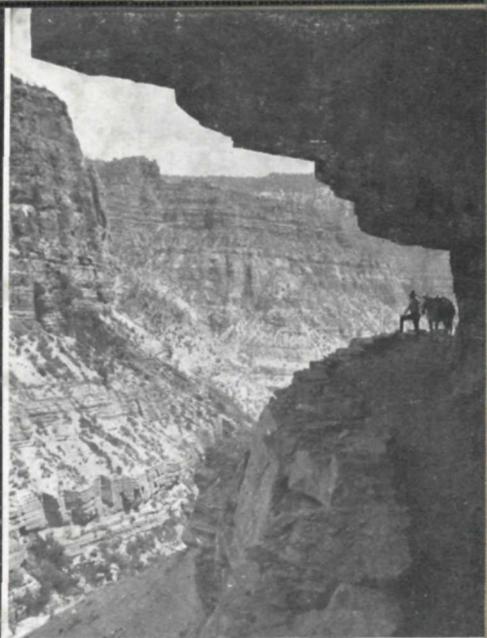


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BOY SCOUTS AT THE GRAND CANYON

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Boy Scouts at the Grand Canyon

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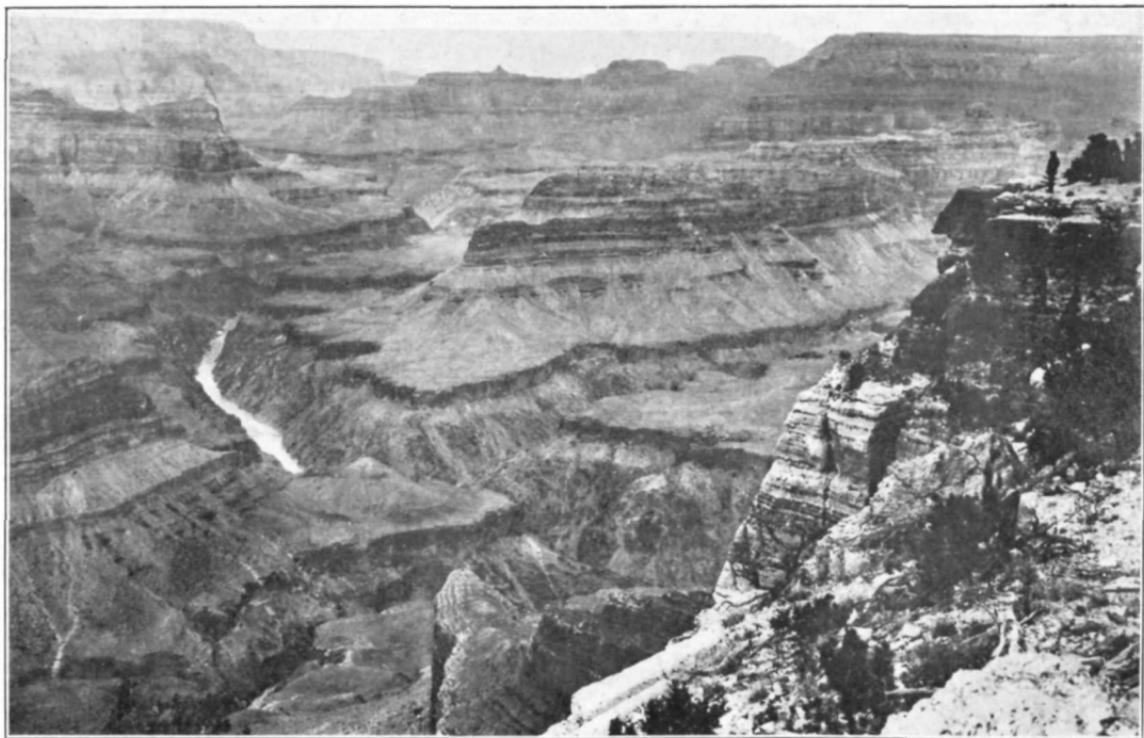
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BOY SCOUTS
AT THE
GRAND CANYON
A STORY OF THE RAINBOW COUNTRY

By
WALTER PRICHARD EATON

ILLUSTRATED



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BOY SCOUTS AT THE
GRAND CANYON

