follow on the run.

When he caught up, everybody was looking very stern. "Now, Peanut, no more nonsense," Mr. Rogers said. "You'll keep to the path hereafter. We want no broken bones, nor colds, nor sore feet from spoiled shoes. Remember, this is the last time!"

He spoke soberly, sternly. "Yes, sir!" said Peanut, not seeing the wink the Scout Master gave the rest.

At camp they shouldered their equipment, stopped at the little store Mr. Sheldon kept in a wing of his

house, to buy some provisions and to say goodbye, and at ten o'clock were tramping up the road of the narrow valley, with the blue bulk of Moosilauke directly south of them, Cannon Mountain just behind to the left, up which they had gone half-way to the falls, and directly on their left the northern ridges of Kinsman, covered with dense forest.

Half a mile down the road Mr. Rogers led the way through a pair of bars, and they crossed a pasture, went panting up a tremendously steep path between dense young spruces, passed through another pasture, and began to climb a steep logging road. It was hard, steady plodding.

"I'm gettin' dry," said Peanut, "but my pants still stick!"

After a while, the path left the logging road, and swung up still steeper through the trees. Suddenly they heard water, and a moment later were standing on a shelf of rock over a waterfall, which came forth from one of the most curious formations they had ever seen.

"Another chance for you to get wet, Peanut!" laughed Frank. "What is this place, Mr. Rogers?"

"It's called Kinsman Flume," the Scout Master answered.

The flume was a cleft not more than eight feet wide, between two great ledges of moss-grown rock. It ran back into the hill two hundred feet, and was

at least thirty feet deep. The brook came into the upper end over a series of waterfalls, and ran out of the lower end, where the boys were, down another fall. Frank took a picture of it, and then they crossed the brook at the lower end, and followed the path up along the top. The path brought them into another logging road, which presently came out into a level clearing. As they had not seen the top of the mountain since they entered the woods, everybody gave a gasp now. There, ahead of them, was the summit—but looking just as high, just as far off, as ever! Art pulled out his watch.

“We’ve been going an hour and a quarter—whew!” he said. “I thought we were ’most there.”

“A little bigger than it looks, eh?” Mr. Rogers laughed. “Most mountains fool you that way.”

The party plodded on a way across the level plateau, and then the ascent began again—up, up, up, by a path which had evidently once been a logging road, but had now been eroded by the water, till it was little better than the dry bed of a brook—and not always dry at that. The boys began to pant, and mop their foreheads. Then they began to shift their blanket rolls from one shoulder to the other. The pace had slowed down.

“How about that mile an hour being ridiculously slow, Art?” Mr. Rogers inquired.

"We're not doing much better, that's a fact," Art admitted.

Just as he spoke, a partridge suddenly went up from the path, not twenty-five feet ahead, with a great whir-r-r. When they reached the spot where he rose, they found a tiny, clear spring. Art flung down his burden, and dropped on his knees with his cup.

"Good place for lunch, *I* say," remarked Peanut.

"Me, too, on that," said Frank.

Rob looked ahead. The path was growing still steeper. He looked back, and through the trees he could see far below to the valley.

"One more vote," he said.

"Carried," said Art, running for fuel.

After a lunch of bacon and powdered eggs, the party lolled an hour in the shade, half asleep, and then resumed the climb. The path very soon entered a forest of a different sort. It was still chiefly hard wood, but very much darker and denser than that below. The trail, too, was not a logging road. It was marked only by blazes on the trees, and the forest floor was black and damp with untold ages of leaf-mould.

"I guess we've got above the line of lumbering," said Rob.

"We have," said the Scout Master.

Art looked about. "Then this is really primeval forest!" he exclaimed—"just what it was when there were only Indians in this country!"

He investigated the trees more carefully. "Why, most of them are birches," he cried, "but they are so old and green with moss that they don't look white at all. And look how short they are, for such big trunks."

"You are nearly 4,000 feet up now, remember," Mr. Rogers reminded him, "and they are dwarfed by the storms."

They came presently out of this dim bit of primeval forest into a growth composed almost exclusively of spruce. It was thirty feet high at first, but the path was very steep, and growing rocky, and in five minutes the spruces had shrunk in height to ten feet. The boys scented the summit and began to hurry. They struck a level place, and from it, in gaps between the stunted spruces, they began to get hints of the view. A quick final scramble, and they found themselves on the north peak. Peanut was leading. His clothes were dry now, except for a new soaking of perspiration, and his spirits high. Rob was right on his heels. The rest heard their shouts, and a second later stood beside them on a big flat rock, above the spruces which were only three or four feet tall here, and looked out upon the most wonderful view they had ever beheld. It made them all silent for a moment.

Right at their feet, on the opposite side from which they had come up, the mountain dropped

away in an almost sheer precipice for a thousand feet. At the bottom of that precipice was a perfectly level plateau, covered with forest, and apparently two miles long by half a mile wide, with a tiny lake, Lonesome Lake, at one end. Beyond it the mountain again fell away precipitously into an unseen gorge. From out of that gorge, on the farther side, rose the massive wall of Lafayette, Lincoln, Haystack and Liberty, four peaks which are almost like one long mountain with Lafayette, at the northern end, the highest point, a thousand feet higher than the boys. The whole side of this long rampart is so steep that great landslides have scarred it, and the last thousand feet of it is bare rock. It looked to the boys tremendously big, and the one blue mountain beyond it, to the east, which was high enough to peep over seemed very high indeed—Mount Car-rigain.

Peanut drew in his breath with a whistle. Lou sighed. "That's the biggest thing I ever saw," he said. Then he added, "And the most beautiful!"

To the southeast, below Mount Liberty at the end of the big rock rampart, the boys could see off to the far horizon, over a billow of blue mountains like the wave crest of a gigantic sea—the Sandwich range, with the sharp cone of Chocorua as its most prominent peak. Facing due south, they could see, close to them, the south peak of Kinsman, perhaps

half a mile away, across a saddle which was much deeper than it had looked from the base. Beyond the south peak was Moosilauke, seeming very close, and on top of it they could now see the Summit House. To the west, they looked down the slope up which they had climbed, to the valley, where the houses looked like specks, and then far off to the Green Mountains of Vermont.

Peanut grew impatient. "Come on, fellers," he cried. "This ain't the top. What are we waiting here for?"

"Oh, let us see the view, Peanut," said Rob. "What's your rush?"

"Well, stay and see your old view; I'm going to get to the top first," Peanut answered. "Where are we going to camp, Mr. Rogers?"

"Back here, I guess. There's a good spring just over the edge below. We'll go to the south peak, and then come back."

Peanut dumped off his pack into the bushes, kneeled down and took out the flag and his fire-crackers, and then slipped over the brow and disappeared rapidly along the path which led across the saddle to the south peak.

The rest waited till Art had put some dehydrated spinach to soak in a kettle, and then followed more slowly, seeing nothing of Peanut, for the path wound amid the stunted spruces which were just tall enough

to out-top a man. They went down a considerable incline, and found two or three hundred feet of fresh climbing ahead of them when they reached the base of the south cone. They were scrambling up through the spruces when suddenly from the summit they heard a report—then a second—a third—a fourth—then the rapid musketry of a whole bunch of cannon crackers. It sounded odd far up here in the silence, and not very loud. The great spaces of air seemed to absorb the sound.

When they reached the top, Peanut had stripped a spruce of all branches, and tied the flag to the top. It was whipping out in the breeze. As the first boy's head appeared in sight, he touched off his last bunch of crackers, and, taking off his hat, cried, "Ladies and gentlemen, salute your flag in honor of the Independence of these United States of America, and the Boy Scouts of Southmead, Massachusetts!"

"Peanut's making a Fourth of July oration," Frank called down to the rest.

Rob laughed. "From the granite hills of New Hampshire to the sun-kissed shores of the golden Pacific," he declaimed, "from the Arctic circle to the Rio Grande, the dear old stars and stripes shall wave—"

"Shut up," said Lou. "This place ain't the spot to make fun of the flag in. I say we all just take

off our hats and salute it, here on top of this mountain!"

Lou spoke seriously. Peanut, who was always quick to take a suggestion, instantly acquiesced. "Sure," he said. "Lou's right. Hats off to the flag on the Fourth of July!"

The five Scouts and Mr. Rogers stood on the rock by the improvised flagstaff, and saluted in silence. Then the Scout Master said quietly, "We can see from here a good deal of the United States, can't we? We can see the granite hills of New Hampshire, all right. We can realize the job it was for our ancestors to conquer this country from the wilderness and the Indians, to put roads and railways through these hills. I guess we ought to be pretty proud of the old flag."

The boys put on their hats again, and Frank took a picture of them, gathered around the flag. Then Peanut let out a pent-up whoop. "Never celebrated the Fourth like this before!" he cried. "Golly, but Moosilauke looks big from here!"

It certainly did look big. It seemed to tower over them. The western sun was throwing the shadows of its own summit down the eastern slopes, and the whole great mountain was hazy, mysterious.

"Are we going to climb that?" asked Frank.

"Sure," said Art.

"Whew!" said Frank. "Makes my legs ache already!"

"It's easier than this one," Mr. Rogers laughed. "Now let's go back and make camp."

The party retraced their steps to the north peak where, just below the summit and overlooking the precipitous drop to the Lonesome Lake plateau, was a small but cold and delicious spring.

"How does the water get way up here, is what stumps me," said Frank.

"I suppose it is rain and snow water, held in the rocks," the Scout Master replied. "Perhaps some of it comes along the rock fissures from the south peak, but that wouldn't be necessary. There is a little spring almost at the top of Lafayette over there. We'll see it in a few days."

"How do we get up Lafayette?" asked Art.

"We'll come down from Moosilauke, and tramp up the Notch down there below our feet now, till we reach Liberty, climb Liberty, and go right along the ridge to Lafayette, and then down to the Profile House," was the answer.

The boys looked across the valley to the great rock wall on the further side. The sun was sinking low now, and the shadow of Kinsman was cast across. Even as they watched, this shadow mounted slowly up the steep, scarred sides of Liberty and Lincoln, till only their summits were in sunlight, rosy at first and then amethyst. The far hills to the southwest began to fade from sight.

"Gee, it's time to make camp!" cried Peanut. "Here's a good, soft place, on this moss."

He pointed to a level spot on the summit. Mr. Rogers shook his head.

"Nix!" he said. "We'd be chilled through before morning. Which way is the wind?"

Art picked up a piece of dry grass and tossed it into the air. It drifted toward the southeast.

"Northwest," he said.

"All right. We'll go down into the spruces to leeward, and keep out of it."

The boys soon found a sheltered level space some fifty feet below the peak, and began to clear out a sort of nest in the tough spruce.

"Gosh, I never saw anything so tough as these young spruces," said Frank.

Lou had been examining one he had cut down. "They're not young," he answered. "That's the funny part of it. This one I've cut is only four inches through, but it's *years* old. I've counted at least forty-five rings. Guess they are dwarfed by the storms up here, like Japanese trees, aren't they, Mr. Rogers?"

The Scout Master nodded. "I've seen 'em only three or four feet high, when they were so thick together, and so tough, that you could literally walk on top of 'em without going through to the ground."

Peanut dropped his hatchet and slipped down over

the rocks to a spot where the trees were as Mr. Rogers had described. He tried to press through, and failed. Then he just scrambled out on top of them, and tried to walk. With every step he half disappeared from sight, while the rest looked on, laughing.

After a few steps, he came back. His hands and face were scratched, and there was a tear in his trousers.

"Excuse *me!*" he cried. "Gee, the Dismal Swamp has nothing on those mountain spruces! Golly, I begin to admire the man who made this path up here!"

The spruce boughs were so tough, in fact, that only the tips could be used for bedding, and the boys had to trim the branches with their knives to make their bunks on the ground. The camp-fire was built of dead spruce, with some live stumps added, and a kettle of water kept beside it lest a spark ignite the trees close by. Night had come on before supper was ready, and with the coming of night it grew cold, colder than the boys had guessed it could be in July. They put on their sweaters, which, all day, they had been complaining about as extra weight, and they kept close to the fire while Art, with the skill of a juggler, tossed the flapjacks from one side to the other in his fry pan, catching them neatly as they came down. The wind rose higher, and began

to moan through the spruces. Far below them was the great black hole of the Notch—just a yawning pit with no bottom. Beyond it the shadowy bulk of Lafayette, Lincoln, Haystack and Liberty loomed up against the starry sky. From this side, not a single light was visible anywhere in the universe. The boys ate their supper almost in silence.

“Gee, this is lonely!” Peanut suddenly blurted out. “I’m going where I can see a light.” He got up and climbed to the summit again, followed by all the others except Lou. They could look westward from the peak, and see the lamps in the houses down in the valley, and the blazing lights of the big hotel on Sugar Hill, and even the street lights in Franconia village.

“There *is* somebody else in the world!” cried Peanut. “Glad of that. I was beginning to think there wasn’t.”

Just as he spoke, a rocket suddenly went up from Sugar Hill, and burst in the air. It was followed by another, and another. The boys yelled at Lou to come and see the fireworks.

“Oh, dear,” sighed Peanut, “why didn’t I bring a rocket—just *one* would be better’n none. Wouldn’t it be some sight for the folks down there to see it going up from the top of this old mountain, eh?”

“That *would* be some celebration, O. K.,” Art cried. “My, let’s come again next year and do it!”

Lou slipped back to camp presently, and Mr. Rogers, returning before the rest, found him sitting on a rock overlooking the black pit of the Notch, gazing out into space.

"What is it, Lou?" he said. "A penny for your thoughts."

"I was thinking," Lou answered, "that I was never so near the stars before. I suppose four thousand feet isn't much in a billion miles, but somehow they *look* bigger, and I can almost feel the earth rolling over under 'em. It's the funniest sensation I ever had."

"You're a poet, Lou," said the Scout Master kindly, as he turned to call the rest to bed.

"All hands to bunk!" he shouted. "We've had a hard day, with a harder one ahead."

The Scouts got off their boots and rolled up in their blankets, all of them glad of the chance. Lou blew out the lantern, and turned in, also. The wind which rushed steadily overhead, with a moaning sound, did not reach them down here to leeward of the peak, amid the thick spruces. But it was cold, nonetheless. They lay close together, and drew their blankets tight.

"A funny Fourth," said Peanut sleepily. "Hope we don't roll off in our sleep. Good-night, everybody."

But there was no reply. Every one else was asleep.

CHAPTER IV

MOOSILAUKE

EVERYBODY was awake early the next morning. "Gosh, I didn't sleep very well!" said Peanut, shivering as he built up the fire. "Here it is the fifth of July, and me wrapped up in an army blanket, with a sweater on—and cold. Kept waking up, and getting closer to Art. He's kind o' fat and makes a good stove."

"Should think you did!" said Art. "You woke me up about forty-'leven times bumping your back into mine. I wasn't very cold. Been warmer, though."

"If it's cold here," put in Rob, "at four thousand feet, what'll it be on Washington at six thousand?"

"I guess we'll sleep inside on Washington," said Mr. Rogers.

"Oh, no!" cried Art.

"Well, you can bunk outside, and the rest of us'll go in," laughed Frank. "Look, there's the sun!"

Sure enough, in the east, across the white cloud which hung below them in the Notch, and beyond the wall of the Lafayette range, a great red ball was rising. It seemed to heave up above the mists as

though somebody was pushing it from underneath, and as it got up and cast its rays across the Notch to their feet, Lafayette looked like a huge island of rock above a white sea of vapor. This vapor rolled up and blew away as they were eating breakfast. The morning was fine and clear. Mr. Rogers pointed toward Moosilauke. "That's where we'll be at night," he said.

"It doesn't look possible!" said Lou.

"It won't be, if we don't start," said Art. "Got your flag, Peanut, or did you leave it on the south peak?"

"I got it, all right," Peanut replied. "Are we ready? How far is it, Mr. Rogers?"

"Hm—four miles down this mountain,—ten to the base of Moosilauke—five miles up—nineteen miles."

"A pickle," said Peanut, and pack on back he plunged over the summit, and down the path into the spruces, the rest trailing behind.

"Go after him, Rob," said the Scout Master, "and hold him back. He'll tire his front leg muscles all out, if he doesn't break his neck."

Rob went, and held Peanut by main force till the rest came up.

"You couldn't have held me," cried Peanut, "if I hadn't wanted to say that we could go down easier with poles. We ought to have brought our poles. What can we cut for 'em?"

"Moose wood," said Art. "I saw moose wood a bit further down, as we came up."

So the party plunged on, finding the steep descent quick work, the chief difficulty being not to go too fast. At the first sign of moose wood, Art gave a cry, and soon the whole party had cut staves six feet long.

"I'm going to leave this pretty green and white bark on mine, and cut my initials in it to-night," Lou announced.

"A good idea," the rest agreed.

Shouldering their packs again, they put out the staves ahead of them, threw their weight forward, and with this assistance descended with even greater rapidity and much more safety. They stopped in the Flume only long enough for a drink, and again plunged down. As they came out into the level pasture near the base, Peanut slowed down.

"Wow," he said, wiping his forehead, "that looks easy, but you really work awful hard holding in!"

"You'll know you've worked about to-morrow," Mr. Rogers laughed.

They made the four miles to the road in a little over half an hour, which, as Art said, is "going some."

It was less than eight o'clock when they faced the ten miles of road to Moosilauke.

The first thing to attract particular attention was the village of Easton, through which they passed

half an hour later. Of the half dozen houses in the village, two were quite abandoned. There was a tiny store, and a small sawmill, and that was all. Beyond the village they passed an abandoned church. Then followed two or three small houses, also abandoned, and then nothing but the narrow, sandy road, winding through woods and fields, with Kinsman growing farther behind them on the left, and Moosilauke nearer straight ahead. They went for more than an hour without meeting a single wagon or motor, and after they left Easton they did not see a human being.

"Pretty lively little road, this," said Peanut.

"Makes you think of Broadway, New York," laughed Rob.

"Look!" said Lou. "Moosilauke isn't blue any longer. You can see the green of the forest."

"You can see what *was* a forest," said Mr. Rogers. "The paper company have stripped it."

"Why paper?" asked Peanut.

"Why paper!" Art sniffed. "You poor boob, don't you know that paper is made out of wood pulp?"

"I thought it was made out of old rags," Peanut answered.

"It is," said Rob.

"Well—what ——"

Everybody laughed. "Newspaper is made of

wood pulp—spruce and balsam almost entirely,” said the Scout Master, taking pity on Peanut. “Linen paper, such as the kind you write letters on, is made out of linen rags. The newspapers use up so much paper for their great Sunday editions, especially, that they are really doing almost more to strip the forests than the lumbermen, because they don’t even have to wait till the trees get good sized.”

“Why can’t they use anything except spruce and balsam?” asked Lou. “Won’t other kinds of wood make paper?”

“They’ll make paper,” said Mr. Rogers, “but the fibre isn’t tough enough to stand the strain of the presses. You know, a newspaper press has to print many thousands of copies an hour; it runs at high speed. The paper is on a huge roll, and it unwinds like a ribbon into the press. It has to be tough enough so that it won’t break as it is being unwound. There’s a fortune waiting for the man who can invent a tough paper which can be made out of cornstalks, or something which can be grown every year, like a crop. Think how it would save our forests! I’m told that every Sunday edition of a big New York newspaper uses up about eleven acres of spruce.”

“Gee, Sunday papers ain’t worth it!” Art exclaimed.

“They are not, that’s a fact,” Mr. Rogers agreed.

"I don't see," Lou put in, "why a paper mill couldn't buy up a great tract of woodland, and then forest it scientifically, taking out the big trees every year, and planting little ones. I shouldn't think it would cost any more than it would to haul lumber to the mills from all over creation."

"It wouldn't, Lou," said Mr. Rogers, "but we in America haven't learned yet to do things that way. Our big mills and business concerns are all too careless and selfish and wasteful. And the public is paying the penalty. Look at that ——"

They had come around a bend in the road, close to the north shoulder of the mountain now, and could see how all the upper slopes had been stripped down to bare soil by the lumbermen.

"That soil will probably dry out, landslides or fires will come, and it may be a thousand years before the mountain is forested again," Mr. Rogers exclaimed. "It's a perfect outrage!"

The party presently came into a crossroad, running east and west. It was a bit more traveled than the one they were on. They turned down it to the left, and reached a curious settlement, or rather the remains of a settlement. There were several rough, unpainted board houses, a timber dam across a small river, and everywhere on the ground lay old sawdust, beginning to rot down, with bushes growing up through it.

"This is Wildwood. It's all that remains of a lumber town," said Mr. Rogers. "The mill stood by that dam. They cleared all this end of the valley many years ago, and sent their lumber on teams down the Wild Ammonoosuc valley to the railroad."

The party now turned south again, crossed the Wild Ammonoosuc at the dam, and began ascending gradually along a road which seemed to be making for the notch on the west side of Moosilauke.

"Only two miles more to the base," said the Scout Master.

Art looked at his watch. "It's only eleven o'clock," he said. "Couldn't we have a swim in that brook down there? I'm awful hot."

"Me, too," said Peanut. "And my bloomin' old boot is hurting my heel. I want to fix it."

"That's because you got it so wet yesterday," said Rob. "For heaven's sake, take your clothes off before you go in to-day!"

Everybody turned from the road to the brook, which was almost a small river. It came down from the sides of Moosilauke, and evidently joined the Wild Ammonoosuc near the dam. In a moment five boys and a man were sticking their toes into it gingerly, and withdrawing them with various "Ouches!" and "Wows!"

"Cowards!" cried Art. "Here goes. What's cold water?"

He selected a pool between two big stones, and went all under. The rest followed suit. There was no place deep enough to swim in, however, and they all very soon came out, and dried themselves on the bank.

"My, that makes you feel better, though!" Frank exclaimed. "Nothing like a bath on a hike to set you up!"

"I got a blister," said Peanut, who was examining his heel. "Oh, dear, who's got the first aid kit?"

Rob had it, of course, as he was always the doctor. He put some antiseptic on the blister, which had burst, dressed it, and bound it firmly across with surgeon's plaster, so the shoe could not rub it.

"You wouldn't have had it if you hadn't got your feet so wet yesterday," he said. "The leather dried stiff. Perhaps you'll behave now."

"Yes, doctor, what is your fee?" Peanut grinned.

The other five pairs of feet were all right, and the march was resumed. At noon they emerged out of the woods into a small clearing on the west side of Moosilauke. There was a tiny hotel in this clearing, and nothing else. On the right, a second, but much lower mountain, Mount Clough, went sharply up. Due south was a deep gap, like a V, between Clough and Moosilauke—the notch which led to the towns south.

"Here's where the path begins," said the Scout Master. "We've done fourteen miles, at least, this morning. I guess we'll have lunch."

"Let's get up into the woods first, by a spring," the boys urged, so they entered on the path, which immediately began to go up at a steepish angle through a forest of hard wood—a very ancient forest.

"Looks as if it had never been lumbered," said Art. "Wow! look at the size of those maples and beeches!"

"The paper men don't want hard wood, thank goodness," Mr. Rogers answered. "We'll get about a mile of this."

They soon found a spring beside the path, and under the shadows of the great trees they made a fire and cooked lunch. Then, for an hour, everybody rested, lying on his back and listening to the beautiful songs of the hermit thrushes. Peanut and Art and Frank went to sleep, while Lou and Rob and Mr. Rogers talked softly. It was a lazy, peaceful hour, up there in the great forest. At two o'clock Rob beat a tattoo on his frying-pan, to wake up the sleepers, and ordered the march to begin.

For the next two hours it was steady plodding. The Benton Path, by which they were climbing, was clear and good. They came out of the hard timber forest in a little over half an hour, into slash land, now growing up into scraggly woods, full of vines

and brambles, and presently the path wound to the edge of a steep ravine, where they could look down at the tumbling waterfalls of the brook they had swum in that morning, and across the ravine to the stripped northern shoulders. The second hour of climbing was merely monotonous ascent, toilsome and slow, with no view at all. They had now put four miles below them, and the signs of lumbering ceased. They were getting close to timber line, where the stunted spruces were not worth cutting. For a little way the path grew less steep, and they quickened their pace. The trees were now no higher than bushes. They saw the summit ahead, though the house seemed to have disappeared; and the view opened out. Westward they could see to the Green Mountains, and beyond the Green Mountains, like a blue haze, the Adirondacks. At their feet they began to notice tiny mountain cranberry vines. Peanut tasted one of the half ripe cranberries, puckered up his face, and spit it hastily out. The path grew steep again. The trees vanished. The way grew rocky, with cranberries between the rocks everywhere. At last only the final heave to the summit seemed to confront them. Peanut, forgetting his lame heel, panted up ahead, and emitted a cry of disappointment.

“Gee whiz,” he shouted back, “there’s the Summit House a quarter of a mile away!”

"You'll learn yet that you're never on the top of a mountain till you get there," Mr. Rogers laughed.

But this final quarter mile was nearly level—or seemed so after the steep climb—and they were soon at the Summit House, with the view spread out to all four parts of the compass.

What a view it was! But all the boys concentrated their gaze in one direction—northeast. There, thirty miles or more away, over the top of the Lafayette range, they saw Mount Washington again, for the first time since the first Sugar Hill view, saw even the Summit House on its cone. That was the final goal of their hike—the high spot—and beside it all the billowing sea of blue mountain tops between paled to insignificance.

"She looks a long way off!" said Art.

"And me with a blister," sighed Peanut. "But it's Pike's Peak—I mean Washington—or bust!"

The party now turned their attention to the Summit House, which was a two-story structure of fair size, built partly of stone, with great chains going over it to lash it down.

"I suppose if it wasn't chained down it would blow away in winter," said Art. "Strikes me we're going to get some blow, even to-night."

The west did, indeed, look windy, with great clouds suddenly piling up. But the Scout Master said you could never tell much about mountain

weather—at least he couldn't. They entered the little hotel to see the inside. Several people were there already. At the back of the room was a big stove, with a fire in it, too. To the boys, who had but just arrived after their hot climb, the room seemed uncomfortably warm.

"Going to spend the night here? Don't know whether I've got room for you all," said the proprietor.

"No, we're going to sleep out," Rob answered him. "We never sleep inside on a hike."

"Well, I reckon you'll need your blankets," the man said. "The water froze here last night, in the rain barrel."

"What's that?" put in Peanut, who was examining picture post-cards. "Say, I move we go back down a way to camp."

"I do too, if you're going to try again to warm yourself between my shoulder blades," said Art.

Everybody laughed, and a man came forward from behind the stove—a funny looking man, with big, hobnail shoes and big, shell-rimmed spectacles.

"Which way are you going down the mountain in the morning?" he asked.

"By the Beaver Brook Trail," Mr. Rogers answered.

"Oh, that's all right, then," said their new acquaintance. "You stay up here long enough to see

the sunset, and then I'll take you down the trail into the woods beyond the head of Jobildunk Ravine. You'll keep warm in there, all right."

"Can you find your way back, sir?" asked Lou.

The man's eyes twinkled. "If I can't, I deserve to be lost," he answered. "I've lived a month on top of this mountain every summer for more years than I care to confess."

"Gee, it must be slow up here all that time!" said Peanut.

"What do you mean, slow, young man?" the other asked.

Peanut fumbled a moment for words. "Why, nothing doing—no excitement," he finally replied.

"Ah, youth, youth! Happy, happy youth!" the stranger exclaimed. "You love excitement, eh? Well, you'll get some going down the Beaver Brook Trail to-morrow. By George, I've a great mind to give you some now! How far have you walked to-day?"

"Nineteen miles," said Peanut, shifting uneasily on his sore heel, and beginning to repent what he had said. Somehow, as Art whispered to Frank, the man looked as if he could "deliver the goods."

"No, that's far enough," the stranger replied, after a long pause, as if for reflection. "I won't dare a man who's hiked nineteen miles—or a boy either."

“ Oh, if it's a dare ——” Peanut began.

“ No, sir, won't do it; you can't bluff me into it!” the man laughed. “ But if you think there's no excitement on Moosilauke, you stay here a few days, and let me take you botanizing a bit, say into Jobildunk.”

“ What's that name again, sir?” asked Rob.

“ Jobildunk,” the man answered. “ It is a big ravine discovered by three men, named Joe, Bill and Duncan. So they made a portmanteau word, and named it Jo-bil-dunc after all three. The 'k' got put on later, I suppose. Come on out of this hot room, you chaps, and see my playground.”

“ I like him,” whispered Rob as they followed him through the door.

He was a small man, but they soon found he was tremendously active. In front of the hotel was a road. The summit of Moosilauke is about a mile long, nearly level, but highest on the north end, where the hotel is. This road ran all the way along the summit, to the southern end, where it vanished around the little south peak. It was a crushed stone road, all right, for there was nothing but stones to make it of. It was just a white ribbon, winding amid the gray boulders and mountain cranberry plants. The man led the way rapidly down it, and the tired boys had all they could do to keep up. Half a mile from the Summit House he stopped,

leaped on a boulder beside the road, and pointed back.

"Here's my favorite view," he said. "The little gray Summit House away up there at the end of the white road, against the sky, the white road running the other way down toward the valley world, and all off there to the west, just space and sunset!"

It was pretty fine. The sun was now descending into the western cloud bank, and turning the clouds to rose and gold. It looked hundreds of miles away.

"Do those clouds mean rain?" asked Art.

"Nary a drop," said the man. "Hello!—here's an *Argynnis atlantis*!"

He made a mad dive with his hat, put it quickly over a low plant, and drew from under a beautiful butterfly, all gold and silver, with a black border around the wings.

"The small mountain fritillary," he said. "Often comes up here, but shouldn't be here with the wind so strong. What I'm looking for really is an *Oeneis semidea*, an arctic butterfly which they say is found only on Mount Washington. He's gray, like the rocks. Looks like a two inch piece of lichen. Haven't found one yet, though. You watch this fritillary follow the road down the mountain, now."

He let the butterfly go, and sure enough, it started down the road, flying not more than three feet above

the ground, and as long as the boys could watch it, it was keeping to every turn and twist.

"He knows the way down!" laughed the man. "And he knows he has no business up here when it's so cold, with night coming on. He'll get down, though, at that rate.

"And now, boys," continued this odd man, "you be as wise as the butterfly! Back to the hotel, shoulder packs, and to your camp!"

He led the way again up the road. He walked so fast that the five boys and Mr. Rogers were all panting. But he himself was not out of breath in the least. He laughed at Peanut.

"Anyhow, I get my wind good in a month up here," he said, "even if it is 'slow' and I'm old enough to be your grandfather!"

"You've not walked nineteen miles to-day," said Peanut.

"No, but I've walked sixteen," the man replied. "I've been down nearly to North Woodstock and back, by the Beaver Brook Trail. You'll know what I mean when you see that trail."

Peanut was silent.

At the Summit House the boys bought some post-cards showing the view from the top, Frank took a picture of the sunset, to label "Moonlight from Moosilauke," and they all picked up their packs and followed their new leader. He took them back over

the path they had come up for a few hundred feet, and suddenly plunged sharp to the east. They began at once to go down. Soon the path skirted the edge of a great gorge, which was like a gigantic piece of pie cut out of the mountainside, with the point toward them. The sides were almost precipitous, and covered with dense spruce.

"That's Jobildunk Ravine. Want to go down it with me, my young friend?" the man asked Peanut.

"Thanks—not till after supper," Peanut grinned.

As they were on the east side of the summit, it quickly grew dark. The man led the way unerringly, however, along a level stretch of path beside the ravine, and presently plunged into the woods. They were now below timber line. In a few moments he halted.

"Got a lantern?" he said.

Lou lighted the camp lantern, and the man showed them a spring, close to the path. "Plenty of dead wood on the trees—lower branches of those spruce," he added. "Good-night, all!"

"Oh, stay and have supper with us!" cried all the Scouts together.

"Well, since you urge, I will," said he. "Don't make me cook, though. I'm a bad cook."

"You sit down, and be company," Peanut laughed.

The boys rather showed off in getting supper ready. Art made the fire pit and the fire, Peanut and Frank gathered wood, Rob brought water and fixed up the props and cross-bar to swing the kettle from, and then cleared out a space for sleeping, cutting spruce boughs for the bed. Lou, meanwhile, got out enough food for the meal, and began to mix the flapjack dough. Mr. Rogers, like the stranger, was not allowed to do any work.

"Well, you've got five of the Gold Dust twins here, for sure!" the man laughed.

"They're Boy Scouts, and used to making camp," Mr. Rogers answered.

"They surely are used to it," the man said. "I tell you, it's a great movement that trains boys for the open like that!"

The Scouts, hearing this, redoubled their efforts, and bacon was sizzling, coffee boiling, flapjacks turning, in a very few moments more.

Supper was a merry meal. The fire was restocked with fresh wood after the cooking had been done, and blazed up, throwing reflections into the trees overhead and quite paling the light of Lou's lantern, which swung from a branch. Their new friend joked and laughed, and enjoyed every mouthful. When supper was over, he pulled several cakes of sweet chocolate out of his pocket, and divided them for dessert. "Always carry it," he said.

“Raisins and sweet chocolate—that makes a meal for me any time. Don’t have to cook it, either.”

He sat with his back against a tree after the meal, and told stories of the mountain. “I used to tramp over all these hills every vacation,” he said, “and many a good time I’ve had, and many a hard time, too, on Washington, especially. I was caught in a snow-storm one June on the Crawford Bridle Path and nearly froze before I got to the Mt. Pleasant Path down. The wind was blowing a hundred miles an hour, at least, and went right through me. I couldn’t see twenty feet ahead, either. Luckily, I had a compass, and by keeping the top of the ridge, I found the path without having to take a chance on descending through the woods. But nowadays, I’m getting old, and this fellow Moosilauke is more to my liking. A big, roomy, comfortable mountain, Moosilauke, with a bed waiting for you at the top, and plenty to see. Why, he’s just like a brother to me! I keep a picture of him in my room in New York to look at winters, just as you” (he turned to Rob) “keep a picture of your best girl on your bureau.”

Rob turned red, while the rest laughed at him. To turn the subject, Rob said hastily:

“Why is the mountain called Moosilauke?”

“It used to be spelled Moose-hillock on all the maps when I was a boy,” the man replied. “Peo-

ple thought it meant just that—a hill where the Indians used to shoot moose. But finally somebody with some sense came along and reasoned that the Indians would hardly name a mountain with English words, when they had known it for generations before they ever heard any English. He began to investigate, and discovered, I'm told, that the Pemigewasset Indians—the tribe which lived in the valley just to the south—really called it Moosilauke, which means, as far as I can make out, 'The great bald (or bare) mountain,' because the top has no trees on it. The Indians never climbed it. They never climbed mountains at all, because they believed that the Great Spirit dwelt on the tops. I fancy they held Moosilauke in particular veneration—and right they were; it's the finest old hill of 'em all!"

"You like the mountains, don't you, sir?" said Lou.

"You bet," the other answered. "They are about the biggest and solidest things we have, and the only folks who get to the top of 'em are folks with good legs, like you boys. I like people with good legs, but I don't like lazy people. So on the mountains I'm sure of good company. It's the only place I am sure of it—except, of course, **in my own room,** with the door locked!"

Peanut led the laugh at this.

Before their new friend rose to go, he told them something of the trail down the mountain. "It's an Appalachian Club trail," he said, "but it's not so well kept up as those on the Presidentials, and it's almighty steep in places. You'll find it good fun. When you get to the bottom, turn to the left and have a look at Beaver Meadow. It's an acre or more across, and was really cleared by beavers. You can still see the ruins of their old dam. Then go through Lost River, and you've seen the best of that region. Good-night, boys, and good hiking!"

"Will you be all right in the dark, around the head of the ravine?" asked Mr. Rogers.

"The soles of my feet are as good a guide as my eyes on this path," the man laughed.

But Peanut jumped up, took the lantern, and insisted on escorting him along the path till it had passed the head of the ravine. Fifteen or twenty minutes later, when Peanut reappeared, he found the rest ready for bed. Rob gave Peanut's sore heel a fresh dressing, and then everybody turned in, lying close together for warmth. As they were dozing off, Peanut suddenly exclaimed, "Hang it!" in a loud tone.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Art crossly. "Go to sleep!"

"I forgot to carve on my stick how far we've walked to-day," said Peanut.

“Well, you can do it to-morrow, can’t you? Shut up now!”

“Oh, very well,” said Peanut, relapsing into silence, and then into sleep—the sleep of the utterly weary.

CHAPTER V

LOST RIVER AND THE LADIES

ONCE again the camp was astir at sunrise, shortly after four. Everybody was cold, and, truth to tell, a little cross.

"We're not hardened to this high air yet, I guess," said Art, as he built up the fire. But breakfast restored their good nature, and they all went back up the path to have a look at Jobildunk Ravine by daylight, while Mr. Rogers was shaving.

"Got to shave, boys," he said, "because we strike a town—North Woodstock—this afternoon."

It was after six before the descent of the mountain began. At first the way led through thick woods, and, while it was steep, seemed no steeper than Kinsman. They came upon the embers of two or three camp-fires beside springs, and presently upon a small lean-to, built of bark and hemlock boughs, which would hold two people.

"Somebody got tired half-way up," laughed Art. "Gee, they could have got to the top while they were building this."

"Maybe they liked to build," Lou suggested, which seemed unanswerable.

The path below this point swung over to the side of a rushing brook, and they began to enter a region where the lumbermen had been, stripping the forest down to bare soil and leaving behind dry, ugly slash. The path grew steeper every moment. The brook went down the mountain in a series of cascades, one after the other, and at almost every waterfall the path beside it dropped almost as steeply. In some places there were rough ladders to descend by. At other places you simply had to swing over a root and drop, often landing in soft, wet leaf-mould, and sinking up to the ankles.

"Steep? Well, I should smile!" said Peanut. "Say, fellers, don't you wish we were going up instead of down?"

"Can't say I do," Frank answered. "I don't see how anybody does get up here, 'specially with a heavy pack. Wasn't this path ever better than this?"

"It must have been once. The water has washed it," the Scout Master replied.

Just then they came to a six foot drop, and Frank took it first. He unslung his camera at the bottom, and snapped the rest as they came tumbling after him.

"That'll prove we had some steep work, all right," he said.

"I believe if my pants were stronger, I'd just sit down and slide the rest of the way," Peanut laughed.

But such steep descents have one great advantage

—they get you down quickly. Almost before the boys realized that they were at the bottom, they found themselves walking along a level wood road, and it seemed suddenly very still.

“It’s the brook—we don’t hear the water falling any more,” said Art.

They came out quickly upon the highway—or so much of a highway as ran through this tiny notch. It was hardly more than a wood road. They turned to the left, as their friend on Moosilauke had advised, and in a moment came into a grassy clearing, with the ruins of an old logging camp at one side. This was Beaver Meadow. To the left, the steep wall of Moosilauke leapt up, and they could see the course of Beaver Brook, beside which they had descended, the white of its waterfalls flashing here and there in the sun. To the right was Wildcat Mountain, really a foot-hill of Kinsman. The meadow itself was very green, and the road went through the middle of it. At the western end, it narrowed to perhaps a hundred feet in width, and here a little brook flowed out, beside the road, and on either side they saw the remains of a dam, perhaps three or four feet high, quite grown over with grass and bushes.

“The beaver dam!” cried Art. “They just cut down the trees on each side, and let them fall over the brook, and then plastered ’em up with mud, eh? My, but they are smart!”

“Did they clear all the trees out of this meadow, too?” asked Frank.

“They didn’t have to do that,” the Scout Master replied. “Once they had the brook dammed back the water killed the trees—killed ’em so thoroughly that this meadow has remained open long after the beavers have vanished, and their dam has been broken open by the road.”

“But why do they go to all that trouble?” said Frank again.

“How many ponds have you seen in these parts?” said Art, scornfully. “They wouldn’t make a dam if they could find a natural pond shallow enough so their houses could come up above water, like a muskrat’s, would they, Mr. Rogers? But I suppose they couldn’t find one around here, so they just made it themselves. I think they’re about the smartest animal there is.”

“You mean was,” said Peanut. “I never saw one. Did you?”

“No,” said Art, sadly. “I’d like to, though. Gee, it’s a shame the way women have to wear furs, and kill off all the animals! Sometimes I wish there *weren’t* any girls.”

“Well, they’re not troubling us much this week,” Mr. Rogers laughed. “Now for Lost River!”

The party turned east, and proceeded down the road for about half a mile, by an easy grade, till they

came quite unexpectedly upon a souvenir post-card and "tonic" store, built of birch logs, beside the path. Here they stopped, and after buying a bottle of ginger ale apiece, a young French-Canadian lumberman, who ran the store and acted as guide during the summer season, agreed to pilot them through Lost River. He advised them to put on overalls before starting, but they scorned the suggestion. While they were debating the point with him, there was a sudden sound of voices outside, and in the doorway of the little log store appeared a party of women and girls—and one lone man.

"Poor Art!" said Peanut, giving him a poke in the ribs.

This party wanted to go through Lost River, too.

"We can't keep the guide all to ourselves and make him lose this other job," said Mr. Rogers. "Besides, we're Scouts, and we ought to do a good turn and help those women folks through."

"Aw, no! Let's cut out the guide, then, and go through alone!" said Art.

"No," Mr. Rogers said, "I don't remember the way. I was never through but once, years ago; besides, we'd miss half the sights."

"Say," whispered Peanut, "will those *girls* put on overalls?"

"I guess they'll have to," said Mr. Rogers.

"Me for that!" cried Peanut, with a whoop.

"Go on, Art, by yourself, if you want. I'm going to be a gay little Sir Launcelot to a dame in overalls!"

All the boys laughed, except Art, who was still scowling.

"Cheer up, Art," whispered Rob. "It sounds like fun to me. Look at that nice girl in the door; she's looking at you."

Art turned instinctively, and his eyes met those of a very pretty girl in pink, who was in the doorway. He blushed. So did the girl. Peanut winked at Rob, who winked back.

"He'll come," they each whispered to the other.

Mr. Rogers was talking to the guide, and to the lone man who had accompanied this party. The man took him over to the women (there were two women and five girls), and the boys saw their Scout Master bow, and talk with them. A moment later he came across the room.

"That poor man has brought his wife and two daughters and three of their friends and another woman up from North Woodstock, boys," he said. "I can see they are all greenhorns at this sort of work. It's really up to us to help 'em. They are going to get into overalls now."

The women and girls went up-stairs to the second story of the log house, and the boys could hear them tittering and giggling, and emitting little cries of "Ah!" and "Oh, my gracious!" and "I can never

go down in these!" The man came over to talk to the Scouts. He was in old clothes, he said, which he didn't mind getting dirty. He was a timid looking man, and seemed grateful that the Scouts were going to help him out.

A few minutes later, a pair of feet—very small feet—appeared, very slowly, on the stairs, and the first girl—the one in pink—came down. Her cheeks were as pink as her dress—or what could be seen of her dress. She had on a pair of long overalls, turned up at the bottom, with her skirts wobbled up somehow inside of them, and the apron buckled up to her neck. She looked very much like a fat boy in his father's trousers. Peanut laughed—he couldn't help it.

"I think you are horrid!" she said, darting an angry look at him.

"He—he didn't mean anything," Art stammered. "You look all right for—for such rough work."

"Thank you," said the girl, and she came over and stood between her father and Art.

Peanut again winked at Rob.

All the rest of the feet now began to come down the stairs, and soon five fat boys in their daddies' trousers, and two women looking like Tweedledum and Tweedledee (it was Peanut who suggested that!) stood in the room, blushing and laughing.

"Now come on, we can't think of our clothes any

more. Let's get to Lost River," exclaimed the girl in pink.

She seemed to pick Art as her natural escort, and the pair of them led the way through the door, beside the guide.

"I don't see any river, though," said Peanut, to the girl he was with, as they went through the woods behind the cabin.

"Of course you don't; it's a lost river," she said.

"Oh!" said Peanut. "I forgot that. Well, here's where it was lost, I guess."

The guide just ahead of them had suddenly disappeared into a hole in the ground, helping Art and the pink girl down after him.

"My goodness!" exclaimed the girl at Peanut's side. She was a small girl, with very black eyes, which twinkled. The other girls had called her Alice.

"Oh, it's nothing," Peanut reassured her. "*We've* been falling down places since six o'clock."

"I wasn't thinking of myself," Alice answered, "but of poor Mamma. Mamma isn't so *slender* as—as *you* are."

"Mr. Rogers will look after Mamma," said Peanut. "Come on!"

He dropped ahead of her into the hole, and clasping his hands in front of him, made a stirrup for her to put her foot in, like a step, as she followed.

They found themselves on a rocky ledge, with another drop ahead of them. At the bottom of this drop stood the guide, Art, and the pink girl, in daylight. The place was really the bottom of a little cañon, concealed in the woods, and a small river (not much more than a brook) flowed along it. On their right, to the east, however, the river vanished completely out of sight, into a great piled up mass of boulders. The leaders waited till all the party had arrived at the bottom, and then the guide led the way directly in among these boulders, the girls and women screaming and laughing as they followed.

It became damp and cold and dark immediately. They entered a sort of cave, made by two rocks meeting overhead, and dropped down several feet to what felt like a sandy beach, though they could, at first, see nothing. But they could hear the water running beside them.

"Look out here," said the guide, "or you'll step into the water. Follow me."

Alice, however, didn't follow him. She was a frisky girl, and she wanted to see all there was to see, so she stepped to the left, and suddenly screamed.

Peanut grabbed her hand and pulled her back.

"Sh," she whispered. "Up to the knees! But Mamma'd make me go back if she knew!"

"What's the matter, Alice?" called her mother.

"She stubbed her toe," Peanut answered, quickly.

"Oh, you nice little liar!" chuckled Alice.

Peanut was beginning to like her!

The strange, underground path grew stranger and stranger. Sometimes they came out into daylight, and saw the sky and the walls of the cañon far above them, sometimes they stood in caves fifteen feet high, sometimes they had to cross the stream on planks, sometimes go up or down ladders. Finally they came to a place where the way was completely blocked, save for a small hole, which didn't look more than two feet across.

Somebody had painted above it, "Fat Man's Agony."

"Don't worry me a bit," said Peanut.

"Quick, let's get through, and watch Mamma come out," cried Alice.

Art and the pink girl had disappeared into the hole already, Art going first. Alice lay down on her stomach and began to wriggle through after them, Peanut following. The guide remained behind to help the rest. The passage was on an incline, leading upward, and it seemed very long. It was certainly very dark. But they emerged presently (the tunnel coming out four feet above the ground, so one had to do quite an acrobatic stunt to gain his feet, if he was coming head foremost), and

found Art and the pink girl waiting for them at the mouth of a cave.

Behind them they could hear the screams and laughter of the rest, and Mamma's voice exclaiming, "I *never* can get through there, I tell you!"

Alice put her face to the hole and shouted back, "Come on, Mamma, we'll pull you through if you stick!"

Then she looked at her feet. "Gee, Grace," she called to the pink girl, "I'm soaked up to my knees!"

"I was soaked up to my neck two days ago," Peanut laughed. "You'll dry. Anyhow, we can build a fire when we get out, and you can take off your wet things, and sit with your little pink tootsies to the blaze."

Alice, with a laugh, gave him a slap on the cheek.

"Why, Alice!" exclaimed the pink girl, shocked.

"Oh, he's a fresh one, he needs it," said Alice, and turned with a shriek of delight to see the first face of the following party emerge through the hole. It was "Mamma"! Her face was flushed with exertion, and wore a look of agonized fright. Her hair was disarranged, and hanging into her eyes. From behind her issued voices, "Hurry up, Ma, you're blocking the passage!"

"Come here, you laughing monkey, and help your mother down!" she cried to Alice. "How do you suppose I can get out of this hole head first?"

But Alice was too doubled up with mirth to move. Art and Peanut sprang to her relief. They took her by the shoulders, one on each side, and pulled her out, supporting her till she could get her feet down on the ground. Then they hid on either side of the tunnel mouth, and as fast as a head appeared, they grabbed the shoulders behind it, without a word of warning, and pulled the surprised person forth. The only one who fooled them was the guide. He came feet foremost!

There was nearly a mile of this curious, underground path, amid caves and tumbled boulders, now close beside the sunken river, now above it. Some of the caves were very cold. But suddenly they saw full daylight ahead, and they stepped out of the last cave upon a ledge of rock, over which the river dashed in a pretty waterfall, and went flowing away down the hill through the woods, on a perfectly sane and normal above-ground bed.

“Well, that is quite an experience!” said Papa, wiping his forehead.

Mamma looked at her soiled overalls, tried to fix up her hair, and then fanned herself with the palm of her hand.

“Well, I guess the young folks enjoyed it more than I did!” she panted. Then she spied Alice’s feet. “Alice!” she cried. “Your feet!”

“What’s the matter with my feet?” said Alice.

"You'll get your death of cold!"

"Nonsense, my dear," said Papa.

"Nonsense or not, she's got to dry them," the mother said. "We must go right back to that store."

"I have a better idea, if you'll excuse me, Mrs. Green," said Rob (he and the oldest of the girls had evidently been exchanging names). "We'll build a fire here by the river, and all have lunch together. While she's drying her stockings, we Scouts will take back the overalls, and bring down all your grub and our packs, and then we can all walk back to North Woodstock together after lunch."

"A very good idea, too," exclaimed Papa Green.

"Well, I'm willing," said the mother. "I don't much want to take that walk back, that's a fact."

"Fire, boys!" cried Peanut, starting to scramble down beside the falls.

"Hold on!" Frank cried. "Nobody stirs from this spot till I get a picture."

"Oh," squealed the girls. "You shan't take our picture in these!"

"Yes, I shall! Peanut, you guard the path!"

"Right-o," said Peanut. "No lady shall pass save over my dead body!"

Frank unslung his camera from the case, and made everybody get in a group, with the girls in front. They all tried to sit down, to hide the over-

alls, but Rob and Lou and Art kept pulling them up. Every time they were up, Frank snapped a picture.

"Now I've got you all!" he laughed.

"What? You were taking us all the time? Oh, you mean thing!" cried Alice. "Let's break the camera, girls!"

She started for Frank, but he disappeared over the ledge, with a hoot.

The Scouts had left their hatchets behind, but they made a fire pit, and kindled a good fire with dead stuff, broken by hand. Peanut rigged up a stick rack beside it for Alice to hang her stockings over. Meanwhile, off in the bushes, they could hear the girls and women laughing, as they got out of the overalls. They came back looking like normal girls again, only their skirts were rather crumpled.

The Scouts took the overalls, and, with the guide and Mr. Rogers, turned toward the road, which led back to the store. Peanut lingered a bit in the rear.

"Toast your tootsies nice and warm," he whispered to Alice, and ducked quickly away from the swing she aimed at him.

"Alice!" he heard Art's girl saying, "I wish you wouldn't be such a tomboy."

Peanut grinned to himself, and caught up with the rest.

"Some skirts, those, eh, Art?" he said, giving Art a dig in the ribs.

Art turned red, and punched back for answer.

"What was it Art was saying back in Beaver Meadow about wishing there weren't any girls in the world?" asked Rob.

"Oh, they're all right, if they wear *pink*," said Peanut.

"You all make me sick," Art retorted. "Gee, Peanut, you got your face slapped, all right!"

"Sure I did," said Peanut. "That's a mark of affection. I made a hit with her, you see."

"That's a rotten joke," said Art.

"All right. Here's another. You go off and eat *your* lunch by yourself, if you don't like girls. The rest of us'll have ours with the crowd. We'll let him, won't we, fellers?"

Art only grunted, and made no answer to the laughter of the rest.

"All of which goes to show, Art," remarked Mr. Rogers, who had been listening, "that it's not safe to generalize about women. A man's always bound to meet one who'll upset all his ideas."

"Or slap his face," said Art, with a poke at Peanut.

At the little store, the boys paid the guide for their share in the expedition, and shouldered both their own loads and the lunch baskets the other party had brought with them, and left in the store. Then they hurried back down the road.

Peanut ran on ahead before they got to the camp site, and slipping as quietly as he could through the trees and bushes, came suddenly out into the open space where the fire was. The girls were all sitting in the shade, except Alice. She was wading bare-foot in the brook, while her stockings and shoes hung by the fire.

Peanut stood there grinning a second before anybody saw him, and then Alice spied him and squealed.

“Oh, you little beast!” she said, jumping out of the water, and grabbing up a tin folding cup, which her father had evidently carried in his pocket. She filled this with water, and ran at Peanut, barefoot, appearing not to mind the rough ground at all. Peanut was so loaded down with his blanket and pack and two lunch baskets that he was in no condition to escape. He tried to run, but his blanket roll caught in a bush, and before he could yank it free he felt the whole cupful of water hit his face, and go running down his neck.

“Alice!” called Mrs. Green. “*Alice!* Come right back here! Aren’t you ashamed!”

“Not a bit,” said Alice. “He’s perfectly horrid, coming sneaking up that way on purpose!”

“Go put on your shoes and stockings and then apologize!” said her mother, sternly.

“Ho, that’s all right,” said Peanut. “I was aw-

ful hot. The water feels good. I'd like some more."

"You would, would you?" said Alice, making as if she were going to the stream again.

"Only give me time to get my mouth open and catch it," Peanut laughed.

"Alice!" said her mother, again, "I told you to put your shoes and stockings on."

"They're not dry yet," said the girl, feeling of them.

"Oh, dear, what can you do? The rest will be here in a moment!" exclaimed her sister, the girl in pink.

"I have it!" Peanut said. He slung off his pack, and produced his pair of extra socks. They were heavy and long, being made to wear with high boots. Alice snatched them from him with a laugh, and, turning her back, sat down to put them on. Then she got up and turned around. Everybody laughed. The toes were too long, and flapped a bit when she walked. Her feet looked huge, for a girl.

"I hope I wear a big hole in 'em," she was saying, as the rest of the Scouts came up.

But she wasn't half so mad at Peanut as she had pretended, evidently, for while Art and Lou were taking all the responsibility of cooking the lunch and making the coffee, the two of them walked off together up the stream to the falls, Alice giving little

"Ouches!" every minute or two as her shoeless feet stepped on a root or a hard pebble, and they had to be called back by the rest when lunch was ready.

It was certainly a merry meal. The girls made birch bark plates, and they had paper napkins in their baskets, and plenty of doughnuts to go with the coffee. Art used the last of the flour and condensed milk for flapjacks, cooking busily while the rest ate, and looking very happy when the girl in pink said, "It's too bad. *You* aren't getting anything at all."

"He don't mind," said Peanut. "He'd rather cook than eat anything, especially for girls."

"Does he like girls?" asked Alice, who was seated on the ground, with her feet sticking out, so she could wiggle the dangling toes of Peanut's socks, which made everybody laugh.

"Does he like girls! You should have heard what he said about 'em this morning!" Peanut replied.

"Shut up—or when I get you to-night——" Art half whispered this at Peanut.

"Oh, tell me, tell me!" cried Alice.

"I'll whisper it," said Peanut.

He whispered in her ear, and she burst out laughing. Her sister, in pink, was trying hard to hear, but she couldn't.

"No, I'll *never* tell *Grace*," said Alice, wriggling

her toes with delight. "Oh, it's a lovely story, Grace!"

Grace moved away to the other side of the circle, with a pout, and she and Art sat together and finished their lunch.

After lunch the girls insisted on clearing the dishes. "It is a woman's place to do the dishes!" they said, and when the dishes were done everybody sat down under the trees, and the Scouts, at Lou's suggestion, got out their knives, and carved their staffs.

First, they cut their initials, and then in Roman numerals, the mileage for the day before. "Let's see—nineteen miles to the top of Moosilauke, one mile down the road and back, a mile maybe to camp—twenty-one miles," said Peanut, "that's two XX's and a I."

When he had finished, Alice took the staff out of his hand.

"You've forgotten something," she said.

"What?" asked Peanut.

"My initials, silly," she answered. "If you don't put them on, how will you remember me?"

"By a sore face and a wet shirt," Peanut replied.

"Now, don't be a goose. Put my initials on," the girl laughed—"A. G."

"It's not N. G. anyhow," said Peanut. He carefully cut her initials beside his own, at the top of the staff, and of course Alice showed it to her sister and

the other girls, and the rest of the Scouts had to do the same thing. By the time it was done, Mr. Green was fast asleep, Mrs. Green was nodding, and Mr. Rogers was looking at his watch.

"I'm afraid it's time this little midsummer day's dream was ended," he smiled. "We've got some way to go yet."

"Wake up Papa, then," said Alice. "Here are your old socks. Oh, dear, there's no hole in 'em, either. I *tried*, though."

She pulled off the socks, tossed them to Peanut, and went gingerly on her bare feet to the fire, where her own shoes and stockings had quite dried. In a moment, they were on. She did everything quickly. She grabbed a blade of grass, then, and tickled her father's nose. He put up his hand and brushed his face, still sleeping. It was the laughter and his wife's voice crying, "Alice! Behave yourself!" which really woke him up.

The five miles to North Woodstock were quickly made—rather too quickly, perhaps, to please the Scouts. They were having a 'good time. They stopped for a few minutes only to look at Agassiz Basin, where Lost River makes some lovely bathing pools on the rocky ledges. The Greens, of course, invited them into their hotel for supper, but Mr. Rogers shook his head.

"No," said he, "we've got to get along up the

Notch yet, and be ready for the climb over Liberty and Lafayette to-morrow. I'm afraid we've got to be on our way."

The girls gathered around Frank. One of them wrote an address on a card, and gave it to him. "Now, promise," they said, "you've got to send us all one of those horrid pictures."

"If they're so horrid, I shouldn't think you'd want 'em," said Frank.

"Well, you send 'em just the same," they answered.

Everybody shook hands all around, and Alice, as she released Peanut's hand, managed to slap his face lightly, and ran laughing up the steps. The Scouts tramped away into the village, while the girls waved their handkerchiefs from the porch.

"Yes, Art," Peanut said, "girls *are* a pesky nuisance. They look so ugly in pink dresses."

"Oh, shut up on that!" Art cried. "You've got a ducking coming to you in the next brook. Anyhow, *mine* wasn't a face-slapping tomboy!"

"No, she was just *too* sweet," laughed Peanut, as he dodged Art's swing at his head.

At the village they stocked up on provisions—bacon, condensed milk, tea and coffee, flour and sweet chocolate—for their provisions were well used up, and soon they were plodding up the road, northward, and entering the Franconia Notch.

The road was quite unlike that down which they had tramped two days before, on the west side of Kinsman. It was macadamized and full of motors.

"This is one of the through highways from the south to the northern side of the mountains," said the Scout Master. "I fear we've hit it at about the worst time of day, too, because we're only twelve miles from the Profile House, which is the end of the day's run for many cars. Most of 'em seem to be going in that direction."

"I should think they were," said Rob. "My blanket is covered with dust already."

"Gosh, my *lungs* are covered with dust," said Peanut. "How far have we got to go, dodging these things?"

"Only six miles," the Scout Master answered. "I guess we can stand it that long."

It was getting on toward dark in the Notch (where the sun seems to set much earlier than outside, because of the high western wall) when they reached the Flume House.

"It's too dark to go up into the Flume to camp to-night," Mr. Rogers declared. "Besides, I don't know just where the path up Liberty starts, and we'd better wait for daylight to ask. We'll go up the road a few rods, and camp by some brook close to the road. Then in the morning we can see the Flume and the Basin and all the sights."

The motors had ceased going by now, and the road was empty. They very soon came to a good brook, and a few paces off the road put them into the seclusion of the woods. Here they camped, and had their supper. The day had been a comparatively light one—four miles down Moosilauke, six through Lost River and to North Woodstock, and six to camp—sixteen in all, mostly down-hill.

“And don’t forget the two miles at lunch to the store and back for our packs,” said Frank.

“An even eighteen, then,” said Rob. “Gee, that’s not very good.”

“Women—they’re to blame for everything, ain’t they, Art?” said Peanut.

Art got up and made for his tormentor, but Peanut was too quick for him. He was away into the rough, dark woods, and Art gave up the chase. It wasn’t long after, however, in spite of the fact that they had walked only eighteen miles, when the camp was asleep.

CHAPTER VI

A STRANGE ADVENTURE IN THE NIGHT

IT seemed to Peanut that he had hardly been asleep at all, when he was awakened by the sound of a motor. He listened, cross at being roused, for the noise to die away up or down the road, but it didn't. Instead of that, he plainly heard the power shut off and the engine come to rest, close to the camp—right in the road opposite the camp, in fact. He sat up, rather startled. Then he heard voices, men's voices. They were talking in low tones, which struck him as strange, because out here in the woods there was no reason why they should be afraid of waking people up. He wondered for a second if they could have designs on the camp, but glancing at the camp-fire, he saw that it had gone entirely out, so that nobody could have seen the camp from the road. As he sat there in the dark, straining his ears, Art woke up, as you often will when you are sleeping close to somebody else who has waked.

"What is it?" Art said.

"Sh!" cautioned Peanut. He whispered softly what had roused him.

"Let's do some scouting," said Art.

They put on their shoes quietly, without waking any of the others. Art tried to see his watch, but couldn't. "Never mind," he whispered, and the two boys crawled softly out of camp. It was easy to get across the brook, because the brook itself made so much babbling over its stones that the sound of footsteps could not be heard. Once across, they were close to the road, in some bushes about three feet lower than the road level. They could see little, in the starlight, but they could make out the shadowy form of a motor, and two men sitting in it. The head lights and the red tail light were all shut off!

"That's funny," Art whispered. "Gee, it's against the law, too."

The boys listened. The men were talking in low tones. Their voices were rough, and they swore about every second word.

"We'll start in fifteen minutes," one of them was saying. "Those swells 'round the Profile House hit the hay late. Won't do to get there too soon. It's almost the last house down this way—lucky for us. We can turn the car at the wide place in the road where guys stop to see the Stone Face, and be all ready for a quick getaway."

"How do you know they ain't got a strong arm guy guardin' the sparkle?" asked the other man.

"They ain't, I tell yer," said the first. "Ain't me

friend Jim got a stable job at the Profile just to tip us off? Ain't we got to split with him? Guess they didn't reckon there'd be any need to watch the weddin' swag, way up here in these God forsaken hills. Ha! They forgot that automobiles has changed things!"

"They are going to rob somebody's house—at the Profile," Art whispered, pulling Peanut back toward the brook. "Gee, how can we stop 'em?"

"Let's rouse the camp, and pinch 'em right now," said Peanut.

"And get shot full of holes in the dark, and they get away in their car? Not much!"

"They'd have to crank it, and we could chop up the tires with our hatchets."

"Probably got a self starter, and what would they do to us while we were chopping? They'd have time to get away from us and do the job before we could hike six miles to the Profile and give the alarm. No, sir, we've got to get there somehow as soon as they do!"

"We could sneak a ride on the trunk rack behind the machine!" whispered Peanut.

"If it's got one—quick—hatchets!"

The two Scouts slipped back into camp. Art grabbed up his hatchet, which he always kept beside his pillow, and slipped it in his belt. Peanut put on his. Then Art leaned down beside Rob,

shook him gently, with one hand over his mouth, and whispered in his ear.

"Don't speak!" he said. "Peanut and I are going up the road to the Profile House. Follow us in the morning. Cut out the climb. We'll explain later. We've *got* to go."

"Why—what——" said the astonished Rob.

"Sh! Don't ask now. Robbers. We've got to give warning."

"Let me go, too," Rob whispered, trying to rise.

Art pushed him down. "We've got to hook on behind an auto. There'd not be room. You stay here, and keep the camp quiet."

Rob lay back, a little too sleepy quite to realize what he was letting the two younger Scouts in for, and they slipped out of camp again. This time they went down the brook, walking in the water so they would make no sound of breaking bushes, and came out into the road two rods below the motor. Then they stole on tiptoe, hardly daring to breathe, close up behind. As the rear lamp was not lighted, they felt softly with their hands to see if there was anything to ride on. Luckily, there was a trunk rack—empty! Straps across it made a rough kind of seat, just large enough to hold them.

"We can't get on yet—not till they start," whispered Art. "It would shake the springs."

The men were still talking, and the boys crouched

behind the car, in silence, waiting for them to start. It seemed to Peanut as if his heart beats must be heard, they were so loud in his breast.

Suddenly they heard a rustle and crack in the bushes almost beside them.

"What's that?" said one of the men, sharply.

"Oh, a rabbit, or something," the other replied. "There ain't a house anywhere 'round here. Don't be a goat."

"It's Rob. He'll spoil everything," whispered Art, dropping on his hands and knees, and literally crawling out from behind the motor to the roadside bushes where the noise came from.

The noise, of course, had ceased when the men spoke. Peanut could no longer see Art, in the shadow of the bushes, but his excited ear could hear the faint sound of a whisper. He wondered why the burglars didn't hear it, also, but they were talking again, oblivious.

A minute later Art returned, and before he could whisper, they heard one of the robbers strike a match. Evidently he looked at the time, for he said, "One o'clock. Let her go."