Made in United States of America

INTRODUCTION

OUT in southern Utah there is a lofty plateau, which goes stepping down in white and pink and vermilion precipices till it reaches, in northern Arizona, the greatest hole in the world—the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Into the brilliantly colored, soft sandstone of this strange region, water and wind and weather have for uncounted ages been cutting and carving, laying bare as nowhere else on the globe the records of geology, and creating wild beauty and opportunities for adventure. Three national parks and a great national forest lie here, only a day's journey apart. Out beyond them, eastward, are the Bad Lands, a cruel desert of sun-smitten rock and uncharted canyons, on either side of the great river. It is a land of rainbow colors, plunging precipices, dazzling light, and crumbling ruins of a forgotten race who once dwelt upon the cliff sides. To this land, so utterly

different from anything known to the East, our Scouts are taken. Go with them in this story, and perhaps some day you will want to go there yourself and see at first hand the wonders of your United States.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON.

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Boy Scouts at the Grand Canyon

CHAPTER I

THE TRAIL PATROL TRY ROPING DOWN A CLIFF

“PATROL, halt!” commanded Bobbie Frost, who as temporary assistant Scout Master was carrying on for the Scout Master in the latter’s absence from town.

“Am I ready to halt? Somebody ask me,” cried “Pickles” Prentice, dropping off his blanket roll and then his pack to the ground, and immediately dropping on top of them.

“I’ll bite. Are you ready to halt?” laughed Charlie Ross, otherwise known as “the Duke,” who, like Bobbie Frost, was a graduate from patrol leadership, and was helping to look after the younger Scouts.

“No,” said Pickles, stretching out at full length, and closing his eyes.

“Just because you’ve come half a mile up hill—all in! Poor Pickles!” said Bobbie.

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“What do you mean, half a mile? It’s been three miles, I bet, and up the side of a house,” sighed Pickles, “and my old pack weighs fifty pounds.”

“So does mine,” said another Scout.

“I bet mine weighs sixty,” said a third.

“Mine won’t be so heavy after dinner,” commented a fourth. “When do we eat, Bobbie?”

“Eat? It isn’t eleven o’clock yet. Not for an hour and a half. We’ve got to make the ridge before we eat.”

“I wish some kind friend would bring me a drink of water,” said Pickles.

Nobody moved.

“He hasn’t got any friends,” said the Duke.

“You said it,” sighed Pickles, sitting up. “Nobody loves me. Will anybody tell me where the water is?”

“Half a mile more, to the ridge,” said Bobbie. “All up, boys! We’re off again.”

“Aw, not yet!”

“Gee, I’m just getting rested!”

“Have a heart!”

“I have one—that’s why we’re starting,” said Bobbie. “If you sit here too long, you’ll get

The Patrol Try Roping Down a Cliff 11

stiff. Come on—lunch over the top—and water.”

The Trail Patrol, for that is what they called themselves, as they kept the foot trails cleared around Southmead, rose, shouldered their packs and blanket rolls again, and started up the dim, steep path through the woods, which led to the top of a long, bare mountain ridge. It was a Saturday in Spring. The air was warm, however, the sun bright, and the young foliage on the trees did not yet make much shade. It was hot work climbing, with packs and blankets, and their rate of progress was not more than a mile an hour.

It was half-past eleven before they came into stunted foliage, and then to the base of bare, steep rocks, scrambled up the cliff by a series of gullies, and stood at last on the naked summit of the ridge.

Here they threw down their loads again, and drew deep breaths. Up here the wind reached them, cool and refreshing, and the perspiration on their faces began to evaporate. But their thirst increased.

“Where’s that water?” Pickles demanded.

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Bobbie pointed. Following his finger, the boys looked along the ridge to a dip, where there seemed to be a heavy forest, and then over the top of this hollow to the summit of the main mountain, rising 600 feet above them, and almost two miles away.

“Are you telling us we’ve got to climb to the top of that old mountain for a drink?” Pickles wailed.

“Not quite,” laughed Bobbie. “Packs on! Forward, march!”

The troop went a quarter of a mile along the ridge, finding the trail by piles of stones, or cairns, and then plunged down into the wooded hollow. In five minutes the trees grew larger, dark hemlocks appeared, then ferns and wild flowers, and almost before they knew it, they were standing beside a clear, cold little brook which came down from the summit cone, through this hollow, and flowed away down the other side of the ridge.

Off came the blankets and packs, out came tin cups, and it looked for a minute, as the Duke said, as if there wouldn’t be any brook in a mighty short time.

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"Whoa, there! That's enough!" Bobbie shouted. "You'll all swell up and bust!"

He snatched the cup out of Pickles' hand.

"Aw, have a heart!" Pickles complained. "I've only begun."

"Wrong, you've finished—for a while," said Bobbie. "Well, Duke, shall we lunch here?"

"Might's well."

"All right. Assignments!"

The patrol knew what that meant. Two at once got out their axes, and went for dry, dead wood. Two others looked for a suitable spot, with no dead leaves around, for a fire pit, found it on a small shelf of gravel in a turn of the brook, and began to build up a pit with loose stones. Another Scout cut the uprights and cross bar to hang the kettle on. Another got the luncheon rations out of the packs, along with the kettle and two frying pans, and filled the kettle at the brook. The Duke gathered small, dead hemlock twigs, snapping them off low branches, for kindling. Soon a thin column of smoke was going up through the trees, and not long after you could hear the sizzle of bacon in the pans, and smell it, too.

Each Scout was provided with a loaf of bread, from which he cut generous slices with his hunting knife and buttered it with butter carried in a jar in the Duke's pack. On these slices were placed the crisp bacon. Each boy, in his tin cup, had put sugar and a pinch of tea leaves. For dessert there was half a bar of sweet chocolate apiece. Maybe you don't think that sounds like much of a lunch, but when you've climbed a steep mountain in the hot sun, and used up a lot of energy, it is pretty good. The Trail Patrol certainly found it so, and lay lazily on their backs for fifteen minutes after eating it, while a kettle of fresh water was heating over the dying coals of the fire.

"Dishes!" said Bobbie, suddenly sitting up.

The few dishes were washed in hot water and stowed back in the packs, the fire thoroughly put out, and the march was resumed.

At half-past two the party stood on the summit of the mountain. Here the trail ended.

"Where do we go from here?" the boys demanded.

Again Bobbie pointed, this time down the summit slope in the opposite direction to which

they had come. He pointed over a long, steep incline covered first with blueberry bushes, and then with stunted scrub oaks and jack pines, and showing no trail at all.

“You mean we’re going to cut a trail down there?” Pickles demanded. “Aw, have a heart!”

“I mean we’re going to scout a trail,” said Bobbie. “With anybody as lazy as you along, we couldn’t hope to get much cut.”

“And wait till you see what’s at the bottom!” said the Duke.

The “bottom” he referred to was a deep ravine between the summit they stood on and the next one, two miles away. On one side, this ravine apparently ended at a sharp cliff edge, where the whole range plumped abruptly down to the valley.

Bobbie now produced from his large pack a reel of fine but strong string, and a compass. Consulting with the Duke, he decided at what point they wanted to hit the ravine, and noted carefully the compass line. Then they set out. As soon as they came to timber, Bobbie cut a stick to insert in the reel, so the string would

unwind easily, tied one end of the twine to a tree and blazed the tree, and then again they started down, moving slowly, with Bobbie coming next to last, to unwind the string as he followed what those ahead told him was the best course. One Scout went behind him, to give warning if the string broke, and to tie it together. Every now and then, as the trees got higher and blocked the view, they took their compass direction, to keep on the line. Thus they strung a future trail down for a mile, leaving a white string behind so they could come back and do the cutting.

It took them two hours or more to reach the bottom of the ravine, where they found a spring, and below that a tiny swamp, and out of the swamp a brook gradually growing, and flowing toward what they knew must be a cliff edge. At the side of this brook they cut their string, made the end fast, and set about preparations for the night.

But the first preparation was a bath.

“Say, am I hot? Ask me!” cried Pickles.

“I don’t need to,” the Duke told him. “It’s bad enough to look at you.”

Off came their clothes, at a spot where the brook had made a couple of small pools two feet deep, and in splashed the Scouts.