There was the click of a self starter, and the engine began to purr. A loud cough came from the exhaust at Peanut's feet, and made him jump. The car began to throb. As it started, both boys swung as lightly as they could up on the trunk rack, their

legs dangling out behind, and the motor moved up the road slowly. Having no lights on, the burglars couldn't drive rapidly. Once they ran off the side into some bushes, and had to reverse.

They swore, and evidently turned on the minor head lights, for after that the car went faster and kept the road. The dust sucked up into the boys' faces.

"I gotter sneeze," whispered Peanut.

"Quick, tie your handkerchief over your nose and mouth," Art whispered back.

It was a ticklish job letting go both hands to tie on the handkerchiefs, but they managed to do it without falling off, and the sneezes were averted. The sharp edge of the rack hurt their legs. The dust almost choked them, even through their handkerchiefs. But they clung fast, and for fifteen or twenty minutes—it seemed hours—they rode in this uncomfortable position rapidly through the dark. It was very dark indeed, for most of the way was through woods, and they could scarcely see the stars.

Presently the machine stopped. Art yanked off his handkerchief. "They are going to turn it here. Quick, into the bushes when they back up!"

The driver ran the car to the right, on what appeared like a very wide place in the road, and then reversed. As she slowly backed toward the edge, the boys waited till their feet were almost in the

bushes, and then they dropped. While the car moved forward again, they wriggled hastily on their stomachs in among the dusty bushes, and lay there, not daring even to whisper, while the driver again reversed, and brought his car around facing back down the road up which they had just come. The two men were now close to the Scouts. They stopped the engine, and got out. One of them got out on the side toward the boys. Peanut could almost have stretched forth his hand and touched the burglar's foot.

But he stepped away, unconscious, and took something out of the tonneau of the car.

"Got the sacks?" the other asked.

"O. K.," said the first.

The two men moved up the road on foot, leaving the car behind, beside the road. Art held Peanut down till they were so far away that their footsteps were not audible. Then he sprang up.

"Quick!" he whispered, "take your hatchet and cut the tires. Don't chop and make a noise—draw the edge over."

"They'll explode," said Peanut.

"That's so. Wait—find the valves, and let the air out!"

The two boys worked rapidly, with matches. They let the air out of each tire, and then cut the rubber through, to make doubly sure.

"Wish I knew more about cars," Art said. "There must be some way to put the engine on the blink."

Peanut lifted the hood. "Hold a match—not too close!" he said. "Here—here's a wire. That'll disconnect the battery, or something."

He yanked the wire out of its connection.

"Good," Art exclaimed. "Now, up the road after 'em!"

The two boys stood directly under the Great Stone Face, one of the sights of the White Mountains which they had come three hundred miles to see—but they never knew it, nor thought about it. They began to run up the road, in the dark, as fast as they could go.

Before long, however, they pulled down to a walk.

"Those burglars will reconnoitre first, before they try to break in," Art whispered. "Go easy, now. They said it was almost the last house this way."

A moment later, the Scouts came out into an open space. At the farther end, they could see the night lamps in the windows of what looked like a hotel.

"Must be the Profile House," said Peanut.

To the left they could see other houses, a row of them, close together, and in the trees, directly at their left, they could distinguish the outline of what seemed to be the last house of all. They stole toward it, on tiptoe, along a path in front. It was quiet. There was not a sound in the world. The whole settlement seemed asleep. But Art suddenly put his hand

on Peanut's shoulder, and they dropped down together on the ground. The two men were sneaking from behind this house toward the next one. Art had seen their figures, as they passed a dimly lighted window of the second house. A second later, and the boys heard a faint, curious sound.

"I know it!" Peanut whispered. "It's a glass cutter. Heard it at the painter's shop."

They waited breathlessly, and heard a window catch sprung, and a window opened.

"They're climbing in!" said Art. "Quick, now, to rouse the house!"

He sprang up, Peanut after him, and emitted a Comanche yell, and then began shouting at the top of his lungs, "Robbers! Robbers!"

"Robbers! Robbers!" yelled Peanut.

The two of them sprang up the steps of the house and began to pound the door with their fists, crying, "Robbers, robbers!" all the while, as loud as they could.

The response was startlingly sudden, and came from all directions at once. The first thing was a switching on of lights in the house itself, in the upper rooms. Then the hall light came on. A second later, the boys saw the two burglars come rushing around the corner to the path, and make hot footed by the nearest way, which was the path, for the road and their auto. Art, so excited he hardly knew what he was doing, jumped off the veranda and started

to follow, yelling "Stop!" But they kept on running. Across the clearing from the Profile House came the sounds of running feet, as two watchmen raced to the scene. In the other houses lights came on, heads appeared in windows, the front door of the house where the boys were pounding was thrown open, and two men appeared there in pajamas and dressing gowns. Behind them the boys had a glimpse of frightened women in nightgowns, and servants in night clothes, also.

"What's the matter, what's the matter?" the men exclaimed.

"Two burglars—got in your house—side window—they've run down the road to their auto—we punctured the tires——" Peanut gasped out.

"We can catch 'em if we hurry," cried Art.

The watchmen were now on the scene.

"After 'em, then, boys!" they shouted. "Show us the way!"

Two or three other men, half dressed, had now appeared on the scene, the boys never knew from where. They were too excited. Peanut and Art dashed down the path, the rest following, and led the way toward the stalled motor.

"They can't use the car," Peanut panted back over his shoulder. "They'll have to beat it on foot!"

The pursuing party was going rapidly, but Peanut was running faster than the rest. He was now fifty

yards ahead. He suddenly heard the engine of the motor start.

"They've got that wire back!" he thought. "But they can't go far on flat tires."

He yelled back at the rest to hurry, and at the sound of the yell, he heard the car start down the road. It was gone when the rest came into the open space!

"We hacked the tires to ribbons," Art panted. "They're on bare rims."

"Go back to the house, Tom, quick," said one of the watchmen. "Get the Flume House by 'phone, and have 'em put a guard across the road there, to stop every car and every person that comes down. We'll get a car out, and follow 'em."

Everybody now ran up the road again, meeting more half-dressed men on the way.

"Where on earth did you kids come from, anyway?" asked somebody for the first time.

"We were camping down near the road by the Flume," said Art, "and we heard 'em stop their car—woke us up——"

"And I heard 'em planning this job," said Peanut, while Art got his breath.

"He crawled out and heard 'em," Art went on, "and woke me, and we sneaked onto the trunk rack behind, and rode up here to give the alarm."

"Say, you're some kids," the watchman com-

mented. "Cut their tires—that's a good one! They were after the Goodwin wedding presents. Told Mr. Goodwin he ought to have a detective."

"Here he is now," said somebody.

Another man had appeared. "No, they didn't have time to take a thing," he was saying, "so far as we can see. Have you got 'em? Who was it warned us?"

The boys were pointed out to him. "Thank you both," he said. "I'll thank you more in the morning. You want a motor to chase 'em in? Get mine out, quick!"

Three minutes later, four motors were brought from the garages, and more than a dozen of the men who were gathered in the road piled into them. Peanut and Art rode in the first car, with two of the watchmen. Art had his hatchet in his hand, and the watchmen had their revolvers ready, too. They went down the road at high speed, the search-lights throwing the road and the bordering trees into brilliant white relief ahead, amid the surrounding gloom. The occupants of the car sat with their eyes glued on the end of the white shaft of light.

"Some rims on that car!" said the driver. He slowed down. "See, there are the tracks. They must have been traveling, too. How many of 'em were there, did you say?"

"Two," said Art.

"Light load. Maybe they got to the Flume House before a rim broke."

He put on speed again, and they flashed into a level stretch. Art and Peanut both exclaimed at once, "Look—there's Rob!"

Sure enough, standing beside the road, was Rob, plainly to be seen in the glare of the powerful search lamps. The driver put on brakes, and stopped. Rob jumped into the car.

"A car just went by—two minutes ago—no, less—a minute. I couldn't sleep again, worrying about you kids. It was those same men, Art. Heard 'em swear."

The pursuing car once more leaped forward. Looking back, Peanut saw the lamps of the motor next behind them. The driver put on speed now with a vengeance. It seemed hardly a second before ahead of them they heard a shout, and they emerged from the woods into the clearing by the Flume House, and their lamps struck full upon a dramatic picture.

There, in front, was the car they were chasing. Across the road was strung a heavy rope with a red lantern swung from it, and close to the car, on either side, stood two men, with gleaming revolvers pointed at the two burglars on the seat. The revolver barrels flashed in the glare of the search-light. Art and Peanut and the rest in the pursuing car sprang

to the ground and ran forward. The two burglars offered no resistance. What was the use? They were looking into four pistol barrels now! Ropes were quickly brought, and their hands tied. The other three pursuing cars came up, the excitement roused a number of guests in the hotel, and Art and Peanut found themselves in the midst of a throng as the captives were being led to the concrete garage to be locked up. Everybody wanted to know all about it, and the boys had to repeat their story a dozen times.

Finally Mr. Goodwin and a young man who seemed to be his son, and who had been one of those to open the door, got hold of them.

"You boys have saved us many thousands of dollars," the father said. "We don't quite know how to thank you. Of course, I know something about Scouts, and I won't offer you money, because you wouldn't take it."

"Oh, no, sir," said Art.

"Of course not. But I've got a motor you can have to go where you please in to-morrow, or next day, or any time, and I own a whole fish pond in the woods back here, with a cabin on it where you can camp, and my wife and daughter will want to thank you. You must give me your names, so my other daughter, who was married this morning, and whose presents you saved, can write to you."

Art and Peanut both stammered, rather uncomfortable.

"Why, that's all right, sir," Art finally said. "We just did what seemed right—had to do something quick. We're camped just up the road, with a party. We're going over Liberty and Lafayette to-morrow, and then on to Washington. We're much obliged, but I guess there's nothing we could use. You see, we're on a schedule."

"Take me back to your camp," said Mr. Goodwin, with a smile toward his son.

"Gosh, I don't know whether we can ever find it in the dark!" cried Peanut.

They got into Mr. Goodwin's car, with Rob.

"Let me ride in front," said Rob, "and go slow. There will be wheel tracks where the car turned in to pick me up just now."

"Well, that's an idea!" said Mr. Goodwin. "You boys seem to be ready for anything."

"Be prepared—that's our motto," Peanut replied, proudly.

The car moved slowly back up the road, and Rob and the driver kept their eyes open. Soon Rob signaled to stop. The driver took a pocket electric flash lamp from under the seat, and handed it to Rob, who led the way through the bushes, and across the brook. He flashed it up and down the wall of bushes and trees, and suddenly, out of the

darkness, came a sleepy grunt, and a startled, "Hi, what's that? Who's there?"

"Wake up, Frank, and hear the birdies sing," cried Peanut.

Frank, Lou and Mr. Rogers sat up, rubbing their eyes, as the others came into camp. Art lit the camp lantern, and by its light the story of the night's adventure was hastily told.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Mr. Rogers. "I *am* a bad Scout Master! To think I slept right through everything!"

"I think you are a pretty good one, to develop such Scouts as these," said Mr. Goodwin.

"Oh, rats!" exclaimed Frank, "to think I missed it all!"

"Me, too," said Lou.

"They didn't let me in on much," Rob laughed.

"Why didn't you wake the rest of us?" Lou demanded of Peanut.

"The more awake, the more noise," said Peanut. "Rob almost gummed the game. Would have if the burglars hadn't thought he was a rabbit."

"Well, boys," Mr. Goodwin put in, "you want to be going back to sleep." He looked at his watch, and added, "My, my! it's three o'clock. The sun will be up in less than two hours! Now, I want you all to come to my house to dinner to-morrow night. We've got to celebrate, and talk this ad-

venture over. You can get down Lafayette by seven, can't you? I'm sure you can. Seven o'clock, then!"

"But we haven't got any joy rags," Peanut protested.

Mr. Goodwin laughed. "You'll have appetites—that's all I ask!"

He spoke a few words quietly to the Scout Master and then went back to his car. Peanut and Art kicked off their shoes again, and lay down with the rest, to sleep. But they were too excited to sleep. They lay side by side and conversed in whispers of the night's excitement, while the Scout Master and Rob were also whispering. Once they heard Rob say, "But it was the only way to save the property, and if I'd waked you all up, what good would it have done? We couldn't get to the Profile on foot till long after the trouble was over. I just had to trust 'em. It seemed to me a job Scouts ought to tackle, even if it was dangerous."

"I guess you're right," they heard Mr. Rogers answer. "But I hope the next time we can all be in on the adventure. I don't like to have my party split up when there's danger."

"Good old Mr. Rogers!" whispered Peanut. "Guess we gave him a scare."

"There's one thing we forgot," said Art, suddenly. "They said they had a pal—Jim, wasn't it?—em-

ployed in the Profile stables. We ought to tip off the Profile House first thing in the morning."

"Well, you can't remember everything, when you're chasing burglars," said Peanut, as he rubbed his dust-filled eyes.

CHAPTER VII

OVER THE LAFAYETTE RIDGE, WITH A DINNER PARTY AT THE END

THE two adventurers must have dropped off to sleep toward daylight, for they were both conscious of being shaken and told to get up.

Peanut rubbed his eyes. "Gee, I dreamed one of those burglars had grabbed me and was dragging me into Lost River," he said.

"I suppose if I'd slapped your face you'd have dreamed of Alice Green," Lou laughed. "Come on, get up and wash yourself. Golly, but you're dirty!"

Peanut and Art were certainly dirty. They had gone on their expedition the night before without hats, and their hair was full of dust, their faces smeared with it, and their hands almost black from clinging to the dusty trunk rack behind the motor. They both got up, and took off their clothes, shaking clouds of dust out of them. Then they went down to the brook, shivering in the chill morning air (it was full daylight, but the sun was still hidden behind the high eastern wall of Liberty) and washed themselves. When they returned to camp, they found breakfast waiting.

"Well, well, it pays to be a hero," said Peanut. "Somebody else does the work for you, then."

"Don't worry, it won't happen often, Mr. Modesty," said Frank. "We were too hungry to wait, that's all."

After breakfast they doused their fire, packed up, and went down the road to the Flume House. It was still so early that none of the guests in the old hotel were astir, though servants were about, sweeping the verandas.

Peanut, Art and Rob showed where the rope had been stretched across the road, with a red lantern on it, to stop the escaping motor, and then led the way to the garage. The two watchmen, pistols in hand, were sitting before the door.

"Hello, boys!" the head watchman said. "We still got 'em in there, in the corner room. Sheriff's coming over from Littleton for 'em as soon as he can get here. You'd better not look at 'em—might make 'em unhappy," he added to Peanut, who was trying to look in the high window.

Peanut laughed. "We did rather gum their game, didn't we?"

"You sure did. Here, stand on this chair."

The boys all took a turn looking in the window. What they saw was two men evidently asleep on a blanket on the floor.

"Don't seem to trouble 'em much," said Peanut. "Where's their car?"

One of the watchmen led the way into the garage, and showed them the car, which had come six miles on the rims.

"Stolen, of course," he said. "It's a five thousand dollar car, too. Somebody else will thank you, beside Mr. Goodwin. Oh, say, I nearly forgot. The sheriff says to hold you boys till he comes, because you've got to give evidence."

"Oh, no!" they all exclaimed. "We've got to get up Lafayette!"

"Tell the sheriff we'll be at Mr. Goodwin's at seven this evening, and he can take the boys' affidavits then," said Mr. Rogers.

"Well, I dunno. He told me particular to keep 'em."

"You can't keep 'em if they want to go, you know, without a warrant," Mr. Rogers smiled. "Here, keep their names and addresses for him, and tell him, Mr. Goodwin's this evening."

"Well, you got a fine day for the mountain," the watchman said. "Go see the Pool and the Flume first, and then just keep right up the head of the Flume. You'll hit the path."

"How long will it take us to make Lafayette?" asked Rob.

"Six hours, I guess," he answered.

"Easy," said they. "Good-bye."

They had turned away before Art and Peanut re-

membered to tip off the watchman about the third thief, Jim, at the Profile stables. Then they started once more.

The party now crossed the road, and entered a path through the woods, marked "The Pool." After a short walk through dense woods, they descended rapidly through a break in a cliff wall, for nearly a hundred and fifty feet, and stood beside the strangest little lake they had ever beheld. It was about a hundred and fifty feet across, more or less circular in shape, and surrounded by high cliffs which made it seem like a pond at the bottom of a crater. The water, which was astonishingly clear, came into it at the upper end in the form of a cascade, and escaped not far from the boys through a fissure, or tiny cañon, in the rocks.

"My, I'd like to swim in that! What a place to dive in!" cried Art. "How deep is it?"

"About fifty feet, I believe," said the Scout Master.

"Looks a thousand," said Peanut. "Come on, let's all have one dive."

Rob felt of the water. "One would be about all you'd want," he said. "Besides, we haven't time."

The Scouts left the Pool reluctantly, climbed back up the cliff, and found the path to the Flume. This Flume, they soon discovered, resembled almost exactly the flume on Kinsman, save that the walls were higher and stood farther apart, and it was also

longer. But the path to it was much more traveled, and there was a board walk built up through it beside the brook, so that it did not seem so wild nor impressive as the smaller flume on Kinsman. They soon passed through it, found the path up Liberty, and began to climb.

As on all the White Mountains, the first part of the climb led through woods, and no views were to be had, neither of the summit ahead nor the valley behind. It was a steep path, too, much steeper than the Benton Trail up Moosilauke, though not so steep as the Beaver Brook Trail down which they had tumbled the day before. At first everybody was chattering gaily, and Peanut and Art were telling over again all their experiences of the night before. But gradually, as the sun mounted, as the trail grew still steeper and rockier, as their packs and blankets got heavier and hotter, conversation died out. Everybody was panting. Rob, who was pacemaker for the morning, would plod away, and then set his pack down to rest. The others rested when he did, and no oftener. Climbing began to be mechanical. Art consulted his watch and his pedometer.

"That Appalachian guide book isn't far from right," he admitted to Mr. Rogers. "We aren't making much over a mile an hour."

"That's enough, in this heat," the Scout Master replied. "Better fill canteens at the next spring,

Rob," he called ahead. "I don't know whether we'll get any more water to Lafayette. I've forgotten this trail."

At the next spring they all took a long drink and a long rest. Shortly after, they emerged above timber, and found themselves to the northwest of the peak of Liberty, and almost at its base, while ahead of them the path pointed up the rocky ledges toward Haystack. With full canteens to add to their load, they plodded on.

Now they could see below them, far down into the Notch, and across the Notch they could see the steep side of Kinsman going up, and the peak where they had unfurled the flag on the Fourth of July. They began to realize for the first time, too, how difficult it could become in a cloud to keep the path, for where the trail led over bare rocks it was almost indistinguishable under foot, and you had to look ahead to find a pile of stones, or a place where it wound through the mountain cranberries or other Alpine plants, to find it. The sun was very hot on their backs, and all of them, under the blankets and knapsacks, were perspiring freely.

"I'm wringing wet," said Peanut. "Wish we had the Pool right here. Would I go in? Hm——"

But this lofty, bare space was also swept by a breeze, which curiously enough dried the perspiration on their faces, and when they paused to rest,



Echo Lake, Franconia Notch, and Mount Lafayette from Bald Mountain

taking off their packs, dried out their shirts so rapidly that the evaporation made them cold.

Once on top of Haystack, their way over the summit of the ridge lay plain before them, the view opened out on both sides, and they dropped their burdens to have a long look.

Straight ahead, the path dropped down to the col between Haystack and Lincoln—a col being the connecting spine, ridge, or saddle between two peaks. This col was certainly a spine, bare, wind-swept, narrow, nothing but an edge of gray tumbled rock. The mountain dropped down sharply on both sides, and the boys exclaimed, almost in a breath:

“Gee, I’d hate to cross that with the winter storms sweeping it!”

“I’d hate to be anywhere above timber line, in a winter storm,” said Mr. Rogers, “unless I was dressed like Peary on his dash to the Pole, and the path was plain.”

It was perhaps a mile across the col to Lincoln. “And beyond that another mile or more—up all the way—to Lafayette!” the Scout Master cried. “Shall we make Lafayette before we lunch, or not?”

The Scouts all voted for it, and moved on again, across the col to Lincoln. The path lay entirely over stones, not great levels of ledge, but small, broken stones, making walking with anything but very stout boots on extremely trying to the feet.

All the way, on their left, they could see down into the forests of the Notch, and they could look, too, down upon the Lonesome Lake plateau, and even upon the top of Kinsman, for they were higher than Kinsman already. On the other side, toward the east, they looked down into a spectacle of indescribable desolation—a wild region of deep ravines and valleys separated by steep mountains, and the entire region stripped to the bare earth by the lumbermen. On some of the steep hillsides, slides had followed, to complete the destruction. This desolation extended as far eastward as they could see, and was evidently still going on, for off to the south they could see a logging railroad emerging from the former forest, and once they heard, very faint and far off, the toot of a locomotive whistle.

“When I was a boy your age, Rob,” said Mr. Rogers, “all that country in there, which is known as the East Branch region, because the East Branch of the Pemigewassett rises in it, was primeval wilderness. There was a trail through from North Woodstock over Twin Mountain to the Twin Mountain House, with branches to Thoreau Lake and Carrigain. It was wonderful timber—hemlocks a hundred and fifty feet tall, great, straight, dark spruces like cathedral pillars! I tramped through it once—took three days as I remember. And look at it now!”

"Oh, why do they allow it!" cried Rob. "Why, they haven't planted a single new tree, or let a single old one stand. They've just *stripped* it."

"Yes, and spoiled the soil by letting the sun bake it out, too," said Lou.

"We aren't such a progressive people, we Americans, as we sometimes think we are," the Scout Master replied. "In Germany they'd have taken out only the big trees, and planted little ones, and when the next size was bigger, they'd have taken them out, and planted more little ones, and so on forever. And we Scouts could be hiking down there, beside a rushing little river, in the depths of a glorious forest."

"I'm never going to read a Sunday paper again—'cept the sporting page!" Peanut answered.

"Do you read any more of it now?" Art asked.

"It wasn't the Sunday papers which stripped that region," said Mr. Rogers. "It was a lumberman, who made boards and beams of the timber. What did he care about the future, so long as *he* got rich? Still, I blame the state and the nation more than I blame him. He should never have been allowed to lumber that wasteful way—nobody should. Look, boys, there's a cloud on Washington again."

The boys had almost forgotten Washington in their interest in the stripped forest below them. They looked now far off to the northeast, twenty-

five miles away as the crow flies, and saw just the blue bases of the Presidentials, wearing a white hood.

"Say, will that cloud come over here?" asked Peanut. "Kind o' lonesome up here, as it is."

"Ho, we've got a compass. We could always just go west, down to the Notch road," said Art.

Peanut looked down into the Notch. "Thanks," he said, "but if you don't mind I'd rather go by a path."

"I guess we've nothing to fear from those clouds," said the Scout Master. "The wind is west. They're nothing but local."

By this time they had reached the top of Lincoln, after a steady upward toil. Another col lay ahead of them—just a huge knife blade of jagged stone, with the path faintly discernible winding across it and stretching up the rocky slope of the final stone sugar loaf of Lafayette.

"There's journey's end!" cried Mr. Rogers. "All aboard for the final dash to the Pole!"

They descended rapidly from Lincoln, and soon began the ascent again, across the rising slope of the col, and then up the cone of Lafayette itself.

"I'm getting sort of empty," said Frank. "What time is it, Art?"

Art looked at his watch. "No wonder!" he said. "It's one o'clock, and after—twenty minutes after.

What interests me is, how are we going to cook any lunch up here on top?"

"We can't," Mr. Rogers said. "Of course, there's no wood. We'll just have to eat something cold, or else wait till we can get down to timber line."

"Oh, dear! How long will that be?" said Frank.

"I should fancy we could make timber in half an hour from the top."

"That would be two, even if we didn't stay on top any time, wouldn't it?"

"I *gotter* stay on top long enough to dry my shirt," Peanut answered. "It's sticking to me."

"Then you'll have to eat emergency rations and sweet chocolate," said Art. "There's nothing else which doesn't have to be cooked."

"We ought to bake some bread and have a bit of potted ham, or something like that, for noon lunches," said Rob. "I move we do it to-night."

"To-night?" sniffed Peanut. "To-night, I guess you forget, we dine on roast beef and plum pudding, because Art and I are heroes!"

"I *did* forget, *both* facts," Rob laughed.

"Well, which is it, emergency rations, or wait till we get down to timber?" asked the Scout Master.

"Emergency rations!" said Lou and Frank.

"Wait!" said Art and Peanut (who had eaten emergency rations before).

"It's up to you to cast the deciding vote," said Mr. Rogers to Rob.

Rob winked at the Scout Master and said, "Well, if Art and Peanut are such heroes, a bit of nice, chewy pemmican won't hurt 'em. I vote to stay on top."

"For two cents," said Peanut, "I'd punch you in the eye."

As they neared the top of the peak, they suddenly heard voices, which sounded strange way up there, far above the world, where for hours they had heard nothing but the rushing of the wind.

"Hello!" exclaimed Mr. Rogers, "there's a party here ahead of us."

"I'll bet there are women in it, too," cried Peanut. "And I wanted to dry my shirt!"

"Hm," said Art. "Seem to be times when even *you* don't want women around."

There were, however, no women in the party. As the Scouts crested the final broken fragment of rock, they found themselves on a summit no larger than a city back yard, and on that summit an old foundation hole, where once a small summit house had stood. Down in this hole, sheltered from the wind, were three men. Like the Scouts, they wore khaki. They, too, had packs and blankets, and they all needed shaves. They were eating their lunch as the boys suddenly appeared just above them.

"Hello!" they called up. "Where did you come from?"

"Up from the Flume," said the boys.

"Took the wrong way," said the men. "That's the way to go down. You got the long trail up."

"We like hard work," Peanut retorted. "Excuse me while I dry my shirt."

He took off his pack and blanket, and then peeled himself of his outer and undershirt, spread them on a rock in the wind and sun—and began to shiver.

"Wow! How this wind evaporates you!" he cried.

"Get down out of it," commanded the Scout Master, "and keep moving. You'll get cold if you don't."

Peanut jumped into the foundation hole, out of the wind, and swung his arms like a coachman in winter. Art took off his shirts, too, and did the same thing. The rest decided to wait till they made camp at the base.

"And now for the emergency rations," cried Rob, undoing his pack.

("Look at those guys—sandwiches! Oh, dear, wish you had a gun to hold 'em up, Art!" whispered Peanut.)

("I'd like to," the other whispered back. "'Your sandwiches or your life!' eh?")

Rob, meanwhile, had produced a small blue tin, and was opening it. The three strangers looked on

with an amused curiosity. Rob sniffed the contents, assured himself that it was fresh, and with his knife blade dug out a chunk for each member of the party.

"Gee, is that all I get for lunch?" said Frank, contemplating the piece in his hand, no bigger than an English walnut.

"It'll be all you'll want, believe me," said Peanut.

"And all you need to stop your hunger and nourish you till night," Rob added. "That's condensed food."

Peanut took his piece over to the three men. "I'll swap this excellent and nourishing morsel for a ham sandwich," he said.

The men laughed. "You will not!" one of them answered, hastily stuffing the last of his sandwich into his mouth. "I've tried that before, myself. If you've got a little water to soften it up in, and a bit of bread to put it on, it's not so bad, at that."

One of the other men passed over a sandwich—but not to Peanut. He gave it to Rob. "Divide the bread," he said. "It'll make your rations go better."

Each boy, then, got a third of a slice of bread, and a tiny morsel of ham. On this they put their chunk of emergency rations, softened with the last of the water from the canteens, and began to eat. Nobody seemed to be enjoying the food very much, but

their expressions grew less pained the longer they chewed.

"Beats all how long you can chew this before it disappears," said Lou. "Gets sweeter, too."

"Maybe that's the bread. Bread almost turns to sugar if you chew and chew it without swallowing," said Rob. "But this pemmican stuff certainly is filling."

"What's it made of?" Lou asked.

"Rats and rubber boots," said Peanut.

Mr. Rogers laughed. "Not exactly—put on your shirt, Peanut," he said. "Pemmican was originally made of dried venison, pounded up with fat and berries. Now it's made of dried beef pounded up with dried fruits and fats, and packed into a jelly cake to harden. That's about what this is, I fancy. It's very nourishing."

"All right, but where's the sweet chocolate?" Peanut demanded.

Rob passed out the chocolate for dessert, and after it was eaten, everybody began to complain of being thirsty. The canteens were empty.

"There's a spring just below the summit," said one of the three strangers.

"You mean there *was*," laughed a second. "You drank it all dry on the way up."

"Let's get there on the way down before he does," cried Peanut.

"No fear," the first speaker laughed, "we are going down over the ridge, the way you just came up. We're doing Moosilauke to-morrow."

"By the Beaver Brook Trail?" the boys asked.

"Yes. Have you been over it? How is it?"

"It ain't," said Peanut. "It was, but it ain't."

"What do you mean?"

"He means it's eroded into pretty steep drops in places," Rob put in. "We thought when we came down that it would be an awful pull up."

"There's a good logging road across the brook, though," one of the men said. "If you'd taken that instead of the trail you'd have had no trouble. I was over it last year."

"I'm glad we didn't," Art said—"at least as long as we were coming down."

Both parties now packed up their loads, took a last good look at the view, with Washington still under the clouds, and said good-bye, the three strangers going off down the ridge, the Scouts turning northwest, and winding down the summit cone, over the rough, broken stones of the path. At the base of the cone, they found the spring, a small, shallow basin in the stones, so shallow that the water had to be dipped gingerly to keep from stirring up the bottom. By the time the last boy had drunk his fill, in fact, there wasn't enough water left to dip. Then the path turned due west, and descended at a

more gradual angle, still over small, flat, sharp fragments of stone, toward a little pond in a hollow of the mountain's shoulder, just below the line where the dwarf trees stopped entirely.

They were soon on a level with this lake, which is called Eagle Lake, but the path was two or three hundred feet south of it, and to get in to it meant fighting through tough dwarf spruce and other verdure, only waist high, but as good as a wire fence. They stuck to the trail, which led through this dwarf vegetation almost on a level for some distance, then actually began to go up-hill again, on to the west shoulder of the mountain.

"Oh, rats!" cried Peanut. "I've gone up enough to-day!"

"Heroes shouldn't be tired," said Frank.

"Heroes need sleep, just the same," Peanut retorted.

The ascent, however, was not for long. Soon they swung northwest again, entered timber at last, and began to descend rapidly. After a mile or so on this tack, the timber growing ever taller, they brought up against the end of Eagle Cliff, which rose straight up in front of them. Here the path swung west again, and began its final plunge to the Profile House. It was a good, generous path through the woods. In years gone by it used to be a bridle path, for people ascended Lafayette on horseback.

"I'd hate to be the horse, though," Peanut said, as he put his pole ahead of him, and cleared six feet at a jump.

It was, indeed, a steep path, and they came down it at a high rate of speed.

"Gee, we go up about a mile an hour, and we come down about six!" Art exclaimed, catching a tree beside the path to stop himself.

They began to have glimpses of the Profile House between the trees. The trail suddenly slid out nearly level in front of them; other paths appeared, crossing theirs; and before they realized where they were, they stood in the clearing, by the railroad station, and just beyond them was the huge Profile House and the colony of cottages.

Peanut and Art sprang ahead. "Whoa!" cried Mr. Rogers. "Suppose we leave our packs and stuff in the depot, and prospect light-footed, eh?"

The baggage master at the depot recognized Art and Peanut. He had been one of the pursuing party the night before. He stowed their things in his baggage room. "Guess you can have the freedom of the city!" he said. "Wouldn't wonder, if you went to the hotel, they'd give ye something cold."

"Come on!" cried Peanut.

"No," said Art, "I ain't so thirsty I have to be treated. I don't think we want to do that, do you, Mr. Rogers?"

"What do you think—on second thought, Peanut?" asked the Scout Master.

"Well, we're taking a dinner from Mr. Goodwin, ain't we?"

"Yes," said Art, "but that's different. We helped save his silver and stuff. And it's just in his family. Up there at the hotel, there'd be a crowd around—women, and things. Looks kind of as if we were trying to get into the lime-light."

"Guess you're right," Peanut replied. "Come on, then, and show us the Old Man of the Mountain, Mr. Rogers. But ain't there a place where we can *buy* a drink?"

"We'll find one—after we've seen the face," the Scout Master laughed. He looked at his watch. "After four, boys," he added. "We've got to get a camp ready, and spruce up before dinner, and I've got to go to the hotel and get a shave."