There was an instantaneous and blood-curdling yell from ten throats, and out they all came, red as boiled lobsters—all except Pickles, who sat in the water up to his neck, and said,

“Th-this is d-d-d-delicious!”

“So d-d-d-delicious it makes your teeth ch-ch-ch-chatter,” laughed the Duke. “Come out before you freeze. If you don’t, you’re apt to break, like an icicle.”

“W-w-w-w-wait till I g-g-g-get c-c-c-cooled off,” said Pickles.

“I’m c-c-c-cool now,” he chattered, as he climbed out about two seconds later.

The next job was to find a good spot for a camp.

“You know what we want—a straight-faced rock that will reflect heat, and a flat place in front of it,” said Bobbie. “Scatter and hunt. Quick now.”

Five minutes later a call came from one of the boys, and everybody drew in to the spot. He had found a boulder with a straight face, and the

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ground, while not very level in front of it, could be slept on, with the help of enough boughs and leaves.

“ We’ll need lots of wood to-night—it’s going to get cold in about an hour,” said Bobbie. “ Duke, let’s you and me join the wood choppers. Assignments, boys!”

For the evening assignments two of the boys took a poncho and gathered it full of dry leaves from the woods, making a dozen trips, and dumping the leaves, with any low hemlock twigs they could gather, on the ground in front of the fireplace. Others brought water from the brook, made the fire pit, and got the dishes ready, while the four axes rang in the silent forest, as the choppers worked up dead timber into fire wood. It was a busy time for the next hour, and it was a tired and hungry troop which finally sat in the leaves, before the fire (with three or four feet of ground cleared bare between the fire and the leaves), while the two best cooks prepared a kettle of pea soup made from soup sticks, cooked two chops apiece, and fried a pan of potatoes, for the Duke, out of his pack, had produced a box of potatoes, already boiled, as a treat.

“That old pack will be lighter now,” he laughed.

It was almost dark in the woods when the dinner was finally ready, and getting pretty cold. Everybody put on sweaters before beginning to eat.

“Seems as if it was colder here than down home,” said Pickles.

“Getting cooled off, are you?” somebody laughed.

“Of course it’s colder,” said the Duke. “We are a thousand feet higher up.”

“Don’t seem’s if it would make so much difference.”

“What’s that formula, Bobbie?” the Duke asked.

“Every hundred feet up is ten miles north,” answered Bobbie.

“You mean, if we climb a thousand feet, it’s the same as going a hundred miles north?”

“Yes, that’s what the scientists say.”

“Wow!” cried Pickles. “We are in Vermont!”

“Sure we are—and pretty well up the State, too,” said Bobbie. “We’ve hiked from Massa-

chusetts way into Vermont, in one day. How's that?"

"Where's Ethan Allen?" Pickles demanded.

"Who—who-who—who-who-who!" came a sudden call from the woods.

"I said, Ethan Allen," shouted Pickles, toward the owl, as everybody laughed.

As they sat around the fire after dinner, with their blankets over their shoulders, Indian fashion, and their faces well toasted by the heat reflected on them by the boulder, little Tommy Cowan, who had been silent and thoughtful during the meal, spoke up.

"Bobbie," he said, "about that hundred feet up meaning ten miles north. How high is Mount Washington?"

"About 6,200 feet—a shade over," said Bobbie. "Why?"

"'Cause, last winter, you remember, two young fellows froze to death climbing it. They were up near the top. If they were up 6,000 feet, they were really 600 miles north of where they were, weren't they?"

"Say, you'll have me woozy if you keep on," Pickles laughed. "They were six hundred

miles north of where they were! That's a hot one."

Tommy paid no attention to him. "Where would that put 'em on the map, Bobbie?"

"I never thought—let's see—six hundred miles north of northern New Hampshire must be well up into Labrador somewhere."

"Gosh! then those fellows were really climbing in the winter climate of Labrador——"

"Yes," said the Duke, "and in a blizzard, a gale, and above timber line with no shelter."

"I guess they didn't really know what they were up against," said Tommy. "I never thought before of our mountains here in New England being dangerous. Labrador—gee whiz!"

"I bet this one is dangerous before morning," Pickles declared. "I bet we are all frozen. I'm starting to freeze now."

"Oh, it's merely d-d-d-delicious," somebody laughed.