They stepped up from the railroad station to the road. Directly before them was the Profile House, a large wooden hotel, facing south. Behind it rose the steep wall of Cannon Mountain, and south of it, on the lowest terrace of the slope, was a double row of cottages, ending, on a bend, with a group including Mr. Goodwin's. Behind the boys, back where they had come, they could see the first steep, wooded slope of Lafayette, and to the north the great rocky precipice of Eagle Cliff. Looking south again, the

road disappeared between the landslides of Lafayette on the one hand, and the wall of Cannon on the other, a narrow notch, not much wider than the road itself. The opening where the boys stood was only large enough to hold the hotel and cottages, and three or four tennis courts, on which a crowd was playing.

The party went south down the road, Peanut and Art pointing out Mr. Goodwin's house, and the track taken by the burglars, and quickly left the houses behind. After a quarter of a mile or so, the woods opened out ahead, and presently the boys stood in a place where the road was enlarged to the left into a semicircle, and in that semicircle a team or a motor could stop for the view.

"It's the place!" cried Peanut. "Here's where they left the car! And those are the bushes we crawled into, Art!"

"And there's the Old Man of the Mountain," said Mr. Rogers.

The Scouts followed his finger. Looking through an opening in the trees across the road, toward the southwest, they saw first a beautiful little lake, so still that it mirrored every reflection, and then, rising directly out of the woods beyond this lake a huge cliff, curved at first, but gradually attaining the perpendicular till it shot up like the side of a house, fifteen hundred feet into the air. At the very

top of it, looking southward down the valley, was, indeed, the Old Man of the Mountain—a huge knob of rock thrust forth from the pinnacle of the precipice, and shaped precisely like a human profile, with sunken eye under a brow like Daniel Webster's, sharp nose, firm mouth, and, as Mr. Rogers said, "quite literally a granite chin."

The boys looked at it in silence for a moment, and then Peanut said, "But it looks so much bigger in all the pictures in the geographies. Why, it really looks as small up there as—as the moon."

"That's because the photographs of it are taken with a telescope lens, I guess," said Frank. "My camera would make it look about six miles off."

"How big is it?" asked Lou.

"They say about eighty feet from forehead to chin," the Scout Master replied. "And it's about fifteen hundred feet up the cliff."

"I'd like to see it in full face," Lou added. "Could we walk down the road and see it that way?"

"We've not time, I'm afraid," Mr. Rogers replied. "We'd have to walk a mile or more. It isn't so impressive full face. In fact, this is the only spot where the human likeness is perfect. At many points along the road the full face view shows only a mass of rocks."

Lou was still looking at the great stone face gazing solemnly down over the valley.

"It's like the Sphinx, somehow," he said. "I've always thought of the Sphinx looking forever out over the desert, and this old man of the mountain looks just the same way forever down the Notch. It gives me a funny feeling—I can't explain it. But somehow it seems as if he ought to be very wise."

Peanut laughed, but Mr. Rogers didn't laugh.

"Lou has just the right feeling about it," he said. "Lou has just the feeling they say the Indians had. To the Indians, the Great Stone Face was an object of veneration. Did any of you ever read Hawthorne's story, 'The Great Stone Face'?"

None of the boys ever had.

"Well, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves," said the Scout Master. "I'm going to see if Mr. Goodwin has the book, and read it to you. How would you like to take to-morrow off, and climb up to his forehead, and read the story there, and then go over to the Crawford House by train, instead of hiking the twenty-five miles over, on a motor road full of dust?"

"Hooray! Me for that!" cried Peanut.

"Me, too!" cried the rest of the Scouts.

"Well, we'll do it, if I can borrow the book," said Mr. Rogers. "Now, back to make a camp!"

At the depot the boys shouldered their packs again, and Mr. Rogers directed them to go north up the road till they came to Echo Lake.

“Leave your packs at the little store,” he said, “and go down to the boat house and get the man to take you out in a launch. I’ll get a shave and meet you there.”

The Scouts set off up the road, and the Scout Master went into the hotel. When he had been shaved, he followed up the road, and as he drew near Echo Lake, a beautiful little pond at the foot of a great cliff just north of Eagle Cliff, he heard the long-drawn note of a bugle floating out over the water, and echoing back from the cliff. He called the boys in from the landing.

“Oh, that’s lovely!” Lou exclaimed. “The sound just seems to float back, as if somebody was up on top of the cliff with another bugle, answering you!”

They paid the boatman and went back to the little store, where the boys had already consumed two sodas apiece, and Peanut had bought two pounds of candy. From there they went still farther north up the road, and suddenly plunged down a path to the left, into a ravine, with a brook at the bottom, and in among a grove of gigantic hemlocks.

“There are real trees!” said Mr. Rogers. “They are relics of the forest primeval. ‘This is the forest primeval, the murmuring pines and the hemlocks’—and so forth.”

"Only there's no 'deep-mouthed neighboring ocean,'" Rob laughed.

"There's a brook," said Lou.

The hemlocks were indeed giants. They were three or four feet thick, and rose sixty or eighty feet without a limb, their tops going on up fifty feet more.

In among these superb trees, the boys made camp, selecting a spot some way from the path, and hidden by underbrush. They all took a bath in the cold brook, put on their one change of clean clothes, washing out their socks and underclothes and hanging them on twigs around the camp to dry. Then they carefully combed their hair, dusted their boots, and tied each others' neckties neatly. (Peanut's tie was badly crumpled, for it had been in his pocket all day.)

It was dark in the woods before they were ready, and it suddenly occurred to them that they'd have trouble finding the camp again, later in the evening.

"We might leave the lantern burning—if it would last," said Lou.

"No, some one would see it, going by on the path," Art replied. "We don't want to risk having our stuff pinched."

"I know—tie a white handkerchief to a bush by the path where we turn off to camp, and then count the number of steps back to the road," said Frank.

"Almost human intelligence," Rob laughed. "And take the lantern with us, to find the handkerchief with."

"Right-o!" said Peanut.

It was time now to start for the dinner party. They tied the handkerchief to the bushes by the path, and everybody counted his own steps out to the road, in case the mark should be lost, or taken down by some passer-by. Then they moved up the road, past the gaily lighted Profile House, where they could see the guests eating in the big dining-room with its large plate glass windows, and again rang the bell of Mr. Goodwin's house—but more quietly this time.

A servant ushered them in, and Mr. Goodwin and his wife and son and daughter at once came forward to greet them. The house was elaborately furnished for a summer "cottage," and the boys were rather conscious of their scout clothes and especially of their hobnail boots.

"Gee," whispered Art, "keep on the rugs all you can, or we'll dig holes in these hardwood floors."

"So these are Peanut and Art," said Mr. Goodwin, after introductions all around, turning to the pair who had given the alarm the night before. "I'm sorry to say, we can't have dinner till the sheriff has disposed of you two chaps. He's waiting in the library now with a stenographer."

Mr. Goodwin led the way into his library, where, sure enough, the sheriff was sitting.

"Here are your men," said the host. "Don't keep 'em too long. We're all hungry."

The rest of the party sat near by and listened, while the sheriff swore in Art and Peanut. First they had to hold up their right hands and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Then they gave their names, ages and residence, while the stenographer's pencil was busy making shorthand marks which Peanut, regarding out of the corner of his eye, thought looked more like hen tracks than anything else.

"Now, tell me exactly what happened last night, from the beginning," said the sheriff. "I don't want to ask you to come way up here from Massachusetts for the trial, so I'm taking this sworn testimony now. I think we have evidence enough to make your actual presence unnecessary."

Peanut started in on the story, told of his being awakened by the sound of the motor stopping in the road, of waking Art, of their sneaking out through the bushes, and hearing the two burglars talk.

"What did they say, as exactly as you can remember it?" asked the sheriff.

Peanut turned red, and glanced toward Mrs. Goodwin and her daughter. "Have I got to tell

exactly?" he stammered. "We ain't allowed to talk that way in the Scouts, even without ladies present."

Everybody laughed, and the officer with them.

"You can put in blanks," he answered.

Peanut, with Art's help, and also Rob's, who came upon the scene at this point, as the reader will remember, and also with the aid of many "blanks," reconstructed the conversation as well as he could. Then Art took up the narrative, and described the ride up the valley, the cutting of the tires, the pulling out of the wire in the engine (which the burglars had put back again), and the subsequent arousing of the neighborhood.

"Well, that's some story!" said the sheriff, with admiration. "That's what I call quick action, and brave action. One thing you didn't do you might have—you might have cut out a piece of that wire so they couldn't have put it back. But if you had, they wouldn't have tried to get away in the car, but would have taken to the mountain, and perhaps escaped, so it's just as well."

He shook hands heartily with Art and Peanut, and then with the rest of the boys, and departed.

"Now for dinner!" cried Mr. Goodwin.

Mrs. Goodwin led the way to the dining-room, while her husband explained to the boys as they went along that all the wedding presents had been

shipped back to a New York vault, under guard that day, to avoid the chance of another scare.

They took their places at the big table, which was gay with candles, Art and Peanut having places of honor beside Mrs. Goodwin and her daughter. There were great, snowy napkins to spread on their laps, and there was iced grape fruit to begin on, and soup, and roast beef, and all sorts of good things, ending up with ice-cream. As it was after seven thirty before they sat down, and the boys had eaten nothing but emergency rations at noon, you may be sure that nobody refused a second helping of anything, just to be polite. In fact, Mrs. Goodwin saw to it that everything came around twice.

"My, nobody has eaten like this in my house for a long time!" she said, "and a housekeeper does like to see her food enjoyed. John"—this to her husband—"why don't you climb Lafayette every day, so you can get up a real appetite?"

"I wouldn't, alas!" he laughed. "I'd just get lame legs and a headache. Lafayette's for the young folks. Have some more ice-cream, Peanut?"

"Gee, I'd like to—but I'm full," said Peanut, so honestly that everybody roared.

"I don't suppose you carry an ice-cream freezer in your packs, do you?" Mrs. Goodwin laughed.

"We don't," said Rob, "nor grape fruit nor nap-

kins, either. I'm afraid this luxury will spoil us for camp to-morrow!"

"Do you know," Mr. Goodwin said, "I'm tired of luxury, myself. If I was twenty years younger, I'd get a blanket out and go with you boys for the next few days, and eat bacon and flapjacks out of tin plates, and have the time of my life."

"Come on!" the Scouts cried.

And Peanut added, "You ain't old. Why, Edward Payson Weston's lots older than you are!"

"And he walked from San Francisco to New York didn't he?" Mr. Goodwin laughed. "Well, I guess his legs are younger than mine. Where do you go to-morrow, by the way?"

This reminded Mr. Rogers of the book, so he asked if he could lend him a copy of Hawthorne's "Twice Told Tales."

"If you can," he said, "we are going up Cannon to-morrow morning and read 'The Great Stone Face,' and then go over to the Crawford House on the train, to be ready for the Bridle Path the next day."

"Have we got it—the book?" Mr. Goodwin asked his wife.

She shook her head, but the daughter spoke—"The Andersons have a copy, I know. I'll run over and get it after dinner."

"Fine—and as to that train—nothing doing," said Mr. Goodwin. "You'll all get in my touring car after lunch, and the driver'll take you over to Crawford's, and show you some sights on the way. I'll tell him to take you through Bethlehem first. Now, don't say no! I want to do that much for you."

The Scouts thanked him, and agreed to be ready at two o'clock, on the next day, for the start. They rose from dinner now, and strolled out-of-doors. There was music at the Profile House.

The entire party loitered along the board walk in front of the cottages, with the great, dark wall of Lafayette going up against the stars directly across the road, and sat on the Profile House veranda a while, listening to the music within. Dancers came out and walked back and forth in front of them between dances—men in evening clothes, girls in low-necked white dresses. It was very gay. But how sleepy the Scouts were becoming! Mr. Rogers saw it, and whispered to their hostess. They walked back to the house, got the book, said good-night, and once more tramped down the road.

"Gee, it's ten o'clock," said Art. "Awful dissipated, we are."

Peanut yawned. "Bet I'll hate to get up tomorrow. Wow, some class to that dinner, though! Ain't you glad we were heroes, boys?"

Lou was lighting his lantern. "I'm glad you picked out Mr. Goodwin to warn," he laughed.

They were alongside of Echo Lake now. "If I wasn't so sleepy, I'd like to go down there and make an echo now, in the night," said Lou. "It would be kind of wild and unearthly."

"Yes, and easy to do, seeing's we have no bugle and no boat," said Frank. "Me for bed."

They now turned in from the road, and followed the path, each one counting his steps. But, as the path was down-hill, and they had counted first when going up-hill, everybody was still many paces shy when Lou, who was leading with the lantern, suddenly spied the handkerchief, still tied to a bush. They turned into the underbrush, and after considerable stumbling in the dark, amid the undergrowth and the gigantic hemlock trunks, the lantern light fell on a shimmer of white—one of the shirts hung up to dry—and they found their camp. It wasn't five minutes later when the camp was once more dark and silent.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE FOREHEAD OF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

THE camp next morning was still asleep at day-break, and for the first time, almost, in the history of the Southmead Scouts Art was not the first to wake. He and Peanut were both asleep when the rest sat up and rubbed their eyes, and it was not till Rob rattled a pan and Lou began to chop wood that the two boys aroused.

"Because you're heroes is no reason you should be lazy," Rob laughed.

Peanut propped himself up on his elbow, and regarded the scene. The sun had not yet risen high enough to look in over the northern shoulders of Lafayette, and it was still dim among the great hemlocks. Some forest birds were singing sweetly, a hermit thrush far off sounding like a fairy clarion. The brook could be heard running close by. The woods smelled fresh and fragrant.

"I don't believe I'll get up at all," Peanut announced. "Rather like it here. Gee, but I slept hard last night! Bet I made a dent in the ground."

“Won’t get up at all, eh?” Rob remarked, setting down the coffee-pot. “We need more wood. Out with you!”

He took hold of Peanut’s blanket, and rolled the occupant out upon the bare ground.

Peanut picked himself up sleepily, and hunted his tooth-brush out of his pack. “Oh, very well!” he said, starting down to the brook for his morning wash. “Only it would be nice one day just to lie around in camp, and do nothing.”

“We’ll do just that, when we get to the Great Gulf, or Tuckerman’s Ravine, perhaps,” said Mr. Rogers. “But not to-day. Besides, we’re going to get a motor ride this afternoon.”

It was after seven o’clock before camp was struck. They left everything packed and ready to put aboard the motor after lunch, and armed only with a small package of raisins apiece, which Mr. Rogers had mysteriously produced from his pack, and the last of the sweet chocolate, and with their staffs and canteens, and the book, they set off.

“Seems good to be going light,” somebody remarked.

“It does that,” said Art. “Let’s whoop it up this morning. By the way, we haven’t cut our mileage for two days.”

“We can do it at lunch,” said Peanut. “Won’t take us long to eat what we’ve got. That’s a lead

pipe. Say, Mr. Rogers, did you have those raisins yesterday?"

"You'll never know!" the Scout Master laughed.

The path up Cannon Mountain (which, by the way, is called Cannon Mountain because a rock on what looks like the summit from the Profile House resembles a cannon) started in near the hotel, and lost no time about ascending. It began to go up with the first step, in fact, through an evergreen forest, and it never stopped going up till it emerged from the evergreens upon bare rock, two miles away, directly across the Notch from the point on Lafayette where the path reaches the end of Eagle Cliff.

"Looks as if you could almost throw a stone across," said Peanut.

The boys now saw that the real summit of Cannon was a mile away to the west, and instead of looking down, as they had expected to do, upon the top of Bridal Veil falls on the west side, where their real mountain trip had begun, they were a long distance from the falls. The Old Man lay to the south of them, and it was toward him they made their way, standing presently on top of the precipice above his massive forehead, and looking southward through the Notch. What a view it was! The ground below their feet fell sheer away out of sight, fifteen hundred feet to the valley below. To the right was the great wall of Kinsman, to the left the bare

scarred ridges of Lafayette, Lincoln, Haystack and Liberty, along which they had plodded the day before. In the green Notch between they could see the white road and the little Pemigewasset River flashing through the trees, on their way to the Flume House, and far off, where the Notch opened out into the sunny distances, the town of North Woodstock. Beyond the opening, the boys could see the far blue mountains to the south.

“That’s what the Old Man of the Mountain is forever looking at, boys,” said Mr. Rogers. “Not a bad view, eh?”

“It’s wonderful!” said Lou.

The Scouts now lay down on the rocks, and Mr. Rogers opened the book to the story of “The Great Stone Face.”

“This story,” he began, “was written in Berkshire County, pretty close to our home—in Lenox, in a little red house at the head of Stockbridge Bowl, in the summer of 1851, when Hawthorne was living there. It isn’t exactly about this particular Old Man of the Mountain, as you will see from the description. It’s really about a sort of ideal great stone face. But of course it was suggested to Hawthorne by this one.”

Then he read the story aloud. I wish all my readers, before they go any further in this book, would get Hawthorne’s “Twice Told Tales,” and

read it, too, right now. If you've read it before, read it again. And try to imagine, as you read it, that Rob and Lou and Frank and Art and Peanut were listening to it, not in school, not in a house, but sitting fifteen hundred feet above the Notch, almost on the forehead of the Great Stone Face itself, and looking off at exactly the same view he looks at, fifty miles into the blue distance.

When Mr. Rogers had finished the story, none of the boys spoke for a minute. Then Peanut said, his brows contracted, "I'm not sure I quite get it."

Lou was gazing off thoughtfully down the valley.

"I think it means that Ernest was the man who fulfilled the prophecy and grew to look like the Great Stone Face because he didn't try to become rich, or a great fighter, or a politician, or even a poet looking for fame, but just tried to live as good a life as he could. He was a kind of *still* man, and it makes you want to be still and just sit and *think*, to look out over the world the way the Great Stone Face does."

Mr. Rogers nodded his head in approval. "You've got the idea, Lou," he said. "I want all of you to get something of it, too. There is a lot to be learned from mountains as well as fun to be had climbing them. I don't believe any of you realized that to-day is Sunday, did you?"

“Gee, I hadn’t!” cried Peanut. “Tramping this way, you lose track of time.”

“Neither had I,” said the rest.

“Well, it is,” Mr. Rogers laughed. “And this is our way of going to church. You remember what the Bible says about the mountains? ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord.’ You see, long, long ago, men felt about the mountains as we do now—that there was something big and eternal about them; and just as the Pemigewassett Indians thought that the Great Spirit lived on Moosilauke, and perhaps worshipped the Great Stone Face here, so the men in Bible days thought of the hills as the symbol of God’s dwelling place. Then later, in our own time, we find Ernest in the story refusing to judge men by worldly standards, but judging them by whether they resemble the Great Stone Face—that is, judging them by whether they were calm, and sweet, and good, like the mountains, and the forests, and the still places.

“As Lou says, Ernest was a *still* man—that is, he wasn’t bustling around making war or making money. When you come to think about it, the still men are the greatest. The greatest man who ever lived was Jesus Christ and He changed all history by the Sermon on the Mount; not by making wars like Napoleon, but by new ideas which He had

thought out, and by teaching love of your fellow men. Darwin, experimenting with plants and fishes and animals and bugs, reached the theory of evolution, which made the nineteenth century so wonderful. He was a still man. He didn't fight nor make money nor shout at the crowds, yet he altered the whole conception of science and religion and human thought. Ernest in the story just stayed down there in his own valley, under the shadow of the mountain, and did his daily work quietly, and loved his neighbors, and preached wise words to them, and made his corner of the world a little better and happier—and suddenly it was *he* who resembled the Great Stone Face.

“Look out, boys, over the Notch, and see what the Old Man sees. Doesn't it make all our little human rows and fights and ambitions seem small and petty? The Old Man will still be looking when you and I are dead and forgotten. While we are here, however, let's try to be a bit like him, worthy of this view, and not talk too much unless we have something to say, and be charitable with all our neighbors, and just try to remember that no matter if lessons in school don't go right, or we are licked in baseball, Lafayette and Cannon and Kinsman are still here, the Old Man is still looking down the valley. Let's lift up our eyes unto the hills, and get strength. Next winter, if you feel like being cross

to your mother some morning, or doing a mean thing to somebody who's done a mean thing to you, just remember this view, just say to yourself, 'The Great Stone Face is looking calmly down the valley, and expects me to be calm, too, and generous, and kind, because those things are what really make men great.' Will you try to remember, boys?"

"Sure!" cried Peanut.

"I can never forget this view," said Lou.

"Whenever I get sore or cross, I always go out in the woods," said Art.

"Say," Peanut added, "I *like* to go to church this way!"

The rest laughed, and "church" was over for the morning. The boys now munched their raisins, and cut their last two days' mileage on their staffs. From the camp on Moosilauke to Lost River was four miles, through the river one, back to the store for the packs, two more, to North Woodstock five, and up to the camp by the Flume House six. That made eighteen miles, and Art and Peanut added another mile on their staffs for their walking during the pursuit of the burglars. The mileage for the next day, according to Art's pedometer, showed nine miles from camp to the Pool and then to the top of Lafayette, and five miles down the mountain and to the base camp. Then there were two more miles of walking

about to Mr. Goodwin's house, Echo Lake, the Profile, and so on—a total of sixteen.

The boys washed down their frugal meal of raisins and chocolate with all the water from the canteens (“Gee,” said Frank, “it beats all how much you drink on mountains. I suppose it’s due to the rapid evaporation.”) and shortly before one began the descent. It was made in quick time. With no packs to bother them, the Scouts could vault on their poles, and they came down the two miles in seventeen minutes. They were hot and panting at the base, and surprised at their own record.

“Takes you in the front of your legs, and in behind your knees,” said Frank. “I suppose that’s because we don’t develop those holding-in muscles on the level.”

“Well, we’ll develop ’em before we get home, I guess,” said Peanut, rubbing his shins.

They now went to the Goodwins’ house to pay their party call, and say good-bye, and then returned to camp to wait for the motor. They had all their stuff out beside the road when the car, a big, seven passenger touring car, came along, and in they piled. They drew lots for the front seat, and Peanut won. The other five got into the tonneau, and with a shout, the car started up—or rather down the road, for they were on the top of a hill.

CHAPTER IX

THE CRAWFORD NOTCH

THE road kept on going down, too, through the woods. The driver told them that this was Three Mile Hill, and nobody disputed him. It was certainly three miles. All the cars they met coming up were on the lowest speed, and chugging hard. At the bottom, they came into the little village of Franconia, and behind them they could see the mountains they had been climbing, piled up against the sky.

“How about grub?” Art suddenly exclaimed. “We’ve got to stock up before we start to-morrow. In fact, we haven’t enough for supper to-night—and it’s Sunday.”

Nobody had thought of that, but Mr. Goodwin’s chauffeur was equal to the emergency. He drove to the storekeeper’s house, who opened the store, and sold them what they needed.

“Suppose I’m breaking the law,” he said, “but I shouldn’t want to see you fellers go hungry!”

Then they got in the car again, turned eastward, climbed a hill past the Forest Hill Hotel, and spur-

along the Gale River road toward Bethlehem, a pretty road through the woods, beside the rushing Gale River. After a few miles, the road climbed a long hill, away from the river, and suddenly, at the top of the hill, they looked out across the valley to the whole panorama of the White Mountains. To the right, a little behind them, rose Cannon and Lafayette. Directly south was the sharp cone of Garfield, then the two tall Twins, then, still far to the east, but nearer than they had yet seen them, the blue Presidentials, with Washington clear of cloud, and the Summit House showing.

“Some sight!” exclaimed Peanut.

They now came speedily into Bethlehem, a town high upon a hill, with many hotels and many stores and summer houses, along a single street, a street a mile long, with golf links at one side of the road, and many people in gay summer clothes walking up and down. The chauffeur drove the length of the street and back (stopping, at Peanut’s demand, to get sodas at a drug store) and then turned the car eastward once more, toward Mount Washington.

The going was good, and the driver “let in the juice,” as Peanut expressed it. They rushed along at thirty miles an hour, with Mount Washington getting closer every moment.

The Scouts took off their hats, and the warm wind blew through their hair.

"Pretty fast walking we're doing to-day!" cried Peanut.

In less than an hour, in fact, they had swung with the bend of the rushing Ammonoosuc River into a considerable level plain, and found themselves in the midst of a settlement. There were two or three railroad tracks, cottages, a small hotel, then a big hotel—the Fabyan House, and a junction railroad station, and then, still closer to the great wall of the Presidential range, which now loomed up directly in front of them, the Mount Pleasant House, and half a mile to the left, across a beautiful green golf course, the huge bulk of the Mount Washington Hotel.

"Golly, that hotel is as big as Mount Washington itself," said Art.

The chauffeur laughed. "Yes, and the prices are as high," he said.

They now passed along the road, between the two hotels, headed south, and then began to go up-hill, leaving the Presidential range more and more on their left. Soon they lost sight of Washington, with the curving line of the railroad up its flank. After two miles, they lost sight of all the range. On their left was only a high, wooded slope. On their right was the same. In front of them a white hotel and railroad station suddenly appeared, and in front of that was only a narrow defile between the two hills, just big enough to let the road and railway through.

"The Crawford House!" said Mr. Rogers. "And ahead is the gateway to the Crawford Notch. All out!"

They got out of the motor beside the hotel, and thanked the chauffeur for their trip. They had come twenty-seven miles farther on their way since two o'clock, and it was not yet four!

"Now," said Mr. Rogers, when the car had turned back home, "the Crawford Bridle Path starts right here in these woods across from the hotel. That's it, there. I move we tote our stuff up it far enough to make camp, and then take a walk down into the Notch."

"Second the motion," said Frank.

Picking up their burdens, the boys walked a quarter of a mile eastward, by a beaten path that ascended at a comfortable angle, not far from a brook. Presently they found a pool in the brook, hid their stuff in the bushes fifty feet from the path, and hurried back to the Crawford House.

Just below the hotel and the railroad station was a small pond.

"That pond," the Scout Master said, "is the head waters of the Saco River. We are on a divide. Behind the hotel, the springs flow north into the Ammonoosuc, and thence into the Connecticut. They empty, finally, you see, into Long Island Sound. The water of this lake empties into the

Atlantic north of Portland, Maine. Yet they start within two hundred yards of each other."

Just south of the little pond, the boys noticed a bare, rocky cliff, perhaps a hundred feet high, rising sharp from the left side of the road. The top was rounded off.

"Look!" said Lou. "That cliff is just like an elephant's head, with his trunk coming down to the road!"

Mr. Rogers laughed. "They call it the Elephant's Head," he said. "You're not the first to discover the resemblance."

When they had passed the Elephant's Head, they saw that the gate of the Notch was, in reality, not wide enough to admit both the carriage road and the railroad. The railroad, on their right, entered through a gap blasted in the solid rock. A few steps more, and they were in the gate themselves, and the wonderful panorama burst upon them.

They saw that the railroad kept along the west bank of the Notch, high above the bottom, but the carriage road plunged directly down, beside the Saco River (at this point but a tiny brook). On the west side of the Notch Mount Willard rose beside them, and south of that Mount Willey shot up almost precipitously, the latter being over four thousand feet high. On the east side was the huge rampart of Mount Webster, also four thousand feet high, and

nearly as steep, with the long white scars of landslides down its face.

"Well!" said Peanut, "the Franconia Notch was some place, but this one has got it skun a mile. Gee! Looks as if the mountains were going to tumble over on top of you!"

"They did once, on top of the Willey family," said Mr. Rogers. "Come on, we'll walk down till we can see how it happened."

The road plunged rapidly down-hill, into the forest at the bottom of the Notch. They met one or two motors chugging up, and having a hard time of it. In one case, everybody but the driver was walking, to lighten the load.

"I came down this hill on a bicycle once—only once," said the Scout Master. "It was back in 1896, when everybody was riding bicycles. I was trying to coast through the Notch. Somewhere on this hill I ran into a big loose stone, head on, and the bicycle stopped. I didn't, though. The man with me couldn't stop his wheel for nearly a quarter of a mile. Finally he came back and picked me up, and took me back to the Crawford House, where they bandaged up my head and knee. Somebody brought the wheel back on a cart."

"Say, it would make some coast on a bob-sled, though!" cried Peanut. "Wouldn't be any rocks to dodge then."

“And there'd only be about ten feet of snow in here to break out, I reckon,” Art answered.

“Nearer thirty,” said Mr. Rogers.

Over two miles below the Crawford House they came to the site of the old Willey House, and saw through the trees to the west the towering wall of Mount Willey, scarred still by the great landslide, seeming to hang over them.

“There's where she started,” said Mr. Rogers, pointing to the top of the mountain. “It was back in late August, in 1826, that the slide came. There had been a drought, making the thin soil on the mountain very dry. Then came a terrific storm, a regular cloudburst, and the water went through the soil and began running down on the rocks underneath. That started the soil and the trees on it sliding, and they gathered headway and more soil and debris and rocks as they came, the way a snow-ball gathers more snow, and presently a whole strip of the wall was thundering down.

“There had been a smaller slide in June, which had terrified the family, and Willey had built a sort of slide-proof shelter down the road, in case another came. It wasn't so far away that the family didn't have time to get to it, if they started when they heard the slide first coming, and nobody has ever been able to explain why none of them got there. James Willey, a brother of the dead man, however, always

said that his brother's spirit came to him in a dream, and told him that the terrible rain, which had caused a rise of twenty-four feet in the Saco, made them fearful of being drowned, and when the water reached their door-sill, they fled not to the shelter hut, but higher up the slope. Then, when the slide came, they were too far away from the hut to escape. They had evidently been reading the Bible just before they fled, for it was found open in the house."

"In the house?" cried Peanut. "Didn't the house get swept away?"

"No, that's the oddest and saddest part of the story. The slide split on a great boulder or ledge behind the house, and if they'd stayed in it, not a soul would have perished. As it was, Mr. and Mrs. Willey, five children, and two hired men were all killed. Three bodies were never found. Only the dog escaped. He appeared at a house far down the road, the next day, moaning and howling. He was seen running back and forth for a few hours, and then he disappeared and was never seen again. It was two or three days before the floods went down enough to allow rescue parties to get up the Notch, however."

"Let's go see the rock that split the slide," said Lou.

Mr. Rogers led the way behind the site of the old house, and showed them the top of the rock, above the ground.

"This boulder was thirty feet high in 1826," he said. "The landslide, as you see, nearly buried it; but it split the stream, and the debris all rushed in two currents on either side of the house, uniting again in the meadow in front. The house stood for many years after that. I think it was destroyed finally by fire."

"But what gets me is, why should anybody want to live in such a lonesome spot, anyhow?" said Peanut. "Gee, it's getting dark down here already."

"Well, there was no railroad in those days," Mr. Rogers answered, "and the road through the Notch was the main artery of travel to the northern side of the mountains. I suppose the Willey House made a good stopping place for the night. Let's go up to the railroad now, and get a look at the engineering job, which was a big thing in its day—and is still, for that matter."

They climbed some distance through birch trees up the steep western wall of the Notch before reaching the railroad. Once upon it, they saw the great gap in the hills to far better advantage, however, than from the road below. Willey shot up directly over their heads, as steep a long climb, probably, as there is anywhere east of the Rocky Mountains. The Scouts came very near deciding to give up a day from Washington, and tackle it. Directly

across the Notch they could see the whole long, beetling brow of Webster.

"It kind of looks like the pictures of Daniel," said Peanut. "Stern and frowning."

"And the slides are the furrows in his forehead," laughed Rob.

But it was looking north that the view was most impressive. The railroad hung dizzily on the side wall, with the rocks apparently tumbling upon it from the left, and it about to tumble down the rocks to the right. It curved eastward a mile or two ahead, and at the bend, facing down the Notch, was the precipitous southern wall of Mount Willard, almost a sheer rock cliff a thousand feet high. As the party walked up the track, the cliff grew nearer and nearer, and as the daylight faded in this deep ravine, it seemed more and more not to be straight up, but to be hanging forward, as if ready to fall on top of them.

"I'd hate to be in here during a thunder-storm," said Lou. "It's—it's kind of terrible!"

They came through the gate of the Notch at six o'clock, and there was the Crawford House in daylight, and above it, on the slope of Clinton, were the rays of the sun!

"Good little old sun," said Peanut. "Wow! I'd hate to live where it set every day at four o'clock."

They now hurried up the Bridle Path to their

camp, and Peanut tied the flag to a tree, in honor of the first camp on the Washington trail, while the others began preparations for supper or cut boughs for the night.

When the supper dishes were cleared away, they heard a faint sound of music coming up to them from below. Peanut pricked up his ears.

"Concert at the Crawford House!" he said. "Let's go down and hear it."

"It sounds pretty nice right here," said Mr. Rogers.

"Aw, come on!" Peanut urged. "We can get post-cards there, too, I guess. Art wants to send one to his Pinkie."

"Shut up!" said Art. "What you really mean is that you want to get some candy."

"No, I don't. I got some left from this afternoon."

"You have!" said Frank. "You old tightwad! Why don't you pass it around?"

"'Cause I sat on it by mistake," Peanut answered. "Come on down to the hotel."

"Maybe we'd better," Rob put in. "We can all send a card home to our folks."

"Not forgetting Pinkie," said Peanut to Art, as he ducked down the path, stumbling in the dark.

Lou took the lantern, and tied his handkerchief to a bough over the entrance to the camp. The rest waited till this was done, and followed be-

hind him. They didn't catch Peanut till the very bottom.

"That was easy," he said. "I'm like the old geezer on Moosilauke—got a sixth sense in the soles of my feet. Besides, if you get off the path, you bump into a tree, which knocks you back in."

The brightly lighted windows of the Crawford House were open, and the sound of the orchestra was floating out. Many people were walking up and down on the veranda. They were all dressed elaborately, many of the men in evening clothes. The little party of five boys and a man, in flannel shirts and khaki, attracted much attention as they entered the lobby of the hotel.

"Gee," Art whispered, "think of coming to the mountains for a vacation, and having to doll all up in your best rags! That's not my idea of fun."

"It's my idea of the ultimate zero in sport," laughed Rob.

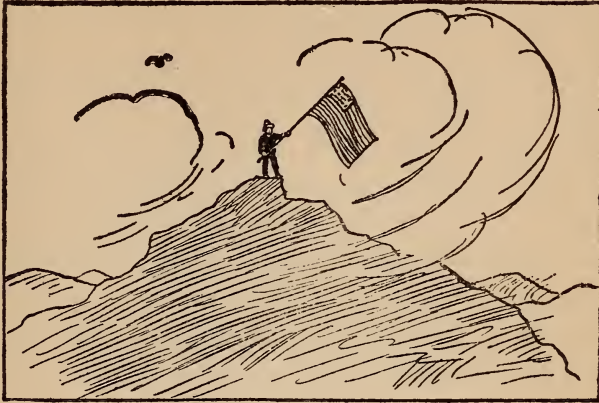
Peanut had at once found the post-card stand, and was offering Art a "pretty picture for Pinkie" as the latter came up.

"All right!" Art laughed. "I'll send it!"

But he wouldn't let anybody else see what he wrote.

The others all sent cards home, and, not to be outdone by Art, they sent cards also to the girls they had met in Lost River. Peanut found a

picture of the top of Mount Washington to send to Alice, and he carefully drew a picture of himself upon the topmost rock, like this:



On the other side he wrote, "The persevering Peanut on the Peak."

"Guess that's some alliteration!" he said. "Mr. Rogers, what painter's name began with P?"

"Perugino," said the Scout Master.

"Do you mind spelling it—slowly?"

Mr. Rogers spelled it, and Peanut added on the card—"Painted by Perugino."

"Guess that'll hold her royal highness for a while!" he laughed.

Then he bought a stamp, and triumphantly dropped the post-card in the letter box.

The boys sat on the veranda for a while, listening

to the music, until Rob and Mr. Rogers noticed that Art's eyes were closed, and Peanut's head bobbed down upon his chest every few minutes, and Frank and Lou were yawning.

"Bunk!" said Rob.

Lou relit the lantern, and they climbed back up the path to camp.

"We are on the way up Washington at last," said the Scout Master as they were rolling up in their blankets. "At this time to-morrow, we'll be asleep on the highest point east of the Rockies, and north of Virginia."

"Hooray," said Peanut. "Let Per—Per—Perugino know, please."

CHAPTER X

A FIGHT WITH THE STORM ON THE CRAWFORD BRIDLE PATH

THE morning dawned cold, with a north wind, and the Scouts woke up shivering. As they were in the woods on the west slope of a mountain, it would be some time before they could see the sun, but so far as they could get a glimpse through the trees to the west and north, the day promised well for the ascent of Washington.

"Looks clear," said Art. "I wonder if old Washington has got a cloud cap on?"

"We'll know before very long," said the Scout Master. "Even if it has, I don't think we've got much kick coming. Here we've been out in the open since the night before the Fourth, and not a bad day yet."

"Right-o!" said Peanut. "Weather man must have known we were up here."

The party ate a good breakfast, chiefly of fresh eggs, which Lou ran down to the Crawford House and bought while the fire was being made. Then the packs were carefully packed, the blanket rolls

firmly strapped, compasses examined and stowed in the pockets, and the party was ready for the ascent. They moved rather slowly into the path, and turned upward, for the loads were heavy. They were carrying enough provisions for four days, the evaporated vegetables and powdered milk and eggs having been largely saved for this final trip over the bare Presidentials, where they would be far from any sources of fresh supply, and their weight increased by flour, a little butter, some coffee, bacon, potted ham and sweet chocolate purchased the day before in Franconia.

"I feel like a packhorse," said Peanut.

"Don't you mean a donkey?" Art laughed.

"Speaking of horses," said Mr. Rogers, as they plodded up the trail through the woods, "this Crawford Bridle Path was made originally for horses, little burros I suppose they were, and folks even when I was a boy used to go up on their backs. I suppose the cog railroad put that form of transportation gradually out of business. Now nobody goes up this way except on Shanks' mare."

"When was this path made?" asked Frank.

"It was the first path cut on the Presidential range," Mr. Rogers replied. "Abel Crawford opened it in 1819, as far as the summit of Clinton—three miles from the Crawford House. It's another five and a half or six to the top of Washington,

however, and it wasn't till about 1840, I believe, that one of Abel's sons converted it into a bridle path and carried it on to Washington. You see, by that time, people had begun to visit the mountains for their vacations in large numbers."

"So the part we are on is nearly a hundred years old!" Lou exclaimed.

They plodded steadily upward, by a fairly steep grade, though not a difficult one. The rising sun was now striking down into the spruce and hemlock woods about them, but they noted that it was rather a hazy sun.

"I bet there's a cloud on Washington," Art muttered.

"What'll we do if there is? Can we climb in it?" Frank asked.

"That all depends," the Scout Master replied, "upon how bad a cloud it is. If we get into a storm up there, a real storm, we'll beat it back, you bet! I haven't told you, I guess, that as late as 1900 two men lost their lives on this path in a snow-storm on the 30th of June—that's hardly more than a week earlier than to-day. Down here it's mid-summer, but up there on the five thousand or six thousand foot level it's still early spring."

"Golly!" said Peanut, in such a heartfelt manner that the rest laughed—though they laughed rather soberly.

"I ought to add," the Scout Master went on, "that W. B. Curtis and his companion, Allen Ormsby, the two men who died, would not have perished, probably, if they had turned back when they first saw threats of bad weather, as they were warned to do, instead of trying to keep on, or even if there had been a shelter hut, as there is now, on the long, bare, wind-swept col between Monroe and the summit cone of Washington. They tried to build a shelter under Monroe, and then left that to press on to the summit. Curtis didn't quite get to the site of the present hut, but doubtless he would have if the hope of it had been there to spur him on. As it was, he evidently fell and injured himself, and Ormsby died some distance up the final cone, struggling in a mad attempt to get to the top and find aid for Curtis. He had fifty bruises on his body where the wind had blown him against the rocks. Curtis was thinly clad, and he was sixty years old. Two guides, descending, who met them on Pleasant, had warned them not to go on—that there was snow and terrible wind above; but they evidently didn't realize at all what they were in for."

"Oh, well, we've got blankets, and you know the way," cried Peanut. "What do we care? Guess we'll ride out anything that can hit us in July!"

The conversation was suddenly interrupted by a sharp "S-sh!" from Art, who was leading. The

rest stopped short, and looked up the path in the direction of his pointing finger.

There, right in the path fifty feet ahead, pecking away at the mould exactly like a hen in the barnyard, was a big brown partridge! The Scouts stole softly toward it, expecting every moment to see it rise and go whirring off through the woods. It did stop feeding, raised its head to look at them, and then hopped up the bank beside the path and began scratching again.

“Good gracious, is it a tame partridge?” Art whispered in astonishment.

But his astonishment was still greater when, a moment later, the whole party stood in the path not six feet from the bird, and saw that it was one of a small covey of six. Four of them were feeding on the ground, and making soft, pretty *coots*, like hens on a hot summer day. Two were perched lazily on the low branch of a hemlock. They paid no attention to the Scouts.

“Gee!” said Frank, “you could knock ’em over with a stick! Let’s have partridge for dinner.”

“Nix!” said Art. “It’s out of season. Besides, I wouldn’t kill anything so tame. I guess they’re not hunted much here. I never saw ’em tame like this before in my life. Down home they’d have been a mile away by now.”

The birds looked up at the sound of his voice, and

moved a few feet farther off. Then they began feeding again, the hens following the cock in a sort of procession.

"They certainly are pretty," Rob said. "I didn't know a partridge was so pretty. Take a picture of 'em, Frank."

"Not sun enough in under those trees," Frank sighed. "I wish I could."

The boys were reluctant to leave the partridges, but the day was mounting, and they pressed on.

The trees were growing more and more stunted, and rocks began to appear in the trail. Now and then there was a break to the north, and they could see far below to the broad green intervale of Bretton Woods. In another half hour, the forest had shrunk to dwarf shrubs, and they emerged above timber line almost upon the top of Clinton. The summit, however, lay a few hundred feet to the south of them, and shut out the view in that direction. Northward, they could see for a long distance. Westward, too, they looked back at the first mountains toward Franconia. Ahead of them, they saw only a great, bare, rocky ridge rising gradually to the dome of Mount Pleasant, and to the left of this, northeastward, the sloping shoulders of the mountains beyond, falling away to the valley far beneath. Washington was hidden somewhere beyond Pleasant—still six miles away. It was nine o'clock. The

dome of Pleasant was free from clouds. The northern sky was blue. Yet the sun was hazy, and south-eastward there seemed to be a haze over everything. The wind was cold. Mr. Rogers shook his head, but said nothing.

Sitting down to rest, and ease shoulders from the pull of the pack straps, he pulled the little green Appalachian guide-book out of his pocket, and read the "Caution" therein about the Crawford Path :

"This path is one of the most dangerous in the White Mountains, on it no less than four persons having lost their lives. For a long five miles it is above tree line and exposed to the full force of all storms and there is but one side-trail leading to the shelter of the woods. The following precautions are suggested :—Persons unfamiliar with the range should not ascend the Crawford Path except in fine weather and beginners should not attempt it alone. If trouble arises south of Pleasant go back over Clinton. If on Pleasant go down the Mount Pleasant Path. If between Pleasant and Franklin remember that by returning via the south loop there is protection from north and northwest winds in the lee of the mountain. Between Franklin and the cone of Washington the Club's Refuge Hut should be used. This is the most dangerous part of the path. Never, under any circumstances, attempt the cone if a storm has caused serious trouble before its base is reached. Should the path be lost in cloudy weather go north, descending into the woods and following water. On the south nearly all the slopes are much more precipitous and the distance to civilization is much greater."

"Say, what are you trying to do, scare us to death?" Peanut said.

"No, I'm not trying to scare you," Mr. Rogers answered. "But I do want to impress on you, before we begin our two or three days on these summits, that they are dangerous mountains, and that here, if anywhere, our scout motto, 'Be prepared,' is the one to live by. As you say, we have blankets, plenty of food, and compasses, and we can go down anywhere we want, if need be, into the timber, and get through. But we might get scattered, or after to-day we might split for a time into groups, and I want you all to know what to do. Now, let's on again."

Packs were resumed, and the party started ahead along the rocky path toward the domed summit of Mount Pleasant, which from this high col was hardly more than a hill of rocks, rising a few hundred feet above the path. They plodded on for a mile or more, and began to see over into the great wilderness to the south. To the north, at their very feet, lay the Bretton Woods intervale, with the hotels and golf links, but to the south the pitch was much steeper, and dropped into a region of forest and tumbled mountains without a house or road of any sort as far as the eye could see.

Now the path divided, the trail to the left leading directly over the summit of Pleasant. They took

the right hand trail, and dropped down a little, going along through some low scrub which had climbed up from the gulf below, protected from the north winds. It was warmer here in the shelter of Pleasant, and they stopped for a long drink by a spring. But, two miles from Clinton, they rose again beyond Pleasant upon the bare col between Pleasant and Franklin, and got the full force of the north wind, which seemed to be blowing harder than before. The sun, too, was getting more misty. Mr. Rogers was watching the south and southeast, but while it was very hazy in that direction, the direction of the wind didn't seem to indicate that the mist bank could come their way. They rested a moment, and then began the toilsome ascent up over the waste of strewn boulders toward the summit of Franklin. The path was no longer distinct. Here and there it was plain enough, but in other places it could be detected only by the piles of rock, or cairns, every hundred feet along the way.

As they drew near the summit of Franklin, Frank, who happened to look back down the trail, shouted to the rest.

“Look,” he said, “somebody's coming up behind us!”

The others turned. Sure enough, half a mile back down the trail, were two people, a man and a woman, evidently hurrying rapidly.

"They haven't any packs or blankets," said Art.

"Nor anything at all, but sweaters tied around their waists, as far as I can see," Lou added.

"Probably going up for the day only, and expecting to get down again before night," said the Scout Master. "They'll have to hurry. They seem to be hurrying. They'll catch us all right, at the rate they are coming now, before we get beyond Monroe."

A few moments later, the Scouts were on top of Franklin, 5,029 feet, the first time they had been above the five thousand foot level except on the summit of Lafayette. Directly ahead, a little over a mile away, was the summit of Monroe, two jagged twin shoulders of rock, with the south wall plunging down almost precipitously into the great pit of Oakes Gulf. Beyond Monroe, rising a thousand feet higher into the air, at last the great summit cone of Washington was fully revealed, and even as they gazed upon it, a thin streamer of grayish white cloud blew against it out of nothingness, and then shredded out to the southward.

"I don't like that," said Rob.

"Hm," said Mr. Rogers, "if it's no worse than that we needn't worry. It's those two behind I'm thinking about."

The Scouts moved on, across the col between Franklin and Monroe, with the north wind blowing

an increasing gale, and always now on their right the yawning pit of Oakes Gulf. They were not more than half-way across when the couple behind them came over Franklin, following them. They were under the southern side of Monroe, some little distance below the summit, and very close to the head wall of the gulf, when the couple caught them.

Meanwhile the cone of Washington had gone out of sight in a white mass. Southward, the view was shut out, for the haze had moved up against the wind. Down at their very feet, in Oakes Gulf, a cloud suddenly appeared from nowhere, coming to the last scrub evergreens.

The couple hailed the boys with panting breath.

"How much farther is it up Washington?" the man asked.

Mr. Rogers and the Scouts turned and looked at them. They were young, evidently city bred, and they had on very light shoes. The girl had on a silk waist, the man a stiff collar! They had no food with them, having eaten some sandwiches they brought, so they said, as they walked. They had put on their sweaters, and had no other protection.

"You are two miles from the summit yet," said Mr. Rogers, "with the hardest part of the climb ahead."

"Oh, John, I can never do it!" said the girl.

"We've *got* to do it," the man answered. "You

see," he added to Mr. Rogers, "we've got to catch the train down. Some people are waiting for us at the Mount Pleasant House."

"The train down!" said Mr. Rogers. "Why, man alive, it's nearly noon now, and the train goes down shortly after one. It will take you two hours to make the summit cone, with your—your wife in her present condition, even if you don't lose the path."

"I—I'm not his wife," the girl said, turning very pale. "We are engaged only. You see, we've got to get down again to-day. Oh, John, we *must* catch that train!"

"Come on, then, we'll do it! Why, we can make two miles in less than an hour! Two hours, indeed!"

He started ahead, but Mr. Rogers grabbed his arm.

"Hold on!" he said, "have you ever been on this mountain before?"

"No," they both answered.

"Well, I have," the Scout Master continued. "Ahead of you lies the most dangerous stretch of path east of the Rocky Mountains. There's a cloud coming down from Washington, and we may have a storm at any minute. You've got no compass, no provisions, no proper clothes. You'd lose that path in five minutes in a cloud. In 1900, the thirtieth

day of June, two men, good strong walkers, too, died of exposure between here and the summit. You stay with us."

The girl went whiter still, and the man, also, grew pale.

"But can't we go back the way we've come?" he said.

Mr. Rogers pointed back over the ridge. A cloud was rolling up and over it from the pit of Oakes Gulf.

"You'd lose that path, too," he said. "You stick with us, and if we can't make the summit before the storm breaks, we'll ride her out in the Shelter Hut. Come, I'm captain, now. Forward, march!"

As the party emerged from the slight shelter of Monroe, upon the great, bare stretch of rising plateau which forms the col between Monroe and the summit cone, they could with difficulty stand up at first against the gale which hit them. The clouds were apparently doing a kind of devil's dance around Washington. Behind them other clouds had sucked up the Notch, and then up Oakes Gulf, and were pouring over the southern peaks behind like a gigantic wave, beaten back into breakers by the wind. Here on this plateau they were for the time being in a kind of vortex between two cloud masses. They hurried as fast as they could, Mr. Rogers and Art leading.

All the party were rather pale, especially the girl. Rob was walking beside her, and helping her fight the great wind. Their breath was short, in this altitude, and hurrying was hard work. Moreover, the wind came in mighty, sudden gusts, which almost knocked the breath out of them and frequently made them stop and brace.

They had not gone a quarter of a mile when the clouds that came down Washington and those which streamed in from Oakes Gulf closed together, and the last of the party, who chanced to be Lou, suddenly found that he couldn't see anything, nor anybody.

His heart gave a great jump in his breast, and he let out a terrified cry, which was almost lost in the howl of the wind.

"Come on up!" he heard faintly. A second later, and he saw the forms of Peanut and Frank emerge from the mist ahead of him. The whole party now gathered close in behind Mr. Rogers, keeping only two feet apart, almost treading on each other's heels. The Scout Master stopped a second.

"Everybody watch for the cairns," he shouted, "and keep close together. Art and I have our compasses. Now, keep cool. We are only a short way from the hut. We'll go in there till the worst is over."

Then he moved on, slowly, making sure of the

path. The wind was rising. The cloud that packed them close as cotton batting condensed on their clothes in fine drops. Suddenly Peanut, who was blowing on his chilled hands, noticed that the drops were beginning to freeze! The rocks of the path were getting slippery, too. The girl had stumbled once, and strained her ankle. She was paler than ever.

"Oh, why did I wear these high heeled shoes!" she half sobbed.

The words were no sooner out of her mouth (and probably nobody heard them for the shrieking of the wind along the stony ground), when a terrific gust hit the party in the faces, its force knocking their breath out, the hail-like, freezing cloud stinging their faces, the damp cold of it numbing them. The girl fell again, Rob holding her enough to break the fall. Mr. Rogers ahead also fell, but intentionally. He made a trumpet with his hands.

"Lie down and get your breaths!" he shouted. "Then go on in the next lull as far as you can!"

They all got up again when the hurricane blast was over, and, heads down into the teeth of the icy wind, they pushed on, till the next gust made them fall down for shelter.

"Two miles in an hour!" Peanut was thinking. "We aren't going a quarter of a mile an hour at this rate. Will we ever get there?"

But the rest were struggling on, and he struggled, too, though his instinct was to turn back to the wind, and beat it for the Crawford House, not realizing that over four miles of bare summit lay between him and the sheltering woods.

Suddenly Art and Mr. Rogers ahead gave a cry. The rest, looking, saw dimly in the swirling vapor only a pile of stones and a cross.

"It's the spot where Curtis died," Mr. Rogers shouted. "We have only a quarter of a mile to go."

"Gee, I don't think it's very cheerful," said Peanut. "I'm near frozen now."

At the sight of the cross the girl gave way. She began to sob, and Rob felt her weight suddenly sag heavily on his arm.

"Here, quick!" he yelled at her companion. "Take her other arm."

The two of them got Rob's blanket unrolled and wrapped about her, as best they could for the whipping of the gale, and then half carried her along, while she tried bravely to stop her hysterical sobbing.

The gale was now a perfect fury. It must have been blowing seventy miles an hour, and the contact of this north wind with the warmer cloud bank from the south was making a perfect hurricane vortex of half frozen vapor around these high summits. Everybody was exhausted with fighting against it, and chilled with cold. Mr. Rogers and Art, however.

kept shouting back encouragement as each fresh cairn was picked up, and as Mr. Rogers knew the trail, and they had a map and compass, there were only a few delays while he or Art prospected ahead at blind spots. Alternately lying on their faces on the frozen, wet rocks to get their breaths, and pushing on into the gale, they struggled ahead for what seemed hours. Actually it was only half an hour. Half an hour to go 440 yards!

Suddenly, out of the vapor, not twenty-five feet ahead of them, loomed a small, gray shanty.

"Hoorah!" cried Art and Mr. Rogers. "The hut!"

CHAPTER XI

TO THE SUMMIT, SAFE AT LAST

THEY dashed to it, and opened the door. The hut was a tiny affair, with a lean-to roof. It faced to the south, with a door so narrow a stout person could barely squeeze in, and one tiny window. It would hold about six people without undue crowding—and here were eight!

“Peanut’s only half a one,” said Art, cracking the first joke since the storm began.

Into the hut, however, all eight of them crowded. Inside, they found two or three blankets hung on a string, and nothing else except a sign forbidding its use in any save cases of emergency.

“I guess this is emergency, all right,” said Rob, as he helped to wrap the girl in a pair of dry blankets, and put the third blanket about her companion. The boys all wrapped up in their own. Rob then got out his first aid kit, and gave the girl some aromatic spirits of ammonia, which revived her so that her hysterical sobbing stopped.

“Here, take my pack,” said Lou, “and use it for a pillow.”

The young man, who was nearly as pale as the girl, and almost as exhausted, took the pack and placed it in a corner. Then they laid the girl on the floor, with her head upon it. Her fiancé bent over her. In cases like this you don't think of other people being around. He kissed her, and all the boys turned their faces away, and Peanut rubbed the back of his hand suspiciously across his eyes.

"Guess he's glad we've got her safe in here," Peanut whispered—or rather he spoke in what was merely a loud tone, which amounted to a whisper with the gale howling so outside.

"I guess we're all glad we're in here," Frank replied. "Look out there!"

They looked through the window into what at first appeared to be the thick cotton batting of the cloud, but closer inspection showed them that it was snow. The cloud was condensing into snow!

"Whew!" Peanut whistled, while the tiny cabin gave a shiver as if it were going to be lifted from its foundations.

"Lord, what a gale!" said somebody else.

There was silence in the hut. Everybody was listening to the wind. It was howling outside, seeming to sing over the loose stones of the mountain top, and wail through the chinks of the tiny cabin. It blew incessantly, but every few seconds a stronger gust would come, and as if a giant hand had sud-

denly hit it, the cabin would shiver to its foundations. And outside was only a great white opacity of snow and cloud!

"Well, well!" cried Mr. Rogers, suddenly, in a cheerful voice, "here we are safe and snug—almost too snug. It's lunch time. It's past lunch time. Why shouldn't we eat? We'll all feel better if we eat."

"How are we going to cook anything?" asked Art. "There's no stove, and no chimney."

"And no wood," said Rob.

"There's a little bit of wood outside the door. I saw it when we came in," said Frank.

"And a lot of good it would do," Art answered. "You couldn't even light it out there in that tornado."

"We've got some cold things," said the Scout Master. "Come on, out with that can of potted ham, and the crackers we bought in Franconia to eat bacon on, and some sweet chocolate. We'll do very nicely."

The Scouts soon had sandwiches made with the crackers and ham, and offered them first to the couple, who, wrapped in blankets, were shivering in the corner. The girl sat up, and she and the man each ate two sandwiches hungrily, and sweet chocolate beside. The girl's color began to come back.

“Do you feel better now, dear?” the man asked her. She nodded her head.

“Of course she does,” said Mr. Rogers. “I’ll tell you something now that we are safe in the shelter. There was no time nor chance to tell you out there. I was too busy keeping the trail. It’s this:—about half the trouble on mountains like this comes from funk, just as half the drownings occur from the same cause. Not only do you lose your way much more easily when you get terrified, but your vitality is lowered, and the cold and exhaustion get you quicker. If you keep cool, and your heart is beating steadily, normally, your eye finds the trail better and your body resists the elements. That is why nobody ought to tackle this Bridle Path who isn’t familiar with the mountain, unless he is accompanied by some one who *is* familiar with it. And, unless the weather is good, nobody should tackle it without a food supply. In fact, I’d go so far as to say they never should, for you can’t depend on the weather here for half a day at a time, or even an hour.”

“I realize that now,” the man said, soberly, as he shivered in his blanket. “They told us down at the Crawford House that it was going to be a gale up here to-day, but I’m afraid we didn’t realize what a gale on Washington meant. I don’t know what would have become of us if we hadn’t met you!”

"Oh, John, don't!" cried the girl, as if she was going to weep again.

"Well, I call it some adventure!" Peanut cried. "Gee, I'll bet we'll all talk about it when we get home! Mr. Rogers had me scared, all right, way back on Clinton, talking about storms and ——" (here Peanut, who was about to say "people killed in 'em," caught Rob's eye in warning, and added instead) "—— and things. When the clouds hit us, my heart came up into my mouth, and then went down into my boots like a busted elevator, and I got kind of cold all over. I can see how, if I'd been alone, that would have knocked the legs out from under me, all right. But there was Mr. Rogers keeping the trail, so I just plugged along—and here we are! Say, I'm going out in the snow! Snow in July! Hooray! Come on, Art!"

Peanut and Art opened the narrow slit of a door wrapping their blankets close about them while Mr. Rogers shouted to them not to go out of sight of the cabin, and stood outside in the icy cloud. Rob, watching them through the window, saw them scooping the thin layer of snow off a rock, and moulding it into a snowball apiece, which they threw at each other. He could see their mouths opening, as if they were shouting, but the howling of the gale drowned all sound. A few minutes later they came in again, their faces and hands red.

"Say, it's cold out there!" cried Art, "but the wind is going down a bit, I think, and it looks lighter in the north."

"It wouldn't surprise me if it cleared up in an hour," said Mr. Rogers, "and it wouldn't surprise me if we had to stay here all night."

"All night!" cried the girl. "Oh, John, we've *got* to get down to-night. Oh, where will mother think we are! They'll know we were in the storm, too, and worry. Oh, dear!"

She began to sob again, and the man endeavored to comfort her.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Rogers, rather sternly, "you've got to make the best of a bad bargain. If we can get to the Summit House later in the day, you can telephone down to the base. Where are your family?"

"They were at Fabyans," the man answered. "We were all going to Bethlehem this afternoon, after the train got down the mountain. You see. Miss Brown and I wanted to walk up the Crawford Bridle Path, and catch the train down. We started very early. A friend of ours walked it last summer in three hours and a half."

"Some walking!" said Peanut.

"Well, it's been done in two hours and thirty minutes," the Scout Master replied. "But it was **done** in that time by two men, college athletes, in

running drawers, and they were trained for mountain climbing, into the bargain. And they had clear weather to the top. Whoever told you that you could make it ought to have a licking. Of course your family will worry, but you—and they—will have to stand it, as the price of your foolhardiness. We are not going out of this hut while the storm lasts, that's sure !”

Something in Mr. Rogers' stern tone seemed to brace the girl suddenly up. She stopped sobbing, and said, “Very well, I suppose there's nothing to do but wait.”

Then she rose to her feet, and stamped around a bit on her lame ankle, to keep it from getting stiffened up too much, and to warm her blood, besides.

“I'd like to know what the thermometer is,” said Frank. “Must be below freezing, that's sure.”

Rob was looking out of the window. “I'm not so sure,” he answered. “It has stopped snowing now. Say! I believe it's getting lighter !”

He opened the door and slipped out of the hut into the cloud. A moment later he came back.

“The north is surely breaking !” he cried. “This cloud bank hasn't got far over the range. The north wind has fought it back. While I was watching, the wind seemed to tear a kind of hole in the cloud, and I saw a bit of the valley for a second. Come on out and watch !”

All the Scouts went outside, leaving the couple alone within. As soon as they got free of the lee side of the shelter, the gale hit them full force, the cloud condensing on their blankets, which they had hard work to keep wrapped about them. But the sight well repaid the effort. The wind was playing a mad game with the vapors on the whole north side of the range. The great cloud mass below them was thinner than it had been. They could see for several hundred feet along the bare or snow-and-ice capped rocks, which looked wild and desolate beyond description. Farther away, where the rocks were swallowed up in the mists, was a seething caldron of clouds, driven in wreaths and spirals by the wind. Suddenly a lane would open between them, and the rocks would be exposed far down the mountain. As suddenly the lane would close up again. Then it would once more open, perhaps so wide and far that a glimpse of green valley far below would come for a second into view. Once the top of Mount Dartmouth was visible for a full minute. Still later, looking northeast, the great northern shoulder of Mount Clay appeared.

“The clouds are not far down on the north side of the range, that’s a fact,” said Mr. Rogers. “With this north wind still blowing we may get it clear enough to tackle the peak yet. But we don’t want to stand out here in the cold too long.”

Everybody went back to the shelter and waited another half hour, which seemed more like two hours, as Peanut said. Then somebody went out again to reconnoitre, and returned with the information that the cloud was lifting still more, and the northern valley was visible. In another half hour even from within the cabin they could see it was very perceptibly lighter. The hurricane had subsided to a steady gale, which Rob estimated at forty miles an hour, by tossing a bit of paper into the air and watching the speed of its flight. It was warmer, too, though still very chilling in the fireless cabin. In another half hour you could walk some distance from the cabin without losing sight of it, and Peanut and Art went down to the spring behind for water. Then Mr. Rogers took the Scouts back on the trail a short distance and showed them a peep of the two Lakes of the Clouds back on the col toward Monroe.

"We were going to have lunch by those lakes," he said. "I wanted to show you several interesting things about them. But they'll have to wait. It's a regular Alpine garden down there, and it's coming into flower now. If we get a good day to-morrow, we can take it in, though."

"Look," cried Lou, suddenly, "there's Monroe coming out of the cloud!"

"And there's Franklin behind it!" cried Frank.

“And there’s a misty bright spot where the sun is!” cried Peanut.

They hastened back toward the shelter to carry the news to the couple within, and even as they walked the clouds seemed to be rolled up by the wind from the northern slopes, and blown off toward the south. Before long, the whole Crawford Trail behind them was practically free from cloud, and the sun, very faint and hazy, was making a soft dazzle on the powder of frost upon the rocks, for the snow was little more than a heavy frost. To the north, they could again see the valley, and the Dartmouth range beyond it, and peaks still farther away, with the sunlight on them.

But the entire summit cone of Washington was still invisible. Standing in front of the shelter, they looked along a plateau of granite and saw it end in a solid mass of cloud.

“Oh, does that mean we can’t go on?” cried the girl.

Mr. Rogers looked at her. “How do you feel?” he said.

“Lame and cold,” she answered, “but I can do it!”

“Well, I feel pretty sure that this storm is over for the day,” the Scout Master replied. “But those clouds will probably take all night to blow off Washington. I can keep the path, I feel pretty sure. It

is plain after you reach the actual cone. And, anyhow, we've got time enough to circle the cone till we reach the railroad trestle, if worst comes to worst. I guess you'd be better off at the top. Shoulder packs, boys!"

He looked at his watch. It was half-past three. "Now, less than two miles! Keep moving briskly. There's nothing to fear now. This storm is over, I'm sure. A fire waits on top!"

They started out at a good pace over the plateau of Bigelow Lawn, Lou looking eagerly at the numerous wild flowers in the rock crannies. The snow was already melting, but it only made the trail the more slippery, and this, coupled with the high wind, made walking difficult. The girl and her companion had no poles, so Rob and Art lent them theirs, and Rob walked beside the girl to help her over bad places.

A third of a mile above the refuge they came upon the Boott Spur Trail, leading off to the right, down the long ridge of the spur, southward.

"Tuckerman's Ravine is in there, to the east of Boott Spur," said the Scout Master. "It seems to be filled with clouds now."

The clouds, however, were off the spur, and though now, as the summit path swung rather sharply toward the north and began to go up steeply, they were entering into the vapor about the

cone of Washington, it was much less dense than during the morning, and they could see the path ahead without much difficulty. This path was something like a trench in the rocks, apparently made by picking up loose stones and piling them on either side till the bottom was smooth enough to walk on—or, rather, not too rough to walk on.

“This path’s a cinch now,” said Peanut, going into the lead.

Every one, however, as the trail grew steeper and steeper, began to pant, and pause often for breath.

“What’s the matter with my wind?” asked Art. “Is it the fog in my lungs?”