"Let's wrap up and sleep," said Bobbie. "And if anybody wakes and sees the fire needs more wood, get up and put it on—but don't feel you have to sing while you're doing it. And if

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anybody giggles, he gets ducked in the brook in the morning.”

Everybody wrapped up in his blanket, with his feet toward the fire (on which they first placed a big back log of dead oak), and with his pack for a pillow tried to sleep. Sleeping in the open is easy enough when you are used to it, but the first night out it isn't so easy, and the more people there are, the harder it is, because everybody turns and twists, trying to get comfortable, and a general feeling of restlessness seems to be in the air.

But, except for the turnings and twistings on the dry leaves, there was silence for a while. Then, suddenly, somebody said “Ouch!”

Pickles burst into a snigger.

“Shut up,” said another voice.

“Well, I got a stone sticking into me,” said the first voice.

“I got a root in my ribs,” said another.

Pickles giggled.

“Brook!” cried Bobbie.

At that, everybody giggled.

“D-d-d-d-d-delicious,” came out of the darkness.

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“I’ll throw you *all* in, if you don’t shut up and go to sleep,” Bobbie ordered. “Come on, now, don’t be amateur campers.”

The crowd sobered down. There was an occasional smothered snigger for the next ten minutes, and then sleep did settle at last on the troop.

Around midnight the Duke woke up, partly because he was cold, partly because a hummock in the ground was sticking into his side. He slipped quietly out of his blanket, and put two or three fresh logs on the red coals of the fire. Then he glanced back, in the flare-up of light, at the sleeping troop, and saw that one other blanket was empty. Looking hastily at the faces, he realized it was no other than little Tommy Cowan.

“Where can the kid be?” he thought, and he sneaked out of the firelight, into the woods, trying to penetrate the darkness. As his eyes grew accustomed to it, he found that he could see quite a distance through the trees, by the light shed from the fire, and he moved still farther away, wondering whether or not to call Tommy’s name.

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But before he could decide, he heard his own name called softly—without seeing anybody.

“Where are you, Tommy?” he whispered.

“Here.”

“Where’s here?”

Tommy stepped out from behind a tree, close by.

“What on earth are you doing here?” exclaimed the Duke.

Tommy hesitated a moment. “Well,” he finally said, as if hunting for words, “I couldn’t sleep very well, and I got to wondering what it’s like in the woods at night, and if you can see in ’em, and what the camp would look like through the trees, so I got up. I’ve been here quite a while. I got so I could see a little before you put the logs on. After that it was plain way out to here. I can tell an oak from a maple now, where the firelight hits ’em. Gee, it’s kind of nice out here in the dark, and the rest of the guys all asleep!”

“You’re a funny kid,” the Duke laughed, “but I know just what you mean. I’ve got up at night and wandered off from the fire often; it’s sort of—of pleasantly lonely.”

“That’s it!” exclaimed Tommy. “It’s lonely, but it doesn’t make you sad!”

“Well, let’s get back in the old blankets, now,” said Duke. “Too cold out here.”

There was no trouble getting anybody up in the morning. They were all stiff and cold, and rose with the first hint of the sun through the trees to the east. Neither did anybody propose a plunge in the brook, though there were loud demands on Bobbie to throw Pickles in. He refused.

“You were all of you as bad as he,” said Bobbie. “Everybody in, or nobody!”

A hot breakfast, and the sun warming them, the troop felt itself again, and demanded what they were going to do next.

“Let’s back cut on our string for a couple of hours,” said the leader, “and then I’ve got a surprise for you.”

They got out their axes, and cleared a trail six to eight feet wide back along the string, for perhaps a quarter of a mile, in the next two hours. Then they marched back along the newly cleared way, throwing all the brush far out at the sides, packed up their loads, and moved east-

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ward along the brook, toward the edge of the mountain.

After a short distance, they could hear a roar, and the forest seemed to thin out ahead. Another few steps, and they found themselves standing on top of a sheer precipice, that dropped down at least a hundred feet before it flattened out into a shelf. Beyond this shelf it dropped down again, an unseen distance. Over the lip of the precipice ran the brook, and dropped in one fall to the shelf below, where it hit with a roar.