“It’s the altitude,” Mr. Rogers laughed. “It oughtn’t to bother you boys much, though. You are young. I’m the one who should be short breathered. The older you get, the less ready your heart is to respond to high altitudes.”

“I don’t mind it,” sang back Peanut. “Art feels it because he’s so fat!”

They toiled on a few moments more in silence, and then Lou suddenly exclaimed, “Look! a junco!”

Sure enough, out from under a rock was hopping a junco. Art went toward it, and looking under the rock found the nest.

“Well!” he said. “What do you think of that! A junco nesting on the ground!”

"Where else would he nest here?" Lou laughed. "But juncos are winter birds, I thought."

"Well, ain't this winter weather enough for you today?" said Art.

"The top of Washington is said to be about the climate of Labrador," Mr. Rogers put in. "That's why some juncos always spend the summer here instead of going farther north."

Lou was watching the pretty gray and white bird, as it hopped excitedly over the rocks, almost invisible sometimes against the bare gray granite, and in the whitish mist. "That junco is protectively colored on these rocks, all right," he said. "But gee, he looks kind of lonely way up here!"

"Lonely!" exclaimed Frank. "I must say, this whole place is the most desolate looking thing I ever saw—nothing but big hunks of granite piled every which way, and no sun and no sky and no earth below you. I feel kind of as if we were the only people in the whole world."

"So do I," said Peanut. "I like it, though! Way up in the clouds above everybody—not a sound but the win ——"

Just at that moment, seemingly from the gray cloud over their heads, rang out the call of a bugle!

Everybody stopped short, and exclaimed, "What's that?"

“We aren’t up to the top yet,” said Mr. Rogers. “Somebody must be coming down.”

“Hello, yourself!” yelled Peanut, at the top of his lungs.

There was a sharp toot on the bugle, and as the Scouts moved forward up the trail, they presently saw dim figures above them, moving down. A moment later and the parties met. The newcomers were five men, with packs and poles. One of them had a bugle slung from his shoulder.

“Is Miss Alice Brown in your party?” they called as soon as they came in sight.

“Here I am,” the girl said. “What is it?”

She had gone white again, and hung on Rob’s arm.

“We’re looking for you, that’s all,” said the five men, as the parties met. “Is your companion here?”

“I’m here—we’re both here, thanks to these boys and their leader,” the man replied. “How did you know we were coming up?”

“How did we know?” said the man with the bugle. “Miss Brown’s parents have been spending \$7,333,641.45 telephoning to the summit to find out if you had arrived. As soon as we got word that the lower ridges had cleared, we started down to look for you.”

“Oh, poor mamma!” cried the girl.

"Well, she'll be waiting for you with her ear glued to the other end of the wire when you get up—never fear," the bugler said. Then he turned to Mr. Rogers. "Where did you ride her out? The shelter?" he asked.

"Yes," the Scout Master replied. "That shelter certainly justified itself to-day."

"Good!" said the other. "Score one more for the Appalachian Club. It was the worst July storm I ever saw on the mountain. A hundred miles an hour on top, and the thermometer down to twenty-two."

He moved on up the trail beside Mr. Rogers and one or two of the Scouts.

"Greenhorns, of course?" he queried, in a low tone, nodding back toward the man and girl. "Tried it without any food, or enough clothes, or even a compass, I'll bet?"

"Exactly," the Scout Master answered. "They were following us—expected to make the top in time to catch the train down. Thought it was a pleasant morning stroll, I suppose. They caught us under Monroe, when the weather was first thickening up nasty. The girl had wrenched her ankle, and it seemed wiser to make the shelter than to try to get back to the Mount Pleasant trail, and then way down Pleasant to Bretton Woods, in the teeth of the gale."

"Quite right," said the other. "Did you have any trouble with the path?"

"A good deal," Mr. Rogers answered. "Art, here, and I were picking it up, and we didn't let on, but it was hard work, especially with that icy gale in your face. It ought to have at least double the number of cairns between Monroe and the summit cone. I really thought I'd lost it once, but we picked up the next cairn before we got nervous."

"You're right," said the bugler. "You're quite right. They've neglected this fine old path for the paths on the north peaks. And it's more dangerous than any of the north peaks, too. It ought to be remarked."

As he spoke, they came suddenly into what looked like an old cellar hole in the rocks.

"The corral where the horses used to be hitched after they'd come up the Bridle Path," said the man. "We're almost there, now."

The path became more nearly level, and very soon, through the cloud, they could make out what looked like the end of a wooden bridge. A moment later, and they saw it was the end of a railroad trestle. Another minute, and through the vapors they saw emerge a house, a curious, long, low house, built of stone, with a wooden roof. The house was shaped just like a Noah's ark.

"The summit!" cried Mr. Rogers. "There's the old Tip Top House!"

The Scouts gave a yell, and jumped upon the

platform at the top of the railroad. From this platform a board walk led up to the door of the Tip Top House. Across the track, steps led down to a barn and a second house, the coach house at the top of the carriage road, which ascends the eastern slope of the mountain.

The girl, as Rob and her fiancé helped her up on the platform, gave a weary sigh, almost a sob, and then, hobbling on her lame ankle, she tried to run up the walk to the Tip Top House. The boys followed a little more slowly, looking first at the cellar hole where the old Summit Hotel used to stand (it was burned down in 1908) and where a new hotel will have been built before this story is published.

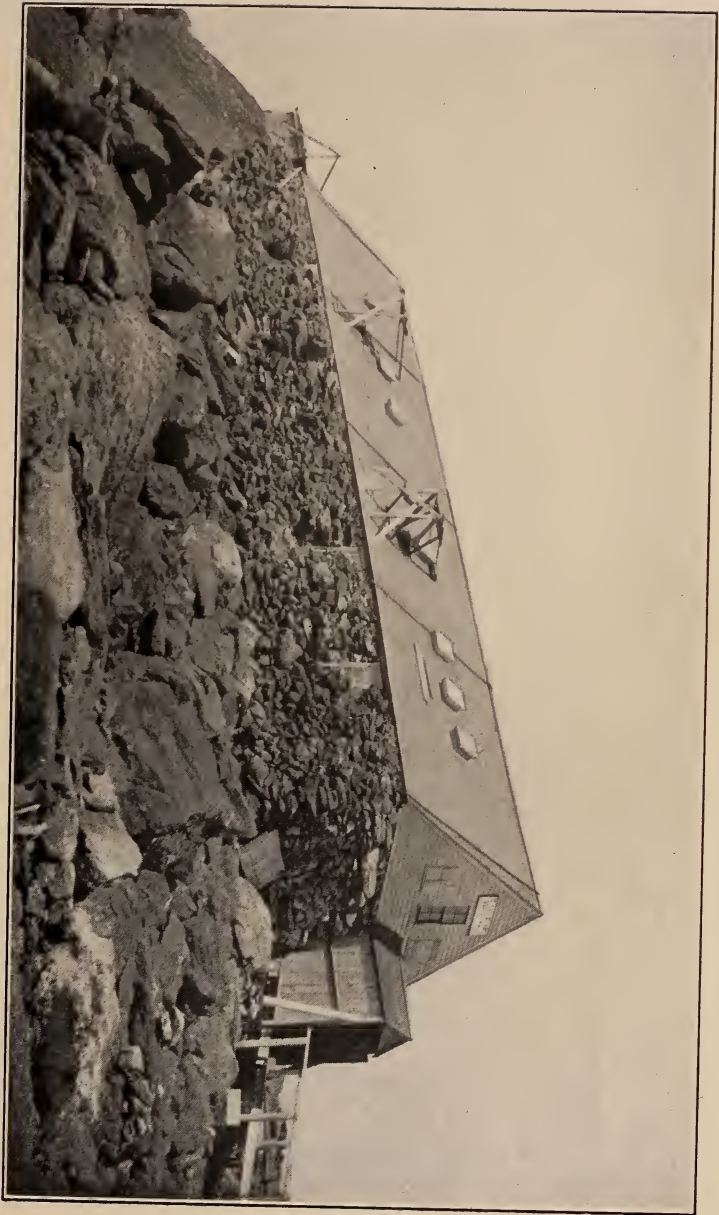
It was nearly half-past five when they entered the long, low room of the Tip Top House, and felt the sudden warmth of a wood-fire roaring in a great iron stove.

Dumping their packs in a corner, the boys made for this stove, and held out their hands toward the warmth.

"Gee, it feels good," said Peanut.

"Feels good on my legs, all right," said Frank.
"I'm kind o' stiff and tired, I don't mind saying."

The girl had disappeared. She had already talked to her mother at the foot of the mountain by the telephone which runs down the railroad trestle, and the wife of the proprietor of the Tip Top House had taken her up-stairs to put her to bed.



“It all depends on what winds Father Aeolus keeps chained, perhaps in the deep caverns of the Great Gulf,
or which ones he lets loose to rattle the chains of the Tip Top House.”

"I guess she'll sleep all right to-night," said the man with the bugle, who had entered with the boys.

"And she won't tackle the Crawford Bridle Path with high heeled shoes on very soon again, either!" said Rob. "Are we going to sleep here, too, Mr. Rogers? I don't believe we'll want to sleep outside. The thermometer by that window is still down almost to freezing."

The man with the bugle whispered to them, so the proprietor wouldn't hear, "Don't stay here. They'll stick you for supper and put you in rooms where you can't get any air. The windows are made into the roof, and don't open. I got a horrible cold from sleeping here last year. Guess they never air the bedding. We are all down at the coach house. You may have to sleep on the floor, but the window will be open, and you can cook your own grub on the stove."

"That's us!" said Peanut. "Say, we want to get some sweet chocolate first, though, and some post-cards, don't we?"

The Scouts all piled over to the long counter at one side of the room, and stocked up with sweet chocolate, and also wrote and mailed post-cards, to be sent down on the train the next day. The summit of Washington in summer is a regular United States post-office, and you can have mail delivered there, if you want.

"Be sure you don't scare your families with lurid accounts of to-day!" Mr. Rogers cautioned them. "Better save that till you're safe home."

"Why don't you write out a little account of your adventure for *Among the Clouds?*" said the proprietor. "You can have copies sent to your homes, if you leave before it comes out."

"What's *Among the Clouds?*" the boys asked.

He picked up a small eight page newspaper. "Printed at the base every day," he said. "It was printed on top here, till the hotel burned. All the arrivals at the summit are put in daily."

"You write the story, Rob," cried Art. "When will it be printed?"

"Make it short, and I can telephone it down for to-morrow," the man said.

"Fine! We'll all take two copies," said Peanut. "Save 'em for us. We'll be around here for two or three days. Hooray, we're going to be in the paper!"

"You might all register over there while the story is being written," said the proprietor.

Rob took a pencil and piece of paper and sat down by the stove to write, while the rest walked over to the register. There were very few entries for that day, as you can guess. The top of the page (the day before) showed, however, the names of two automobile parties, who had written, in large letters

under their names, the make of the cars they had come up the mountain in.

"Gee, how silly," said Art.

"Wait," said Peanut, his eyes twinkling, "till *I* register."

He wrote his name last, and under it he printed, in big, heavy letters :

Smith and Jerome's Shoes.

"There," he cried, "that's the motor *I* came up in! Good ad. for old Smith and Jerome, eh? Might as well advertise our Southmead store-keepers."

The man with the bugle, who was standing behind the boys, peeked over at the register, and roared with laughter.

"You're all right, kid!" he said. "I wish the motor parties could see it. It would serve 'em right for boasting about owning a car. Besides, that's the lazy loafer's way of climbing a mountain. If I were boss, I'd dynamite the carriage road and the railroad, and then nobody could get here but folks who knew how to walk."

"You're like the man on Moosilauke," said Lou.

"I'm like all true mountaineers," he answered.

"And Scouts," said Peanut.

Rob had now finished a brief account of their

adventure on the Crawford Bridle Path, and the proprietor went up-stairs to find out the name of the man they had rescued. The girl's name they already knew.

"Don't say we rescued them, Rob," Mr. Rogers cautioned. "Say they overtook us at Monroe, and we all went on together, because we had blankets and provisions."

"That's what I have *said*," laughed Rob. "But it doesn't alter the facts."

The proprietor came back with the name, and Rob added to the man with the bugle, "And the names of your party, too?"

"Say five trampers," the other answered. "I'll tell you our names later. We aren't essential to the story."

"But I would like to know why you have the bugle," said Rob.

"I'll tell you that later, also," the man laughed.

Rob turned his little account over to the proprietor, and the party left the warm house, and went out again into the cloud and the chilling wind.

It was almost like stepping out upon the deck of a ship in a heavy fog. They could see the board walk ahead, as far as the railroad platform—and that was all. The rest of the world was blotted out. The wind was wailing in the telephone wires and through the beams of the railroad trestle, just as it

wails through the rigging of a ship. It was getting dark, too. The boys shivered, and nobody suggested any exploring.

"Me for supper, and bunk," said Peanut.

They crossed the railroad with its cog rail between the two wheel rails, and descended a long flight of steps. At the bottom was the end of the carriage road, which they could see disappearing into the cloud to the east, a barn on the left, chained down to the rocks, and on the right a square, two-story building, the carriage house.

Inside, a lamp was already lighted, and the four men who had come down the mountain with the bugler, as well as the evident proprietor of the house, were sitting about the stove, which was crammed with wood and roaring hotly

"Well?" said the four, as the Scouts and the bugler entered. "Any more people to go down and rescue?"

The bugler shook his head. "Haven't heard of any," he said. "There's no word of any one else trying the Crawford Path to-day. Anybody that tackled Tuckerman's will certainly have had sense enough to stay in the camp. That party who came over the Gulf Side this morning with us decided to go down the carriage road, they tell me. I guess we've got this place to ourselves."

"Oh, it's a good, soft floor," one of the men

laughed. "You boys don't mind a good, soft floor, do you?"

"Not a bit," said Peanut. "I always sleep on the floor—prefer it, in fact."

The others laughed, and the Scouts got off their packs, spread their blankets out to dry, and took off their sweaters.

Then everybody began to prepare for supper. The proprietor of the coach house moved out a table, and put some boards across it to make it larger. The Scouts compared provisions with the five trampers, and found that the strangers had coffee which the boys were rather shy on, and condensed milk, which the boys didn't have at all, while the boys had powdered eggs and dehydrated vegetables, which the strangers didn't have. There wasn't time enough, however, to soak the vegetables.

"You make us coffee, and we'll make you an omelet," said Art. "That's a fair swap. I'll cook griddle cakes for the bunch."

"More than fair," said the bugler. "It's taking a whole meal from you chaps, while we have more than enough coffee. Here, use some of our minced ham in that omelet."

"Just the thing!" said Art. "We ate most of ours in the shelter." He began at once to mix the omelet.

In a short time the party of eleven (the proprietor

cooked his supper later) sat down to the rough table, with bouillon cube soup first, and then steaming coffee, omelet made with minced ham, griddle cakes flavored with butter and sugar furnished by the proprietor, and sweet chocolate for dessert.

For a time nobody said much. The men and boys were all hungry, and they were busy putting away the delicious hot food.

"Nothing could keep me awake to-night," said Peanut, presently. "May I have another cup of coffee?"

"Who else wants more?" asked the bugler, who was pouring.

"Me," said Art.

"And me," said the bugler.

"And me," said Mr. Rogers.

"And me," said one of the men.

"And I," said Rob, whereupon the rest all burst out laughing, and Rob looked surprised, for he hadn't intended to rebuke them by using correct grammar.

"You see the advantages of a college education, gentlemen," cried Mr. Rogers, while poor Rob turned red.

It was a merry meal. After it was over, the five men pulled pipes out of their pockets, and puffed contentedly, while the boys sat about the stove, and Peanut said:

"Now, Mr. Bugler, tell us why you have the bugle."

Much to the boys' surprise, the man addressed blushed.

"Gee, you boys will laugh at me!" he said, like a boy himself. "But I'll tell you. I toted this bugle up from Randolph yesterday. We came in around through the Great Gulf, and up the Six Husbands' Trail ——"

"Some trail, too!" the other four put in.

"—— and back over Adams to the Madison Hut. We spent last night there, and came over the Gulf Side this morning. We'd reached Clay before the bad weather hit us. The summit cone held it back. And we got to the carriage road before it got so thick that you couldn't see at all. Lord, how the wind blew coming around Clay! Honestly, I didn't know if we could make it."

"But the bugle?" said Peanut.

"Oh, yes, the bugle. I was forgetting the bugle, wasn't I?"

"You were—maybe," said Peanut.

The rest laughed.

"Well, now I'll tell you about the bugle," the speaker went on. "When I was in college a chap roomed next to me who could punt a football farther than anybody I ever knew ——"

"How far?" asked Art.

"Well, I've seen him cover seventy yards," was the answer.

"Some punt!" cried Peanut. "Did that make you buy a bugle?"

"Say, who's telling the story?" the man said. "No, it didn't make me buy a bugle, but this chap who could punt so far bought a cornet. What do you suppose he bought a cornet for?"

"I can't imagine why *anybody* should buy a cornet," put in one of the other men.

"Shut up, Tom," said the bugler. "Well, he bought a cornet so he could learn to play it, and after he had learned to play it (keeping everybody in the dormitory from studying while he learned, too!), he spent a summer vacation in the Rocky Mountains, and carried that cornet up to the highest peaks that he could climb, and played it. He learned to play it just for that—just for the joy of hearing horn music float out into the great spaces of the sky. Also, he made echoes with it against the cliffs while he was climbing up. After that summer he never played it again."

"Why didn't he see how far he could punt a football from the top of Pike's Peak?" Peanut grinned.

"He used up all his breath playing the cornet, and couldn't blow up the ball," said the man.

Lou wasn't taking this story as a joke, however

"And you brought your bugle up here, to play it from the top of Washington?" he asked. "I think that's fine. Gee, I wish you'd go out and play taps before we go to bed!"

The man looked at Lou keenly. "So *you* understand!" he said. "These Philistines with me don't, and your young friend Peanut there doesn't. They have no music in their souls, have they? You and I will go outside presently, and play taps to the circumambient atmosphere."

"Some language," snickered Peanut. "What we'll need isn't taps, though, but reveille to-morrow."

"Cheer up, you'll get that all right," the man laughed.

They all sat for a while discussing the day's adventure, and planning for the next day, if it was clear. The five men were going down over the Davis Path, and as that path leads along Boott Spur, the Scouts decided to go with them, leaving them at the end of the spur, the Scouts to descend for the night into Tuckerman's Ravine, while the others kept on southwest, over the Giant's Stairs, to the lower end of Crawford Notch.

"But we want to visit the Lakes of the Clouds first," said the Scout Master. "We scarcely got a peep at 'em to-day."

"Suits us," said the man called Tom. "We'll

have time, if we start early. I'd like to see the Alpine garden myself."

"And now for taps," cried the bugler.

He and Lou got up, and went out-of-doors. The rest followed, but the first pair slipped away quickly into the cloud, going down the carriage road till the lamp of the coach house was invisible.

The universe was deathly still save for the continual moaning of the wind. There was nothing at all visible, either stars above, or valley lamps below—nothing but a damp, chilly *white darkness*. Lou was silent, awed. The man set his bugle to his lips, and blew—blew the sweet, sad, solemn notes of taps.

As they rose above the moaning of the wind and seemed to float off into space, Lou's heart tingled in his breast. As the last note died sweetly away, there were tears in his eyes—he couldn't say why. But something about taps always made him sad, and now, in this strange setting up in the clouds, the tears actually came. The man saw, and laid a hand in silence on his shoulder.

"You understand," he said, presently, as they moved back up the road, and that was all he said.

Back in the coach house, the proprietor showed them all the available cots up-stairs. There were two shy, so Art and Peanut insisted on sleeping down-stairs by the stove. They wabbed up an extra

blanket or two for a bed, made their sweaters into pillows, and almost before the lamp was blown out, they were as fast asleep as if they had been lying on feathers.

CHAPTER XII

DOWN TUCKERMAN'S RAVINE

BUT while it is comparatively easy to go to sleep on the floor, it is not so easy to stay asleep on it. Both Art and Peanut awoke more than once during the night, and shifted to the other shoulder. Finally, toward morning, Art got up and tiptoed to the window, to look out. He came back and shook Peanut.

"Whaz-a-matter?" said Peanut, sleepily.

"Get up, and I'll show you," Art whispered.

Peanut roused himself, and joined Art at the window.

Outside the stars were shining! But that was not all. Art pointed down the carriage road, and far below, on the black shadow of the mountain Peanut saw what looked like bobbing stars fallen to the ground. These stars were evidently drawing nearer.

"Well, what do you make of that!" he exclaimed.

"Bless me if I know. It's evidently somebody coming up the road with lanterns."

The two boys slipped noiselessly into their shoes, and struck a match to look at their watches.

"Quarter to four," said Art. "The sun will rise

in half an hour. Gee, I'd like to get that bugle and wake 'em up!"

"The owner's using it himself, I should say," whispered Peanut, as the sound of a snore came from the room above. They looked about, but the man had evidently taken his bugle up-stairs with him, so they slipped out through the door to investigate the bobbing lanterns coming up the mountain.

It was cold outside, and still dark, but they could make out dimly the track of the carriage road, and walked down it. The lanterns were drawing nearer, and now they could hear voices. A moment later, and they met the lantern bearers, a party of nearly a dozen men and women.

"Hello, boys! Where did you drop from?" cried the man in the lead, suddenly spying Art and Peanut.

"Where did you come up from?" Peanut replied.

"We walked up from the Glen cottage to see the sunrise," the other replied.

"Oh, dear, I should say we did!" sighed a woman in the party. "If you ever catch me climbing a mountain again in the middle of the night, send me to Matteawan at once."

"Cheer up, Lizzie, we'll have some sandwiches pretty soon," somebody told her.

"Sandwiches for breakfast! Worse and worse!" she sighed. "I don't believe there's going to be any sunrise, either. I don't see any signs of it."

"Let's shake this bunch," Art whispered to Peanut. "They give me a pain."

The boys ran back, ahead, to the coach house, entered once more, and bolted the door behind them, lest the new party try to get in.

"Golly, we've *got* to get that bugle, and have the laugh on whatever his name is—he didn't tell us, did he? I'm going up after it," said Peanut.

He kicked off his shoes, and started on tiptoe up the stairs. Art heard the floor creak overhead, and then he heard a smothered laugh.

A moment later the man appeared with the bugle in one hand, and Peanut's ear in the other. Peanut was still attached to the ear, and he was trying hard not to laugh out loud.

"Caught you red-handed," said the man. "Hello, there, Art! You up too? How's the weather?"

"Fine," said Art. "Come on out and wake 'em all up."

The man looked at his watch, then at the sky through the window. The east was already light. The stars were paling. You could see out over the bare rock heaps of the mountain top.

"Come on!" he said.

The three went outdoors. The party with lanterns had already passed the coach house and climbed the steps to the summit. They could be heard up there, talking. The man and the boys

went around to the south of the coach house, out of sight of the summit, and setting his bugle to his lips, tipping it upward toward the now rosy east, the man pealed out the gay, stirring notes of reveille.

"Oh, do it again!" cried Peanut. "Gee, I like it up here! I know now why you brought the bugle."

The man smiled, and blew reveille again.

Before the last notes had died away, they heard stampings in the house behind them, and cries of "Can it!" "Say, let a feller sleep, won't you?" "Aw, cut out the music!"

"Get up, you stiffs, and see the sun rise!" shouted Peanut. "Going to be a grand day!"

Five minutes later the Scouts and the men were all out of the coach house, on the rocks beside Art and Peanut.

"It *is* a good day, that's a fact," said Mr. Rogers. "Where's the best place to see the sun rise?"

"I'd suggest the top of the mountain," said the bugler.

It was light now. The east was rosy, and as they looked down southward over the piles of bare, tumbled rock toward Tuckerman's Ravine, they could see masses of white cloud, like cotton batting. Up the steps they all hurried, and found the lantern party eating sandwiches in the shelter of the **Tip Top House**, out of the wind.

"They'd rather eat than see the sun rise," sniffed Art.

"Maybe you would, if you'd spent the night walking up the carriage road," laughed somebody.

Peanut led the way to the highest rock he could find, and they looked out upon the now fast lightening world.

Northward, far out beyond the great shoulders of the mountain, they could see glimpses of the lower hills and valleys. But all nearer the mountain was hidden by the low white cloud beneath their feet. To the northeast and east was nothing but cloud, about a thousand feet below them. The same was true to the south. Southwestward, over the long shoulders of the Crawford Bridle Path, where they had climbed the day before, lay the same great blanket of white wool.

"Say, this peak of Washington looks just like a great rock island in the sea," cried Lou.

Now the world was almost bright as day. The east was rosy, the upper sky blue, the stars gone. The great white ocean of cloud below them heaved and eddied under the gusts of northwest wind which swept down from the summit, wherever a wave crest rose above the level. The sun, a great red ball, appeared in the east, and the bugler set his bugle to his lips and blew a long blast of welcome.

It was a wonderful, a beautiful spectacle. As they

watched, the clouds below them heaved and stirred, and seemed to thin out here and there, and suddenly to the northeast a second rock island, shaped like a pyramid, appeared to rise out of the pink and white sea.

"Hello, there's Jefferson!" cried one of the men.

Then a second island, also a peak of bare rock, rose beyond Jefferson.

"And there's Adams," said Mr. Rogers.

"And there's Madison," said the bugler, as a third peak rose up from the cloud sea, beyond Adams.

"What is between those peaks and the shoulder of Washington I see running northeast?" asked Frank.

"The Great Gulf," one of the men replied. "There must have been a heavy dew in the Gulf last night. It's packed full of clouds."

"Probably got soaked with the rain yesterday, too," somebody else said. "The clouds will get out of it before long, though. They are coming up fast."

Even as he spoke, one rose like a long, white finger over the head wall of the Gulf, stretched out to the gray water-tanks of the railroad and almost before any one could speak, it blew cold into the faces of the party on the summit.

"Hello, cloud!" said Peanut, making a swipe with his hand at the white mist. "Does that mean bad weather again?" he added.



Cataract of clouds pouring over the Northern Peaks into the Great Gulf, seen from the summit
of Mount Washington

“No, they’re just rising from the gulfs. They’ll blow off before we start, I fancy,” one of the trampers said. “It’s the clouds which come down, or come from the plains, which make the trouble. Come on, breakfast now! If we are going to make a side trip to the Lakes of the Clouds with you Scouts, we’ve got to get an early start, for our path down over the Giant’s Stairs is fifteen or twenty miles long, and hard to find, in the bargain.”

As they went, however, a look away from the sun showed the shadow of Washington cast over the clouds westward as far as the eye could see. Peanut waved his arm. “The shadow of that gesture was on the side of Lafayette!” he cried.

Breakfast was prepared as quickly as possible, the boys furnishing powdered eggs, the men bacon and coffee. Then, after they had paid the keeper of the coach house for their night’s lodging, the combined parties shouldered packs, went back up the steps in a thin white cloud, stocked up with sweet chocolate at the Tip Top House, and still in the cloud set off southwest down the summit cone, by the Crawford Bridle Path.

The descent was rapid. The cone is a thousand feet high, but they were soon on Bigelow Lawn, and though the white mists were still coming up over the ridge from the gulfs below, they were thin here, and the sunlight flashed in, and below them they

could see the green intervale of Bretton Woods, shining in full morning light.

"Rather more cheerful than yesterday," said Frank.

"Ra-ther," cried Peanut.

At the junction of the Boott Spur Trail, everybody unloaded all baggage, and the packs and blankets were piled under a boulder. Then they hurried on down the Bridle Path, past the refuge hut which had been such a friend the day before, and soon reached the larger of the two Lakes of the Clouds, which lies just north of the Crawford Trail, on the very edge of the Monroe-Washington col, exactly two miles below the summit. The larger lake is perhaps half an acre in extent, the smaller hardly a third of that size.

"These lakes are the highest east of the Rocky Mountains," said Mr. Rogers. "They are 5,053 feet above sea level."

"And a deer has been drinking in this one," said Art, pointing to a hoof mark in the soft, deep moss at the margin.

"Sure enough!" one of the men said. "He must have come up from timber line, probably over from Oakes Gulf."

"You remember, boys," Mr. Rogers said, "that I told you I was going to show you the head waters of a river? Well, we saw one at the Crawford House

—the head of the Saco. This lake is one of the head waters of the Ammonoosuc, which is the biggest northern tributary of the Connecticut.”

“It’s a bit cleaner than the Connecticut is at Hartford or Springfield,” laughed Rob. “My, it’s like pure glass! Look, you can see every stick and piece of mica on the bottom.”

“And it’s cold, too!” cried Art, as he dipped his hand in.

“Now, let’s look at the Alpine wild flowers as we go back,” said the bugler. “They are what interest me most.”

The party turned toward the path again, and they became aware that almost every crevice between the loose stones was full of rich moss of many kinds, and this moss had made bits of peaty soil in which the wild flowers grew. There were even a few dwarfed spruces, three or four feet high, all around the border of the lake.

The wild flowers were now in full bloom.

“It’s spring up here, you know, in early July,” said the bugler. “Look at all those white sandwort blossoms, like a snow-storm. What pretty little things they are, like tiny white cups.”

“What’s the yellow one?” asked Lou, who was always interested in plants.

“That’s the geum,” the man replied. “Look at the root leaves—they are just like kidneys.”

"It's everywhere," said Lou. "Look, it even grows in cracks half-way up the rocks."

The man also pointed out the tiny stars of the *Houstonia*, which interested the boys, because their Massachusetts home was near the Housatonic River. But the botanist assured them that there was no connection between the names, the flower being named for a botanist named Houston, while the river's name is Indian.

There were several other kinds of flowers here, too, as well as grasses, and conspicuous among them was the Indian poke, sticking up its tall stalk three feet in the boggy hollows between rocks, its roots in the wet tundra moss, with yellowish-green blossoms at the top.

"Well, who'd ever guess so many things could live way up here, on the rocks!" Lou exclaimed. "But I like the little sandwort best. That's the one which gets nearest the top of Washington, isn't it?"

"It's the only one which gets there, except the grass, I believe," the bugler answered.

Everybody picked a few sandwort cups, and stuck them in his hat band or buttonhole, and thus arrayed they reached once more the junction of the Boott Spur Trail, shouldered packs, and set off southward, down the long, rocky shoulder of the spur, which pushes out from the base of the summit cone.

The sun was now high. The clouds had stopped coming up over the head walls of the ravines. They could see for miles, even to the blue ramparts of Lafayette and Moosilauke in the west and southwest. Directly south they looked over a billowing sea of mountains and green, forest-covered valleys, a wilderness in which there was no sign of human beings. To their left was the deep hole of Tuckerman's Ravine, gouged out of the solid rock. Only the very summit of Washington behind them still wore a hood of white vapor.

It was only three-quarters of a mile to the nose of the spur, and they were soon there. Here the two parties were to divide, the boys going down to the left into the yawning hole of Tuckerman's Ravine, which they could now see plainly, directly below them, the other trampers turning to the southwest, for their long descent over the Davis Path and the Montalban range. At the nose of the spur was a big cairn, and out of it the bugler fished an Appalachian Mountain Club cylinder, opened it, and disclosed the register, upon which they all wrote their names. Then they all shook hands, the bugler blew a long blast on his bugle, and the Scouts watched their friends of the night go striding off down the Davis Path.

"Now, where do *we* go?" asked Art.

Mr. Rogers pointed down into Tuckerman's

Ravine, the wooded floor of which, sheltering the dark mirror of Hermit Lake, lay over fifteen hundred feet below them.

“Golly, where’s your parachute?” said Peanut.

“We don’t need a parachute,” Mr. Rogers laughed. “Here’s the path.”

The boys looked over into the pit. Across the ravine rose another precipitous wall, with a lump at the end called the Lion’s Head. The ravine itself was like a long, narrow horseshoe cut into the rocky side of Mount Washington—a horseshoe more than a thousand feet deep. They were on one side of the open end.

“Well, here goes!” cried Peanut, and he began to descend.

At first the trail went down over a series of levels, or steps, close to the edge of the precipice. At one point this precipice seemed actually to hang out over the gulf below, and it seemed as if they could throw a stone into Hermit Lake.

Peanut tried it, in fact, but the stone sailed out, descended, and disappeared, as if under the wall.

“These are the hanging cliffs,” said Mr. Rogers. “We’ll go down faster soon.”

Presently the path did swing back to the left, and began to drop right down the cliff side. The cliff wall wasn’t quite so steep as it had looked from above, and the path was perfectly possible for travel ;

but it was the steepest thing they had tackled yet, nonetheless, and it kept them so busy dropping down the thousand feet or more to the ravine floor that they could barely take time to glance at the great, white mass of snow packed into the semi-shadow under the head wall.

“Say, we are making some time, though!” Peanut panted, as he dropped his own length from one rock to the next.

“Faster ’n you’d make coming back,” laughed Lou.

The path soon dropped them into scrub spruce, which had climbed up the ravine side to meet them, and this stiff spruce grew taller and taller as they descended, till in less than fifteen minutes they were once more—for the first time since leaving the side of Clinton—in the woods. At the bottom of the cliff the path leveled out, crossed a brook twice, and brought them suddenly into another trail, leading up into the head of the ravine. Almost opposite was a sign pointing down another path to the Appalachian Mountain Club camp.

“We’ll leave our stuff there at the camp,” said Mr. Rogers, “and go see the snow arch before lunch, eh?”

“You bet!” the boys cried.

It was only a few minutes after ten. They had started so early from the summit of Washington that they still had the better part of the day before them. A few steps brought them to the camp, which was a

log and bark lean-to, with the back and sides enclosed, built facing the six or eight foot straight side of a huge boulder. This boulder side was black with the smoke of many fires. It was no more than four feet away from the front of the lean-to, so that a big fire, built against it, would throw back a lot of warmth right into the shelter. All about the hut were beautiful thick evergreens.

"That's a fine idea!" Art exclaimed. "You not only have your fire handy, and sheltered completely from the wind, but you get the full heat of it. Say, we must build a camp just like this when we get back!"

"Somebody was here last night," said Rob, inspecting the ashes in the stone fire pit. "Look, they are still wet. Soused their fire, all right."

"And left a bed of boughs—for two," added Peanut, peeping into the shelter.

"Let's leave our stuff, so we'll have first call on the cabin to-night," somebody else put in. "Will it be safe, though?"

"Sure," the Scout Master said—"safe from people, anyhow. The folks who tramp up here are honest, I guess. But I don't trust the hedgehogs too far. The last time I slept in Tuckerman's, five or six years ago, two of us camped out on the shore of Hermit Lake, and the hedgehogs ate holes in our rubber ponchos while we slept."

“Say, you must have slept hard—and done some dreaming!” laughed Peanut.

“Fact,” said Mr. Rogers; “cross my heart, hope to die!”

“Well, then let’s hang our blankets over this string,” said Art, indicating a stout cord strung near the roof from the two sides of the shelter.

They hung their blankets over the cord, stacked their packs in a corner, and set off up the trail toward the head wall of the ravine, nearly a mile away.

A few steps brought them to a sight of Hermit Lake, a pretty little sheet of water which looked almost black, it was so shallow and clear, with dark leaf-mould forming the bottom. It was entirely surrounded by the dark spires of the mountain spruces, and held their reflections like a mirror, and behind them the reflections of the great rocky walls of the ravine sides, and then the blue of the sky.

The path now began to ascend the inclined floor of the ravine, and the full grandeur of the spectacle burst upon the boys. Even Peanut was silent. It was the most impressive spot they had ever been in.

To their left the cliffs shot up a thousand feet to Boott Spur, to their right they went up almost as high to the Lion’s Head. And directly in front of them, curved in a semicircle, like the wall of a stadium, and carved out of the solid rock of the mountain, was the great head wall, in the half shadow at

its base a huge snow-bank glimmering white, on the tenth day of July. Above the snow-bank the rocks glistened and sparkled with hundreds of tiny water streams. All about, at the feet of the cliffs, and even down the floor of the ravine to the boys, lay piled up in wild confusion great heaps of rock masses, the debris hurled down from the precipitous walls by centuries of frost and storm.

"It looks like a gigantic natural colosseum," said Lou. "The head wall is curved just like the pictures of the Colosseum in our Roman history."

"Right-o," cried Peanut. "Say, what a place to stage a gladiator fight, eh? Sit your audience all up on the debris at the bottoms of the cliffs."

"And have your gladiators come out from under the snow arch," laughed Mr. Rogers.

"Sure," said Peanut.

They now came to the snow arch, which is formed every June under the head wall, and sometimes lasts as late as August. The winter storms, from the northwest, blow the snow over Bigelow Lawn above, and pack it down into Tuckerman's Ravine, in a huge drift two hundred feet deep. This drift gradually melts down, packs into something pretty close to ice, and the water trickling from the cliff behind joins into a brook beneath it and hollows out an arch.

The Scouts now stood before the drift. It was per-

haps eight or ten feet deep at the front now, and a good deal deeper at the back. It was something like three hundred feet wide, they reckoned, and extended out from the cliff from sixty to a hundred feet. The arch was about in the centre, and the brook was flowing out from beneath it.

"Look!" cried Art, "a few rods down-stream the alders are all in leaf, nearer they are just coming out, and here by the edge they are hardly budded!"

"That's right," said Lou. "I suppose as the ice melts back, spring comes to 'em."

Rob put his hand in the brook. "Gee, I don't blame 'em," he said; "it's free ice water, all right."

"Come on into the ice cave," Peanut exclaimed, starting forward.

Mr. Rogers grabbed him. "No, you don't!" he cried. "People used to do that, till one day some years ago it caved in, and killed a boy under it. You'll just look in."

Peanut poked at the edge of the roof with his staff. It looked like snow, but it was hard as ice. "Gee, that won't cave in!" said he.

"Just the same, we're taking no chances," said the Scout Master.

So the Scouts tried to content themselves with peeking into the cold, crystal cave, out of which came the tinkle of dripping water from the dangling icicles on the roof, and a breath of damp, chilling

air. It was like standing at the door of a huge refrigerator.

Then they climbed up the path a few steps, on the right of the drift, and made snowballs with the brittle, mushy moraine-stuff on the surface, which was quite dirty, with moss and rock dust blown over from the top of Washington.

"Snowballs in July!" cried Peanut, letting one fly at Art, who had walked out on the drift.

Art retaliated by washing Peanut's face.

It was getting close to noon now, and the party started back to camp. Hermit Lake was first inspected as a possible swimming pool, but given up because of the boggy nature of the shores. Instead, everybody took one chill plunge in the ice water of the little river which came down from the snow arch, and then they rubbed themselves to a pink glow, and started for the camp. Before they reached camp, Art sniffed, and said, "Smoke! Somebody's got a fire."

A second later, they heard voices, and came upon two men, building a fire against the boulder in front of the shelter.

"Hello, boys. This your stuff?" one of the men said. He was a tall, thin man, with colored goggles and a pointed beard. The other man was short and stout.

"Sure is," Peanut answered.

"Well, we're going on after lunch. Won't bother you to-night," the men said. "Don't mind our being here for lunch, do you?"

"Depends on what you've got to eat," said Peanut, with a laugh.

"Not much," the tall man answered. "Enough for two men, but not enough for a huge person like yourself."

Peanut grinned, as the laugh was on him, and the boys set about getting their lunch ready, also.

The two newcomers had come up from Jackson that morning, they said, and were bound for the top of Washington via the head wall of Huntington Ravine. They spoke as if the head wall of Huntington were something not lightly to be tackled, and of course the boys were curious at once.

"Where's Huntington?" asked Art. "Mr. Rogers, you've never told us about that."

"I never was there myself," said Mr. Rogers. "I can't have been *everywhere*, you know."

"Well, neither have I been there," said the tall, thin man, "but my friend here has, once, and he alleges that it's the best climb in the White Mountains."

"Hooray, let us go, too!" cried Peanut.

Mr. Rogers smiled. "We'll go along with these gentlemen, if they don't mind, and have a look at it," he said, "but I guess we'll leave the climbing to

them. I don't believe I want to lug any of you boys home on a stretcher."

"Aw, stretcher nothin'!" said Peanut. "I guess if other folks climb there, we can!"

The short, stout man's eyes twinkled. "Maybe when you see it you won't be so keen," he said. "Come along with us and have a look."

CHAPTER XIII

UP THE HUNTINGTON HEAD WALL

LUNCHEON over, the two men packed their knapsacks again, while Art put some dehydrated spinach in a pot to soak for supper. He covered the pot carefully, and stood it in the ashes of the fire, where it would get the heat from the rock, even though the fire was put out. Then falling into line behind the two men, the boys and Mr. Rogers started off, apparently going backward away from the mountain down the path toward Crystal Cascades and the Glen road.

"We just came up here," the tall man said. "Came out of our way a bit to see the shelter camp, as I want to build one like it near my home."

"So do we," said the Scouts.

The two men walked very fast, so that the boys had hard work to keep up with them. They were evidently trained mountain climbers. After half a mile of descent, they swung to the left, by the Raymond Path, and after a quarter of a mile of travel toward the northeast, they swung still again to the left, up the Huntington Ravine Trail, and headed

back almost directly at right angles, toward the northwest, where the cone of Washington was, though it could not be seen. The path now ascended again, rather rapidly, and the Scouts puffed along behind the tall man and his stout companion, who walked just about as fast up-hill as they did down.

"Say!" called Peanut, "is there a fire in the ravine?"

The tall man laughed. "Sure," he said. "Four alarms!"

A mile or more of climbing brought them into the ravine. It was not so large as Tuckerman's, and it had no lake embosomed in its rocky depths, but in some ways it was an even wilder and more impressive spot. On the right, to the east, the cliff wall rose up much steeper than in Tuckerman's, to Nelson's Crag. On the west, also, the wall was almost perpendicular, while the jagged and uneven head wall, which did not form the beautiful amphitheatre curve of Tuckerman's head wall, and had no snow arch at its base, looked far harder to climb.

"Wow!" said Peanut. "You win. I don't want to climb here."

"Why, it's easy. You can climb where other folks have," said the stout man, with a wink. "Folks have climbed all three of these cliffs."

"That one to the left?" asked Peanut.

"Sure," said the man.

"What with, an aeroplane?"

"With hobnail boots," said the other.

"I guess they had pretty good teeth and finger nails, also," Frank put in.

A half mile more, and the trail ended at a great mass of debris and broken rocks piled up in the shape of a fan at the base of the head wall.

"This is called the Fan," said the stout man. "Here's where the job begins. Goodbye, boys."

"Oh, let's go up a way!" cried Art. "If they can do it, we can."

"Sure," said Peanut, as he saw the two men begin to climb carefully over the broken fragments of the Fan.

"Oh, please!" the rest cried.

"Well, just a short way," Mr. Rogers reluctantly consented, "if you'll agree to come down when I give the order. We have no ropes, and we are none of us used to rock climbing. I won't take the risk. If we had ropes and proper spiked staffs, it would be different."

The Scouts, with a shout, started up behind the two men, who had now ceased their rapid walking, and were going very slowly and carefully. The boys soon found out why. The footing on the rocky debris of the Fan was extremely treacherous, and you had to keep your eyes on every step, and test your footing.

About fifty yards before the top of the Fan was reached, the two climbers ahead turned to the right, and made their way along a shelf on the ledge which they called a "lead," toward a patch of scrub. One by one, the boys followed them, using extreme caution on the narrow shelf. At the patch of scrub, they could look on up the head wall, and see that the mass of rocks which made the Fan had been brought down by frost and water in a landslide from the top, and made a gully all the way to the summit. To climb the wall, you had to use this gully. It looked quite hopeless, but the stout man started right up, the tall man following him, zigzagging from one lead, or shelf, to another. The boys followed.

"Gee," said Peanut, "wish it hadn't rained so lately. These rocks are slippery. And I don't like walking with the ground in my face all the time."

"I think it's fun," said Art.

"Me, too," said Frank. "But I don't like to look back, though."

They followed two or three leads up the gully, till they were perhaps a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet above the floor of the ravine below. Then Mr. Rogers, looking up, saw Peanut, in the lead, looking about for the next lead, and, after finding it, trying with his short legs to straddle the gap between it and the spot where he stood. His foot slipped, and if Art hadn't been firmly braced right behind him, so

that he threw his shoulder under, Peanut would have fallen off.

"Here's where we stop!" said the Scout Master.

Peanut was rather white with the sudden shock of slipping. Still, he looked longingly up the gully, toward the two climbers above, and said, "Aw, no, let's go on a little further!"

"Not a step—remember your promise," Mr. Rogers declared.

The boys turned reluctantly, and started down. They found it far harder than going up. Going up, you didn't see that almost sheer drop below you. But going the other way, you had to see it at every step, and it made you constantly realize how easy it would be to fall.

Lou grew very pale, and paused on a wide bit of shelf. "I'm dizzy," he said. "Let me stand here a minute. I can't help it. Makes me dizzy to look down."

Frank was directly in front of him below.

"You keep braced after every step, Frank," said the Scout Master, "and let Lou take his next step to you each time before you take another. Better now, Lou? You'll be all right. Just keep your eye on your feet, and don't look off."

They started down once more, and after at least fifteen minutes reached the Fan in safety and then

the floor of the ravine. Lou sat down immediately looking, as Peanut said, "some seasick."

"I guess I was never cut out for rock climbing," poor Lou declared. "I wouldn't have gone, and worried you, Mr. Rogers, if I'd known it would make me dizzy like that."

"You'd probably get used to it," the Scout Master answered, "but I guess we'll not experiment any more just now, where there's no path. Look, our friends are almost up."

The boys, who had forgotten the two men, turned and saw them far above, working carefully toward the summit of the wall. They shouted, and waved their hats, and the men waved back, though the Scouts could hear no voices.

"Gee, and folks have climbed those side walls, too, eh?" said Peanut. "Believe me, real mountain climbing is some work!"

"It is, surely," Mr. Rogers said. "But in the Alps, of course, people go roped together, and if one falls, the rest brace and the rope holds him. How would you like to climb that gully if it was all ice and snow instead of rock, and you had to cut steps all the way with an ice ax, for ten thousand feet?"

"Say, there'd have to be a pretty big pile of twenty dollar gold pieces waiting at the top," answered Peanut.

"Oh, get out," said Art. "That isn't what makes folks climb such places. It's the fun of getting where nobody ever got before—just saying, 'You old cliff, you can't stump me!' isn't it, Mr. Rogers?"

"About that, I guess," the Scout Master replied. "There's some fascination about mountain climbing which makes men risk their lives at it all over the globe, every year, on cliffs beside which this one would look like a canoe beside the Mauretania. I'm glad we've had a taste of real climbing this afternoon, anyhow, to see what it's like. Look, the men have reached the top, and are waving good-bye."

The boys waved back, and as the men disappeared from sight, they themselves moved slowly down the trail, toward the Raymond Path, looking up with a new respect at the walls on either side, and speculating how they could be climbed. Consulting the Appalachian Mountain Club guide book, they found no description of how to get up the west wall, but the ascent of the eastern wall, to Nelson's Crag, which was called "the most interesting rock climb in the White Mountains," was described briefly. The Scouts easily identified the gully up which the ascent must be made, but nobody seemed very eager to make it.

"No, sir," said Peanut, "not for me, till I've had

more practice on cliff work, and have bigger hob-nails in my shoes, and can keep right on up."

"Still," said Frank, "people who go up places like that in the Alps have to come down again."

"Sure they do," Peanut replied, "but they're used to it. The older I grow, the more I realize it doesn't pay to tackle a job till you're up to it."

"Hear Grandpa talk!" laughed Frank. "You'd think he was fifty-three."

"He's talking horse sense, though," the Scout Master put in. "When we get home, we'll go over to the cliffs on Monument Mountain some day, with a rope, and get some practice. As a matter of fact, those cliffs, though they are only two hundred feet high, are steeper than these here, and you haven't any gully to go up, either. We'll get some Alpine work right at home."

"I'll stay at the bottom, and catch you when you fall off," said Lou, with a rather crooked smile. "Gee, to think I'd go dizzy like a girl!"

"Forget it, Lou," Peanut cheered him. "'Twasn't your fault, any more'n getting seasick."

The afternoon shadows were all across Tuckerman's Ravine when the boys once more reached the camp. It was not yet five o'clock, and out behind them the green summits of Carter and Wildcat and Moriah across the Glen, and all the peaks to the south and east, were bathed in full sunlight; but

down in the great hole of the ravine the shadow of Boott Spur had risen half-way up the east wall toward the Lion's Head, and it seemed like twilight.

"Makes me want supper," Frank laughed.

"I got an idea," said Peanut. "Let's take a loaf. Let's just sit around the camp-fire till supper, and do nothing."

"Let's cut our mileage on our staffs," said Art.

"Hooray!"

Somebody lit the fire, for already the twilight chill was creeping down from the snow-bank, and Art put the pot of dehydrated spinach on to simmer. Then everybody got out his knife and cut mileage.

"Only nine miles for yesterday!" said Art. "And think of the work we did."

"One mile against that hurricane is about equal to fifteen on the level, I guess," said Peanut. "Shall we call it eight plus fifteen?"

"You can, if you want to be a nature fakir," Rob answered. "What's the total to-day? Who's got the guide book?"

"Let's see," said Frank, turning the pages. "Two miles from the summit to the Lakes of the Clouds, half a mile back to Boott Spur Trail, from the junction with the Crawford Path over the spur to here, two and a half miles—that's five. Then from here to the snow arch and back, one and a half—six and a half. Then a quarter of a mile to Raymond Path, half a

mile to Huntington Trail, two miles to the Fan ; double it and you get five miles and a half. That makes twelve miles, not counting our climb of the head wall, or what we'll do later to-day."

"Guess we'll not do much more," said Peanut.

"Sure, we'll walk up the ravine and see the snow arch by moonlight. Add a mile and a half more," said Art. "Grand total, thirteen and a half. Golly, you can get fairly tired doing thirteen miles on Mount Washington, can't you?"

"And tolerably hungry," said Frank. "That spinach smells good to me."

"We're going to have bacon, and an omelet, and spinach, and tea, and flapjacks," said Art. "Doesn't that sound good?"

"Well, go ahead and get 'em ready," Peanut said, flopping backward upon the old hemlock boughs in the shelter, and immediately closing his eyes.

Nobody did nor said much for the next hour. There came one of those lazy lulls which hit you once in so often when you are tramping, and you just naturally lie back and take life easy, half asleep, half awake. It was half-past five, and getting dusky in the ravine, when suddenly a hermit thrush in the firs right behind the cabin emitted a peal of song, so startling in its nearness and beauty that every one of the six dozers roused with a start.

"Say, that's some Caruso!" exclaimed Peanut. He rubbed his eyes, and added, "What's the matter with you, Art? Where's supper? You're fired!"

Art laughed, and jumped out of the shelter, giving orders as he went.

"Water, Lou. Rob and Frank, more wood. Peanut, you lazy stiff, get out the bacon and light the lantern. Mr. Rogers, more boughs for the beds."

"Yes, sir," the others laughed, as they scattered quickly on their errands.

It was dark when supper was ready, and outside of the cozy shelter of the cabin and the great boulder facing it, with the fire burning briskly, it was cold. The boys had all put on their sweaters. But the boulder threw the warmth of the fire back under the lean-to, and they sat along the edge of it, their plates on their laps, the fragrance of new steeped tea in their nostrils, and of sizzling bacon, and made a meal which tasted like ambrosia. The spinach was an especial luxury, for this time it had soaked long enough to be soft and palatable. Their only regret was that Art hadn't cooked more of it.

"Let's soak some over night, and have it for breakfast," Peanut suggested, amid hoots of derision from the rest.

"We'll have fresh bread, though," said Art. "I'm

going to bake some in a tin box somebody has left here in a corner of the hut."

"How'll you make bread without yeast?" asked Rob.

Art produced a little sack of baking powder from his pack. "With this, and powdered milk, and powdered egg," he answered. "You make me up a good fire of coals, and I'll show you."

He mixed the dough while the rest were clearing up the supper things, greased his tin box (after it had been thoroughly washed with boiling water) with bacon fat, and put the dough in to rise. "I'll leave it half an hour to raise," he said, "and go with you fellows up to see the snow arch. Then I've got to come back and bake it."

It was moonlight when they set out for the head of the ravine, but the light was not strong enough to make the path easy, nor to take away the sense of gigantic black shadows towering up where the walls ought to be. Peanut tried shouting, to get an echo, but his voice sounded so small and foolish in this great, yawning hole of shadows in the mountainside, that he grinned rather sheepishly, and shut up.

The "baby glacier," as Rob called the snow-drift, was like a white shadow at the foot of the head wall. They could hear the brook tinkling beneath it, but not so loud as by day. When the sun goes down, the melting stops to a very considerable extent.

And it was very cold near the icy bank. The boys shivered, and turned back toward camp.

"We'll go with you, Art, and see you bake that bread," said Rob.

But they didn't. While Art went on, the rest made a side trip in to Hermit Lake, to see the reflections of the moon and stars in the glassy water. Not one, but a dozen hermit thrushes were singing now in the thickets of fir. It was lonesome, and cold, but very beautiful here, and the bird songs rang out like fairy clarions.

"This is as lonely as the Lake of the Dismal Swamp," Rob remarked, "and as beautiful."

"It's a heap sight colder, though," said Peanut shivering.

Back in camp, they found Art with his tin of bread dough propped on edge in front of a great bed of coals, with coals banked behind it and on the sides. The others kicked off their shoes and stockings, put on their heavy night socks, rolled up in their blankets under the lean-to, and, propped upon their elbows, watched Art tending his bread, while they talked in low tones.

One by one the voices died away to silence. Finally Rob and Mr. Rogers were the only ones awake. Then Mr. Rogers asked Rob a question, and got no answer. He smiled.

"Well, Art," he said, "all the rest seem to think

you can get that bread baked without their help. I guess I can trust you, too. Good-night."

"Good-night," said Art. "They'll be glad to eat it in the morning, though!"

But Mr. Rogers didn't reply.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GIANT'S BEDCLOTHES

EVERYBODY was awake early the next morning, and glad to get up, for Tuckerman's Ravine can be very cold, even in mid-July, and all the boys had huddled together unconsciously in the night, for mutual warmth. Art's suggestion that they take a morning dip in the waters of the Cutler River wasn't hailed with much enthusiasm.

"You know, it doesn't get exactly *warm* in the mile between here and where it comes out of the snow arch," said Frank, with a shiver.

"I want a bath, all right," said Peanut, "but I don't want a refrigerator for a bathroom and ice water in the tub. I'm no polar bear. Let's wait till we get to some other brook."

"Gee, you're a set of cold-foot Scouts!" Art taunted.

"And we don't want 'em any colder," laughed Lou.

"Why don't *you* go for a bath, Art?" asked Rob.

"It's no fun all alone," Art replied, rather sheepishly, while the rest laughed.

The sun was not yet up as they got breakfast ready, and the valley behind them and the ravine ahead were full of white mist. Only the rocky pinnacle of the Lion's Head to their right, and the cliffs of Boott Spur to the left stood up above the vapor. The coffee smelled good in the cold air, and Peanut toasted a great piece of Art's bread, and varied his breakfast by making himself scrambled eggs on toast as a special treat. They broke camp as the sun was rising, and by the time they had climbed into the floor of the ravine the shadow of the Lion's Head was beginning to climb down the cliffs of Boott Spur, and in Pinkham Notch behind them they could see the billows of white mist tossing and stirring, Lou said exactly as if a giant was sleeping underneath, and tossing his bedclothes.

"That's how Winthrop Packard, the bird expert, once described it," said Mr. Rogers.

When they reached the snow arch, the path swung to the right, and ascended a pile of debris which had come down from the cliffs above. When the path had surmounted the arch, it turned to the left, and passed under the overhanging cliffs at the top of the head wall. It was very steep and rough, and at one point was covered with snow, or, rather, snow packed into ice. Here the going was extremely treacherous, and the party moved slowly, with the utmost caution, using the staffs on every step. But they got

past without accident, and soon found themselves at the top of the wall. At the top was a long sloping "lawn," leading to the summit cone, the "lawn" consisting of grasses and flowers and moss between the gray stones. They were in full morning sunlight for a few moments, and every stone on the summit pyramid stood out sharp against the sky. But all the world below them, except the tops of the surrounding mountains, was buried under the white vapor.

"Above the clouds!" cried Peanut.

"But not for long," said Art. "Lou's giant is picking up his bedclothes and coming after us!"

Sure enough, as they looked back, they saw the white mist rising from Pinkham Notch, sucking in through Tuckerman's Ravine, and seeming to follow them up the path. Already a wisp was curling over Boott Spur and drifting slowly across the lawn.

"Ding it!" cried Peanut, "is it never clear on this old mountain? I'm getting so I hate clouds. This path is none too easy to find as it is."

"Well, let's keep ahead of the giant, then," Mr. Rogers said.

They walked on more rapidly, noting that the wind was actually from the north, a gentle breeze, just strong enough to hold the rising vapors back and let them keep ahead. Presently their path crossed a dim trail which seemed to come from Boott Spur

and lead northeastward toward the Chandler Ridge. It was the Six Husbands' Trail.

"Hooray, here's old Six Husbands," cried Peanut. "I sure want to go over it, and also know where it got its name."

"Where does it go to, anyhow?" somebody else asked.

They stopped for a moment to trace the trail on the map, finding that it started at Boott Spur, skirted the cone of Washington on the south and east, dipped into the bottom of the Great Gulf, and ascended the shoulder of Jefferson, ending on the peak of that mountain.

"The last two miles up Jefferson must be some climb!" Art cried, looking at the contour intervals—"right up like the wall of a house!"

"Let's take it!" shouted Peanut.

"Perhaps we can take it, out of the Gulf," Mr. Rogers answered. "But now we've got to get to the Tip Top House. Don't you want your copies of *Above the Clouds*?"

"Gosh, I'd forgotten them," said Peanut.

They resumed the climb, and were soon traveling more slowly, up the steep summit cone. They could not see the top, and they could see nothing below them because of the following mists. The path was merely a dim trail amid the wild, piled up confusion of broken rocks. Before they reached the end of it

too, the clouds had reached them, and they made the last few hundred yards enveloped in the giant's bed-clothes.

"Bet he was damp in 'em, too," said Peanut.

The coach house and barn burst upon them suddenly, out of the fog.

The boys rushed at once up the steps to the Tip Top House, secured their copies of *Above the Clouds*, and read Rob's account of the storm, which the editor had cut down till it was only half what Rob had written, much to everybody's indignation. While they were reading the paper, buying sweet chocolate and sending post-cards home, the clouds thinned out on the summit, and when, at eight o'clock, they again stepped out-of-doors, there seemed to be every prospect of a splendid day, with a gentle northerly wind to cool the air.

"Now, our objective point is the Madison Hut, over there to the northeast at the base of the summit cone of Madison," said Mr. Rogers. "We'll spend the night in the hut, and go down the next day to Randolph, through King's Ravine, and catch a train home. There are two ways of getting there. One is to go over the Gulf Side Trail, along the summit ridge of the north peaks, the other, and much the harder way, is to descend into the Great Gulf and climb up again, either by the Six Husbands' Trail,

the Adams Slide Trail, or the trail up Madison from the Glen House."

"Me for old Six Husbands!" cried Peanut.

"I want to go along the tops," said Lou, "where you can see off all the time."

"So do I," said Frank.

"I'm for Peanut and the Six Husbands," said Art.

"Suppose we split for the day," Rob suggested. "I'll go with one half, and you go with the other, Mr. Rogers."

The Scout Master looked at the sky and the horizon. The day held every promise of fine weather, and he assented. "All right," he said, "I'll take Lou and Frank over the north peaks, and you take the others down the head wall of the Gulf, past Spaulding Lake and the Gulf camp, to the Six Husbands' Trail, and then come directly up that to the Gulf Side Trail near the cone of Jefferson. When you reach the Gulf Side Trail, if the weather is clear, leave your packs by the path, and go on up to the top of Jefferson and signal to us. We'll be waiting on the top of Adams, at four o'clock. If it's not clear, come right along the Gulf Side to the hut."

"Hooray! Signaling from one mountain peak to another! That's going some!" cried Peanut.

"But why wait till four?" asked Art. "According to the map, we haven't more than eight miles to go, half of it down-hill."

Mr. Rogers smiled. "We'll leave it at four o'clock, though," he answered. "If you think you can beat that schedule, all right. Maybe we'll be on Adams earlier."

The party now went down the steps to the carriage road, and swung along down that for a quarter of a mile. Then they turned off to the left by the Gulf Side Trail, and walking over the rough stones with grass between drew near the head wall of the Great Gulf. Soon they were at it. The Great Gulf is a gigantic ravine between the huge eastern shoulder of Mount Washington, called the Chandler Ridge, and the three northern peaks of Madison, Adams and Jefferson. Mount Clay, the fourth of the north peaks, and the one next to Washington, is almost a part of the head wall of the Gulf. The Gulf sides are very precipitous, and as the boys looked across it to the shoulder of Jefferson, where the Six Husbands' Trail ascends, Lou and Frank began to laugh.

"Glad *we* haven't got to climb that to-day!" they cried.

"Lazy stiffs," said Peanut. "What's that! A mere nothing!" But he grinned dubiously, even as he spoke.

"Well, we're in for it now," said Rob, "so come on."

"Oh, I'm coming," Peanut replied.

"Now, Rob, one last word," said the Scout Master. "I'm giving you the map. Follow the trails agreed on, and promise me not to leave 'em, even for a dozen feet. You are entering unknown country, and dangerous country. Go straight down past the Gulf camp, and you'll pick up the Six Husbands about a quarter of a mile below—maybe less. Goodbye. Signal, if clear, when you get to Jefferson. If worst comes to worst, go back to the Gulf camp, or if you are on the range, go to the shelter hut just east of Jefferson, on the Adams-Jefferson col."

Mr. Rogers, Lou and Frank waved their hands as they watched the other three plunge over the edge of the head wall, and begin to descend the two thousand feet of precipitous rock pile which dropped down to where Spaulding Lake lay like a mirror amid the trees at the bottom of the Great Gulf. Then they shouldered packs again, and set out toward the three summits of Clay, just ahead of them, the first stage of their journey over the north peaks to the Madison Hut. The morning was clear and fine now, and they could see for miles upon miles out over green valleys and far blue mountains, while the rocky pyramids of Jefferson, Adams and Madison ahead of them, rising about five hundred feet above the connecting cols, seemed near enough, almost, to hit with a stone, though actually the nearest, Jefferson, was two miles away.

“We’ve got nearly all day for a six mile hike,” the Scout Master said. “Let’s take it easy and enjoy the view.”

So we will leave them climbing slowly up the slope of Clay, and descend the Gulf with Rob, Art and Peanut.

CHAPTER XV

WITH ROB, ART AND PEANUT INTO THE GREAT GULF

ROB, Art and Peanut were making time down the head wall, but they were also using up shoe leather, for the wall of the Great Gulf is composed of innumerable loose stones, often of a shaly nature, with sharp edges, which turn under the foot. The head wall trail, too, because of its steepness, is not so much used as many others, and at times the Scouts had some difficulty in keeping it. It grew warmer as they descended out of the breeze into the still air of the Gulf, and, as Peanut said, his forehead was starting another brook. They reached timber line in a short time, and before long were in the woods beside Spaulding Lake, where in spite of the leaf-mould on the bottom they paused long enough to strip and have a quick bath in the cold water, which was, however, warm by contrast with some of the brooks they had tried. Then they resumed the trail down the floor of the Gulf, beside the head waters of the Peabody River. The path was rough, full of roots and wet places, and it descended con-

stantly, with waterfalls beside it, and through openings in the trees here and there glimpses of the great cliff walls of Jefferson and Adams to the left. The thrushes were singing all about them, and they came upon several deer tracks, and once upon the mark of a bear's paw in the mud. They kept looking, too, for the Gulf camp, but it did not appear.

"Say, this old trail is longer than I thought," said Peanut, "or else there isn't any Gulf camp."

At last, however, after nearly an hour's tramping from Spaulding Lake, they saw smoke through the trees ahead, and came upon the camp, which was a lean-to like that in Tuckerman's, with the opening placed close up against the perpendicular wall of a big boulder, to throw the heat of the fire back into the shelter.

Two young men, badly in need of shaves, were cooking breakfast.

"Hello, Scouts," they said.

"Lunching early, aren't you?" asked Rob.

The men laughed. "This is breakfast," they said. "We decided to-day to have a good sleep, and we did, all right—thirteen hours! Came over Crawford's and down the head wall yesterday. Going out to Carter's Notch to-day. Where are you going?"

"We are bound up the Six Husbands to the Madison Hut," the boys answered.

The two men whistled. "Well, good luck to you," they said. "But glad we're not going with you!"

"Why?" Peanut demanded.

"Because it goes right up the shoulder of Jefferson. Have you seen the shoulder of Jefferson?"

"Sure," said Art. "What of it?"

"Well, if you *had* to work as hard as that, you'd make an awful fuss!" one of the men laughed.

"You talk just like my father," said Peanut. "Why is it called the Six Husbands' Trail—if you know so much about it?" he added.

"Search me," the man replied, "unless because it would take six husbands to get a woman up there."

The boys laughed, and went on their way. They soon came to the trail itself, and struck up the Six Husbands at last, headed directly for the cliffs of Jefferson and Adams, which seemed to be towering over their heads.

"It *does* look like a job, and no mistake!" cried Peanut.

"Well, if somebody can put a trail up it, we can follow 'em, I guess," cried Art. "This is something like mountain climbing!"

But for half a mile the trail didn't ascend much. It followed up a brook, and seemed to be headed for the ravine between Adams and Jefferson. Presently they came to a fork in the trail, where the Adams

Slide Trail branched off to the east. Here there was a spring, labeled Great Spring on the map, where they filled their canteens, and taking the left fork, the Six Husbands, began at last the real ascent of Jefferson. There was no longer any doubt about its being an ascent, either. The map showed that from the Great Spring to the crossing of the Gulf Side Trail at the summit cone of the mountain was little over a mile, but that mile, as Peanut said, was stood up on end. They plugged away for a while, toiling upward, weighted down with their packs and blankets, which had increased in weight at least fifty per cent. since morning, and then decided to eat lunch before the fuel gave out.

It was hard work chopping up fire-wood from the tough, aged, and gnarled stumps of the dwarf spruces which alone could grow on this cliff side, but they got a blaze at last, and made tea and cooked some bacon—the last they had. It was one o'clock before they were through, and Rob, seeing that Peanut was pretty tired and Art pretty sleepy, ordered a rest for an hour. They spread out their blankets and lay down, in a spot where there was the least danger of rolling off, and soon the two younger boys were fast asleep.

Rob didn't go to sleep. He watched an eagle sailing on still wings out over the Gulf, and presently, to his consternation, he saw a thin wisp of

vapor curling around the ridges far above on Adams. Southwestward, the slopes of Washington were clear, but there was surely cloud coming above them, and they on a little used trail, without Mr. Rogers! Rob's heart went suddenly down into his boots, and he felt a cold sweat come. Then he pulled himself together.

"Fool!" he half whispered. "If we keep on up, we are bound to hit the Gulf Side Trail. And didn't Mr. Rogers say that if you kept cool you were much better off? Brace up, old Scout!"

He waited till his heart had stopped thumping, and then he waked the other two.

"We've got to be climbing again," he said; "there's a cloud coming over Adams."

"Say, there's always a cloud coming, seems to me," said Peanut. "Well, come on then. Gee, I was having a good sleep!"

The three boys rolled up their blankets, and resumed the trail, first taking a good look at the map and fixing the compass direction. The clouds were now plainly visible above them, both around the tops of Adams, Madison and Jefferson, and evidently over on Clay, too. But behind them, across the Gulf, Chandler Ridge was in clear sun, and they could see a motor car going up the carriage road, and even hear a faint cough from its exhaust.

"This is no storm, it's evidently just a wandering

cloud," said Rob. "But we'd better make all the distance we can in clear going."

They toiled upward for a full hour, almost hand over hand in places, with the cloud still above them and the Gulf clear below, before they got into the under curtain of the vapor, and began to have trouble in finding the trail. They were feeling their way cautiously, compasses in hand, when suddenly Art, who was leading, uttered a cry, and pointed to the unmistakable cross path of the Gulf Side Trail, carefully maintained and worn by many feet. There was a sign, too.

"Hooray! Here we are! Can't miss that trail!" yelled Peanut, his feeling of relief escaping in a shout which used up all the breath left in his lungs.

There was, to the amazement of the Scouts, an answering shout from somewhere southwest of them, coming out of the fog—a faint call which sounded like "Help!"

CHAPTER XVI

FIRST AID IN THE CLOUDS!

“WHAT’S that?” all three exclaimed.

Facing in the direction whence the sound seemed to come, they put their hands around their mouths, and shouted together, “Hoo-oo!”

Again there was a faint reply.

“It’s down the Gulf Side Trail, and a bit west!” cried Art. “Come on!”

“Easy!” cried Rob. “We don’t want to go rushing off the trail this way, or we’ll be lost, too. Here, let’s go south on the Gulf Side, until the shouts are directly west of us, and then strike in toward ’em. Keep yelling as we go.”

The answering halloo grew nearer as they moved south on the Gulf Side, and presently it seemed quite close, to the west. The boys struck off toward it, over what seemed almost like a rocky pasture there was so much mountain grass at this spot, and in a hundred yards or so they came upon a man and two women, one of the latter seated on the ground moaning, her face pale with pain, while the other was rubbing her ankle.

"Thank God!" said the man, as the Scouts appeared.

"But they're only boys!" added the woman who was not hurt, her face clouding with disappointment. She looked as if she had been crying.

The injured woman, however, said nothing. Rob took one look at her, and saw that she was fainting. He caught her just in time to keep her from falling backward upon the rocks.

"Here, hold her!" he said brusquely to the man, while he unslung his pack and fished for the aromatic spirits of ammonia.

She came to in a moment.

"Lost?" asked Rob.

"We were walking from Washington to the Madison Hut," the man answered, "and this cloud came, and we lost the path coming down Mount Clay. Are we far from it now? We have been wandering blindly, getting more and more confused, and finally this lady sprained her ankle."

"She ought to have high boots on, not low shoes," said Rob; "especially a woman of her weight."

"Get me down the mountain somehow," the injured woman moaned. "I'll never come on a trip like this again!"

"We can't carry her far," said Art, bluntly, "she's too heavy. We'll have to get help."

"Let's get her to the trail," Rob suggested, "and then one of us will have to go for help. What's nearer, Washington or the Madison Hut? Look at the map, Art."

"We must be on the edge of the Monticello Lawn on the south shoulder of Jefferson," Art replied. "It's about an even break, but it's nearer to Adams, where our crowd is waiting for us."

"Well, we'll get her to the path, and decide," Rob said. "Stretcher!"

The boys made a stretcher with their coats and staffs, and Rob and the man took the ends, while the woman, who was large and heavy, was helped up, groaning with pain, and sat on it. It was quite all they could do to carry her, and the poles sagged dangerously. Art went ahead with the compass, walking almost due east, and they reached the Gulf Side Trail and lowered the stretcher.

"Now," said Rob, "two of us had better go for help to Adams. Art, you and I will, I guess. Peanut, you wait here and make the lady as comfortable as you can in our blankets."

"Hold on!" Peanut cried. "See, the cloud is breaking up! Maybe we can signal. That would be quicker."

The clouds were surely breaking. They didn't so much lift as suddenly begin to blow off, under the pressure of a wind which was springing up. The

top of Jefferson was visible through a rift even as the party watched, and presently a shaft of sunlight hit them, and the whole upper cone of Jefferson was revealed, a pyramidal pile of bare, broken stone.

"Give me the staffs and two towels," Peanut cried. "I'll have help here in half an hour!"

Rob went with him, and the two Scouts, forgetting how weary they were, began almost to run up the five hundred feet of the summit cone, without any path, scrambling over the great stones without thought of bruised shins.

When they reached the peak, the clouds were entirely off the range—they had disappeared as if by magic—and the sharp cone of Adams to the north-east, almost two miles away in an air line, was plainly visible. As they stood on the highest rock, a flash of light sprang at them from the other summit.

"Hooray!" Peanut cried, "they're there! They're flashing a mirror at us!"

"More likely the bottom of a tin plate," said Rob. "Where'd they get a mirror? Out with your signals!"

Peanut tied a white towel to the end of each staff, and standing as high on the topmost rock as he could, held them out. Against the blue sky, on the peak of Adams, the two boys saw two tiny white specks break out in answer. They were so far away

that it was very hard to follow them, to keep the two apart.

"Oh, for a pair of field-glasses!" Rob cried. "Do you think they can get us?"

"If we can get them, they can," Peanut answered. "Here goes!"

"Woman hurt, bring help, Gulf Side," he signaled, very slowly.

They both watched, breathless, for the answer, but it was impossible to make out whether they were understood or not.

"Here, you take one flag, and stand up here; you're taller," Peanut said, jumping off the rock. "I'll stand below you. That'll separate the two more. Now, again!"

Very slowly, holding each letter a long time, and running a few steps to left or right with their flags, they signaled once more, the same message.

This time they saw the answering flags change position. "Good old Lou, he's done the same trick," Peanut cried. "Look, I can read it now!"

"I can't," said Rob.

"Well, I can — G-o-t-y-o-u! Got you!" Peanut shouted. "They'll be here! How long will it take 'em?"

"Oh, half an hour, I should say," Rob answered. "Come back, now. Maybe the woman has fainted again."

"Gee, why do people try to climb mountains when they don't know how?" said Peanut, as they descended again toward the little group of figures below them.

"Help is coming!" they cried, as they drew near.

"Well, you boys were certainly sent by Providence!" the man exclaimed.

They all made the injured woman as comfortable as they could while they waited. There was still a little water left in the Scouts' canteens, and they made a cold bandage around her ankle, which Rob decided was not broken. Then there was nothing to do but sit and wait. It seemed hours, though it was really less than thirty minutes, when over the east shoulder of Jefferson, where the Gulf Side Trail skirts the precipitous wall down into the Great Gulf, came the rescue party, almost on the run—Mr. Rogers, Frank, Lou, and four men.

One of these men, it speedily turned out, was a doctor, and he took charge at once, while Rob watched him admiringly, for Rob was going to be a doctor, too. He felt of the injured ankle carefully, while the patient winced with pain.

"No broken bones," he said, "just a bad sprain. You should wear stout, high boots for such work, madam."

("Just what we told her," Art whispered.)

"And now," the doctor added, "she's got to be

carried to the nearest point on the railroad. Jim, you start along now to the summit house, and telephone down for a train to be sent up immediately. We'll get her to the track at the point where the West Side Trail crosses, just below the Gulf tank."

"How far is it?" asked the Scouts.

"Two miles," the doctor answered, "but we can do it all right. You boys have done enough to-day. We are going that way anyhow, and you are going the other."

"Couldn't we take her to the Madison Hut?" asked Frank.

"That would be a great help!" the doctor said. "How would we get her down the mountain from there?"

"I hadn't thought of that," said Frank.

Meanwhile, one of the four men had picked up his pack again and was striding rapidly down the trail toward Clay, headed for Mount Washington and the telephone. The other three trampers, and the man who had been lost with the women, made a new stretcher of their staffs and coats, put the woman on it, and started after him.

The Scouts begged to help, but the doctor said no.

"Twice a day over the Gulf Side is enough for boys of your age," he declared. "We can get on all

right. You go back to the hut—and take it easy, too.”

The man and both the women who had been rescued said goodbye to Peanut, Rob and Art over and over, shaking their hands till the boys grew embarrassed.

“Heaven knows what would have become of us if they hadn’t heard our shout!” the uninjured woman exclaimed, again close to tears. “We were lost, and Bessie was hurt, and we’d have perished!”

“Not so bad as that,” the doctor said, with a smile, “because the cloud cleared, and you’d have found the path, and we four would have come by just the same.”

Peanut’s face clouded. He had thought of himself and his two companions as rescuers, and here the doctor was proving that if they hadn’t done it, somebody else would! The doctor evidently guessed his thoughts, for he added:

“That’s not taking away any credit from these Scouts, though. If we hadn’t happened to be headed for Washington you would undoubtedly have been in bad trouble, and if the cloud had lasted longer, you might have been in for a night on the mountain without shelter, and that never did anybody any good. Pretty good work for the boys, I think!”

Peanut looked happy again, and the two parties shouted goodbye to each other, as those with the

stretcher moved down the trail toward the distant railroad trestle, and the Scouts moved northward, toward the Madison Hut.

Then Peanut suddenly realized that he was tired. He was more than tired—he could just about drag one foot after the other. Art was not much fresher, and even Rob said if anybody should ask him to run fifty yards, he'd shoot 'em.

They passed the Six Husbands' Trail, swung around north of Jefferson onto the knife-blade col between that mountain and Adams, passing Dingmaul Rock, a strange shaped boulder called after a mountain animal which is never seen except by guides when they have been having a drop too much. Peanut laughed at this, but he grew sober and silent again when it was passed, and when the trail swung to the left of Adams, rising over the slope between Adams and the lesser western spur called Sam Adams, he didn't even grin when somebody suggested that they climb Adams, which is 5,805 feet, the second highest mountain in New England.

“Go to thunder,” was his only comment.

Once they had toiled up the slope, however, they looked down-hill all the way to the Madison Hut, and in thirty minutes they had crossed the Adams-Madison col and reached the stone hut tucked into the rocks at the base of the cone of Madison, the last peak of the Presidential range.

With one accord, packs and blankets were dropped off weary shoulders to the ground, and the three Scouts who had been into the Gulf that day flopped down on top of them, and lay there exhausted. The other three had already been to the hut and left their load.

“Well, I guess you’ve had enough husbands for one day, eh?” said the Scout Master. “And you’d better not lie there, either. Come on, inside with you, and lie in your bunks.”

CHAPTER XVII

PEANUT LEARNS WHERE THE SIX HUSBANDS' TRAIL GOT ITS NAME

IT was, in truth, getting cold on the mountain, and the wind was freshening as the sun set. They moved wearily into the hut, and found three tiers of bunks inside, like a ship's cabin, and a stove giving out pleasant heat, and the caretaker getting supper ready.

"No cooking to-night," said the Scout Master. "You three climb up and lie down till supper is ready."

Rob, Art and Peanut made no objection to this order, and soon, from their bunks, they were discussing the day's adventures with the other three.

"We had a wonderful day!" said Lou and Frank. "We climbed every one of the north peaks except Madison—Clay, Jefferson and Adams—and we got almost to the hut here before the cloud came. Gee, what views! We kept looking down into the Gulf for you, but we never saw you. It was lots of fun climbing back up Adams in the cloud."

"Well, we had some day ourselves, believe me

Judge!" said Peanut. "We had a swim in Spaulding Lake, and a long hike in the woods down at the bottom of the Gulf, and then the Six Husbands' Trail. Say, that's a trail!"

"My pack weighed a hundred and twenty-nine pounds before we got to the top," Art added.

"And then, when we saw the clouds above us, we hurried, too," Rob said, "so we could reach the Gulf Side path before they closed down too far, and that took our wind."

"And then Peanut let out a Comanche yell when we did strike the Gulf Side," put in Art, "with all the wind he had left ——"

"Which wasn't much," said Peanut.

"—— and out of the cloud, off southwest somewhere we suddenly heard a faint call for 'Help!' It sounded awfully strange, kind of weird-like, way up there in the clouds."

"Wonder if they've got the woman down by now?" said Frank.

"Lucky that doctor and the other three men were hiking along here," Lou put in, "or we'd have had to carry her to the railroad and then walk way back over the whole Gulf Side Trail again."

"Not me," said Peanut. "I'd have kissed the mountains good-night, and got aboard the train myself."

"Where did you strike those four?" asked Rob.

"They were at the hut when we first got there at two o'clock, waiting for the cloud to break," said Mr. Rogers. "They came up Adams with us to see you fellows signal, for they said the cloud wouldn't last long. Good trampers, they were, on their annual vacation up here. They know every path like a book."

The Scouts were discussing signaling and its uses, and Rob was saying that it made him tired to hear people say the Scouts were taught to be war-like, when signaling had proved so valuable that very day as a means of saving life in peace, instead of taking it in war—when steps were heard outside the hut, and a second later two men stood in the door.

"Hello, any room?" they said.

"Come in," said the caretaker.

The two men entered. They were rather elderly men, or at least middle aged, with gray hair; but both of them were tanned and rugged, the type you learn to recognize as the real trampers on the White Mountain trails. They made themselves at home at once, tossing their small packs into a corner. They had no blankets, but both of them carried botanical specimen cases.

"Where from?" asked Mr. Rogers.

"Jackson," they said. "We came up Tuckerman's yesterday to the Tip Top House, and spent

this morning getting specimens on Bigelow Lawn. We've just come over the Gulf Side."

"Did you meet four men carrying an injured woman?" the boys asked.

"Carrying her where?"

"To the train."

"They were taking her along the West Side Trail, from Monticello Lawn, where she sprained her ankle," Mr. Rogers added. "One of them went ahead to the summit to telephone."

"Oh, that explains it!" the two strangers said. "We met him just as we were turning out of the carriage road into the trail. He was going about ten miles an hour. And when we got up on Jefferson, we saw a train climbing the trestle, and wondered why."

"Hooray, she's safe!" shouted Peanut. "Bet she never tries to climb in low shoes again, though."

Supper was now served, and the combined parties sat down to it. The boys told the newcomers of their day's adventures, and Peanut suddenly shot out, "Say! Can *you* tell me why it's called the Six Husbands' Trail?"

One of the men laughed. "I surely can," he said.

"Well, for Heaven's sake, do, then," Rob said. "He'll never be happy till he knows."

"You came down the head wall of the Gulf, you

say?" the man asked. "Well, did you notice the first waterfall you came to after you reached the bottom of the wall and started down toward the Gulf camp?"

"Gee, there was nothing but waterfalls," said Peanut.

"Exactly, but there are some real falls on the trail, though, and some which are only rapids. Anyhow, the upper fall was named in the summer of 1908, by Warren W. Hart, a Boston lawyer who cut the trail up to the head wall. Weetamo Fall, he called it, in honor of Queen Weetamo, the sister-in-law of the famous Indian chief, King Philip. Maybe you boys know all about her?"

"Know about King Philip," said Peanut, "but can't say I'm intimate with his sister-in-law."

"That's a pity," said the man, "because she was a fine woman. Her husband, King Philip's older brother, Alexander (or Wamsutta) was also a chief. After he died, Weetamo married again, several times, each time seeking to bind the New England tribes into a stronger alliance. Some say she married three times, some say five or more. Mr. Hart, when he cut the new trail you boys came up this afternoon, decided to give the lady a liberal allowance, so he made it six. The Six Husbands' Trail is named in honor of the husbands of Weetamo, the Indian chieftainess."

"There, Peanut, now you know!" laughed Art.

"I like it, too," Peanut declared. "I don't see why more of these mountains and places aren't named after Indians, or with Indian names, like Moosilauke and Pemigewassett and Ammonoosuc. Why should this mountain be called Madison, for instance? *He* didn't discover it, or even ever see it, maybe."

"Who did discover the White Mountains, by the way?" asked Rob. "I never thought of that before."

The same man who had answered before again replied. He seemed to know all about these hills. "Mount Washington, which was named in the first years of Washington's administration, when all sorts of things were being named for him, was the first mountain climbed in the United States," he said. "Darby Field accomplished it in 1642, after a trip of exploration in from the coast, through the then trackless forest. The only account of the trip is in Governor John Winthrop's journal, which you'll find in your public library, or it ought to be there, if it isn't. Field was accompanied by two Indians. It took them eighteen days to get here and back. At the foot of the ascent was an Indian village, but these Indians dared accompany him no nearer the top than eight miles, as they never climbed mountains. His own two Indians went on with him. From the fact that his ascent was, he says, for the

last twelve miles over bare rocks, he evidently came up over the southern ridges somewhere, possibly the Giant's Stairs and Boott Spur. The north peaks were not explored and named till 1820, less than a hundred years ago. Lafayette, over in Franconia, was not climbed till 1826."

"But weren't there any Indian names for these mountains?" Peanut persisted.

"They called the whole Presidential range, or perhaps the whole White Mountains by the name Agiocochook," the man answered. "I'm afraid my knowledge ceases there. Our forefathers didn't make any special effort to learn what the Indians did call things, or to respect their names any more than their lands. Certainly we've done badly in our naming. Clay, for instance, and Franklin, were never Presidents, yet their names are given to two peaks in the Presidential range; and Mount Pleasant isn't even named after a statesman. I agree with our young friend here, and like better the names of the Sandwich range to the south, Chocorua, Passaconaway, Bald Face. Those are either Indian names, or are suggestive of the appearance of the mountain."

"Right-o," said Peanut.

It was now dark outside, and clear and cold. The Scouts went out into the windy starlight, and looked far down into the valley to the north, where

the lights of a small town glittered, and filled their lungs with the bracing, fresh air. Then they one and all turned in, and though the two new arrivals were talking with the caretaker of the hut, it wasn't five minutes before all six were fast asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII

THROUGH KING'S RAVINE AND HOME AGAIN

ART was not the first one up in the morning. When he opened his eyes, he saw the caretaker of the hut moving about the stove. Nobody else was astir in the Scouts' party, but through the open door Art saw the two men who had arrived the previous evening standing on the rocks, looking off. It was full daylight!

Art climbed hastily down out of his bunk and shook Peanut.

"Lemme 'lone! I got to climb this rock!" said Peanut.

"What do you think you're doing? You've got to get up!" laughed Art.

"Whaz 'at?" said Peanut. Then he opened his eyes, stared into Art's face, and added, "Hello! Why, I'm awake!"

Meanwhile, the others had waked, also. Rob looked at his watch. "Six o'clock!" he exclaimed. "That's what comes of sleeping in bunks. All up, and have a look at the weather!"

The weather seemed propitious. The north peaks

were all out, and the great shoulder of Chandler Ridge on Washington, across the white mists which filled the Great Gulf, looked like a stone peninsula thrusting out into a foamy sea. There was only a slight wind, and the sun was pleasantly warm already.

"How's the grub holding out?" asked Mr. Rogers. "If we have breakfast cooked for us inside, it will cost us something. Have we enough left for breakfast and lunch? We'll have to get supper on the train."

"Train! Gee whiz, I don't want to go home! Let's stay another week," said Frank.

"That's the talk!" Peanut cried. "Let's go down in the Great Gulf and get some trout, and live on them."

"I'll shoot a bear with a bow and arrow," Art added. "We'll need the meat, too, for we've not got more than enough for one good meal—except vegetables. We've got a lot of spinach left, 'cause we've hardly ever stayed anywhere long enough to soak it, unless we'd had it for breakfast."

Peanut fished in his rear pocket and produced his purse. "I've got enough to buy breakfast, if the caretaker'll sell us any, and a sleeper home," he announced. "Golly, though, where's my return ticket!"

He began searching wildly in all his pockets,

while the others investigated their pocketbooks, to see if they had their tickets. Peanut finally dashed back into the hut, and discovered his in his pack. The tickets were from Fabyans, however, and as they would reach the railroad at Randolph, some miles east, there would be a small extra fare. All the boys had money enough left for the trip, and for breakfast as well.

"I'll shout you all to supper on the train," said Mr. Rogers. "Let's save all our grub for a whacking big farewell luncheon in King's Ravine, and buy breakfast here, eh?"

"You're on," the Scouts replied, and they hastened back into the hut, where the two men joined them. The caretaker finally agreed to give the boys breakfast out of his own stores, though he didn't seem very keen about it. Usually, he only cooks meals for visitors at the hut when they provide the food.

"How do you get the food up here?" Peanut asked him.

"The birds bring it," he said.

"You think you're Joshua, don't you?" Peanut retorted.

"Why?" asked the man, looking puzzled.

"'Cause he was fed by the ravens. Wake up and hear the birdies," Peanut laughed. "Now will you tell me?"

The man grunted, and made no reply.

("I suppose he has to pack it up from Randolph," one of the men whispered. "It's no cinch, either.")

Breakfast over, the boys paid fifty cents each for their night's lodging, and a dollar and a half for cooking dinner and the breakfast. Then they set out for the summit of Madison, before descending to the railroad. The sharp cone of Madison rose directly behind the hut. Indeed, you could step from the roof of the hut in the rear out onto the rocks. It was only a twenty minute climb, without packs, for the hut is 4,828 feet above the sea, and Madison, the last of the Presidentials, is only 5,380. From the top they had their last high prospect, and they drank it in to the full. Eastward, they looked out over the ravine of the Peabody River to the timbered slopes of the Moriahs and Carter's Dome, another group of mountains which lured their feet. Beyond them was the state of Maine. Southward, over the Great Gulf, was Chandler Ridge, with the Chandler River leaping down its steep side, like a ribbon of silver. Southwestward lay the bare stone pyramids of Adams and the two lesser Adamses (Jefferson was hidden) and finally the great bulk of Washington to the left of Clay, lying high above them all, far off against the blue sky. Due west, they looked down into the yawning hole of King's Ravine. It was a mighty prospect of bare rocks piled more than a

mile in air, of great gulfs between them, of far green valleys and far blue hills.

"Oh, I like the mountains!" cried Lou. "I want to come to the mountains every year! I want to stand up under the sky and see off—way off, like this!"

"That goes for me, too, even if I can't say it so pretty," declared Peanut.

Reluctantly, they descended from the cone, picked up their packs at the hut, and with Peanut throwing back a final "Goodbye, Josh," to the caretaker, they hit the Gulf Side Trail for a scant quarter of a mile, swung off of it to the right, and stood presently in a kind of gateway of great stones, with the world dropping out of sight between the posts.

"Look back!" said Mr. Rogers.

They turned. Behind them, framed by the huge stones of the natural gate, rose the cone of Madison against the blue sky—that and nothing else.

"Goodbye, Maddie," said Peanut.

"Au revoir," said Lou. "See you again next summer, maybe!"

They turned once more, and at once began to drop down the head wall of King's Ravine, a ravine almost as fine as Tuckerman's, discovered and explored by the Reverend Thomas Starr King in 1857 and named after him.

"Say, this trail has the Six Husbands' guessing," said Art.

"Glad I'm not going up," said Frank.

"Well, nothing is steep to me after the head wall of Huntington," Lou said. "I can see something under my feet here, at any rate."

The descent was rapid, for they dropped 1,300 feet in the five-sixteenths of a mile to the floor of the ravine, which means an ascent of 4,160 feet to the mile. Anybody good at mathematics can reckon out what this angle is. The boys estimated it roughly as they were descending at about seventy degrees. Nobody had time to figure it on paper, however, and when they got to the bottom, there was too much else to see. Anyhow, it was steep going!

They found the bottom of the ravine strewn with great boulders which had fallen down from the cliffs on three sides. Some of them were as big as houses, and in a cave under one they found ice. Two paths led down the ravine, one over the boulders called "Elevated Route for Rapid Transit," the other "The Subway."

The guide book said the latter took longer but was more interesting.

"The Subway for us!" cried Peanut.

So they took the Subway, and though it was not a second Lost River, this path took them by a tortuous route through several caves, and under many an overhanging boulder, where the air was chill and

there were strange echoes. Again, at the lower end of the ravine, they descended rapidly for half a mile by a steep way, into the woods again at last, and finally stopped by a brook for the farewell lunch.

The last of the powdered eggs, spinach soaked and boiled as long as they dared wait, till it wasn't too tough to eat, the last of the bacon from Lou's and Mr. Rogers' packs, a single small flapjack apiece, a quarter cake of sweet chocolate for each, and tea, completed the repast. After it was over, they carefully burned all the wrapping paper and Art blazed a tree and printed on the fresh wood, "Farewell Camp," and the date. Then under it they all wrote their names.

It was less than two miles from this point out to the railroad and for the first time in many days they were walking on almost level ground. Before long, the woods opened, and they came out on the meadows of Randolph. Across a field in front of them lay the railroad track and the tiny station. They dropped packs on the platform and turned to look at the mountains. Only the north peaks were visible—Madison, Adams and Jefferson—three pyramids against the sky.

"Golly, how funny it feels to be down on the level again!" said Peanut.

"And how far away they look! Think, we were up there only this morning!" said Frank.

"And how small our hills will look when we get home," said Lou.

"Well, anyhow," put in Art, "cheer up and think how good some of mother's pies will taste."

"There's something in that," laughed Rob and Mr. Rogers.

The train soon came, and carried them by a round-about route to Fabyans, where they had to change to the night train down the Connecticut valley. At Fabyans, where the big Fabyan Hotel sits beside the railroad, they bought some more souvenir post-cards and Peanut got a pound of very sticky candy which Mr. Rogers said would spoil his supper, whereat he answered, "Wait and see!" They could see from here the whole south range, culminating in the peak of Washington, and thus could follow their adventurous climb over the Crawford Bridle Path. Again, the peaks seemed very far off, and Lou said it was like a dream to think that they had been walking way up there only a few days before.

Once aboard the train, they secured berths for the night, and began to think of supper. Mr. Rogers was true to his word—and so was Peanut. He provided—and Peanut ate.

"What's a pound of candy to an empty tum?" said Peanut. "Besides, Frank and Art ate most of it."

They had a last faint glimpse of Lafayette against

the twilight at Bethlehem junction, and then the train moved on through the darkness.

"Well, it's goodbye mountains," said Rob. "Let's fix up our mileage."

Each Scout got out his precious staff, battered now, with the end pounded into a mushroom by the hard usage on the rocks, and cut the mileage for the day—five miles was all they could make it, even with the trip up the Madison cone included.

"Disgraceful!" said Peanut. "Five miles! Bah!"

"But the day before is *fair*," said Art, "considering the Six Husbands'!"

"Let's see, have I got it right?" asked Peanut. "Mile and three-quarters from Tuckerman hut to Washington, three and a half miles to Six Husbands', mile and a half to sprained ankle, mile up Jefferson and back, three miles to the hut—that's ten and three-quarters miles, and I guess we can call it eleven, all right, and some up and down hill, take it from me!"

"Well, we did more'n that," said Frank; "we had the mile and three-quarters from Tuckerman's, six to the Madison Hut along the Gulf Side, and three back to you folks, and three back to the hut again. That's thirteen and three-quarters, and we took in the summits of Jefferson and Adams, so we can call it an even fifteen. Some up and down for us, too."

"Well, eleven over the Six Husbands' will stand off your fifteen," Peanut declared; "won't it, Rob?"

"I think it will," said Rob, "but let's not fight about it. What's the grand total?"

"Eight the first day," said Art, "from Sugar Hill station to camp; ten up Kinsman; twenty-one on Moosilauke; seventeen in Lost River and on to the Flume camp for you fellows, and eighteen for Peanut and me; sixteen over Lafayette; ten on Cannon and in Crawford's; nine on the Bridle Path, fighting storm; thirteen and a quarter in Tuckerman's and Huntington—let's call it fourteen, 'cause we climbed the Huntington head wall a way; eleven for half of us in the Gulf, and fifteen for the rest; and five on the last day. What does that make?"

Rob, who had put down the readings on a bit of paper, added the total. "One hundred and twenty-one for half of us, one hundred and twenty-six for the rest," he said.

"About a hundred and twenty-five miles in ten days," said Mr. Rogers. "Well, that's not so bad, when you're toting a pack and a blanket, and fighting clouds and hurricanes, and shinning up Six Husbands' trails. Are you glad you came, boys?"

"Are we!" they shouted, in one breath. "You bet!"

"We haven't done so awful much real scouting though," added Peanut.

"Why not?" said the Scout Master. "It seems to me we have. We've been prepared, haven't we? We've handled ourselves in storms and clouds, we've helped other folks, we've known how to signal for aid from one mountain top to another, we've kept ourselves well and hardy in the open, and we've had a bully good time. After all, we've put a lot of scout lore into use, when you come to think of it. That's what scout lore is for—to use, eh, Peanut?"

"Guess you're right. Gee, you're always right!" said Peanut. "I say three cheers for Mr. Rogers, the best Scout Master in America! Now, one ——"

"Sh!" said Rob. "We all agree, but the man in that next berth is snoring already. He might not agree!"

"Well, I can snore as loud as he can," cried Peanut, "if I get the chance. Let's turn in. And tomorrow A. M. we'll be in old Southmead! Golly, wish I was in the Great Gulf!"

"You couldn't tell the other fellers what a good time we've had, if you were," said Art.

"That's so," Peanut reflected. "Aw, the stiffs! I hadn't thought about 'em till just this minute. The stiffs! Think of the fun they missed!"

It was eight o'clock the next morning when the five Scouts and Mr. Rogers, tanned and lean, with shoes battered and worn thin by the stony trails, marched

up Southmead Main Street from the railroad station, and found the village just as they had left it.

"It's all here, as if we'd never been away!" said Rob.

"But we are changed," said Lou. "We've got pictures in our heads, and memories, that we didn't have before. We've lifted up our eyes unto the hills!"

"And our feet, too," said Peanut. "Yes, sir, we are changed. These old Southmead hills haven't grown smaller, but our eyes have grown bigger."

"You're a psychologist, Peanut," laughed Mr. Rogers.

"I'm a hungry one, whatever it is," Peanut replied. "Hope ma has saved some oatmeal."

"So do I!"

"So do I!"

"So do I!"

"So do I!"

"We seem to have the same old appetites, anyhow!" laughed Rob, as the White Mountain hike ended at the post-office, and the six hikers scattered for their homes.

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