"Wow!" cried Pickles. "Here's where we break the standing broad jump record!"

"Where do we go from here, if we *don't* jump?" asked another Scout.

Bobbie didn't answer. He was opening his pack. Out of the bottom he took a long coil of braided alpine rope.

"We'll use this," he said.

"You mean we're going to shin down on *that?* Good-night!"

"I'm no monkey," said Pickles.

"How long since?" the Duke demanded.

"We'll not go right over this steepest part,

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for a start," laughed Bobbie. "Come on over this way."

They all moved to one side of the precipice, where it slanted at an angle of fifty or sixty degrees, and had several ledges with small trees or laurel bushes growing on them.

"Packs off!" Bobbie ordered. "Now watch me."

First he doubled the rope around a stout tree at the top of the cliff, and pulled it till the two ends were equal. Then he flung them over the rim and looked to see if they reached a ledge below. They did. Then he stood up back to the rim, with his feet on either side of the doubled rope, picked up both strands behind him and brought them up behind and around his left hip, over his chest and over his right shoulder, and then down along under his left arm, holding them in his left palm.

"You see," he explained, "the rope now makes so much friction I can't slip and fall. Watch."

Guiding himself by grasping the rope in front of him with his right hand, and easing it slowly through his left hand, he backed right off the

rim, into space. But he kept his feet braced on the rock, leaning back into the rope, and almost danced right down the precipice, fifty feet to the ledge below! There he stepped out of the rope, and called up to the Duke, "Put Tommy Cowan on next!"

Tommy, who was always quick to learn, and had no fear, at once came down almost as if he'd been doing it all his life. But several of the other Scouts had a hard time. They didn't lean back into the rope enough, and their feet wouldn't stay put on the cliff, so that they swayed back and forth, or else the rope stuck too firmly to them, and they couldn't get down at all. But one by one they managed at last to get the hang of it, and all reached the ledge except the Duke.

He began to throw down the blankets, which those below caught. Then he pulled up one end of the rope, and tied on a bunch of knapsacks and lowered them, repeating till all the dunnage was safely down. Then he himself slowly descended.

"And now, how do we get the rope down?" Pickles demanded.

“If you can’t guess, we’re stuck here,” Bobbie laughed.

“Try pulling one end,” the Duke suggested.

Pickles pulled one strand, and of course the other end rose up the cliff, went around the tree at the top, and presently came tumbling down.

The same process was repeated down the next stretch of cliff, which brought them to the shelf where the waterfall hit. From here they found that the next drop was only about fifty feet, but was everywhere almost perpendicular. However, by this time all the boys had got used to roping down, and were keen to try the straight drop. On the straight face, they all dangled and swayed a good deal, but they all got down. As the last one, except the Duke, was descending, they suddenly heard voices in the woods below them, and looking down, saw two men climbing the steep pitch toward them. Over his shoulder one of these men was carrying a coil of rope.

“Well, well,” said this one, as they reached the Scouts, “I didn’t know anybody even knew where these cliffs are, let alone climbed ’em! And here are ten of you boys roping down. How’d you get up?”

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“We didn’t, Mr. Parsons,” said Bobbie. “We came over the top of the mountain. We strung a trail down to the rim of the cliffs, and some day we’re going to cut it out.”

“So you know who I am, too?”

“Yes, sir. I guess everybody knows that.”

Mr. Parsons laughed. He was a strong, active man about thirty-five or forty, who lived in the next town, had a good deal of money, and was well known as a sportsman.

“This is my friend, Tom Underwood, boys,” he said. “He’s a member of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and has come out to get some climbing to limber him up. We thought we’d try it up here.”

Pickles looked back up the fifty foot wall, down which the Duke was lowering the packs, and whistled.

“You must be a fly,” he said.

“Not quite,” laughed the man. “Sometimes I wish I was.”

Just then the Duke started down. He came easily, almost dancing on the cliff face.

“Where did you boys learn to rope down so well?” Mr. Parsons demanded.

"Two of our old Scouts taught me and the Duke," Bobbie answered. "They learned out in Oregon, at Crater Lake, where they went one summer."

"Oh," said Mr. Parsons. "And why 'the Duke'?"

The Duke by now was down to the bottom, and stood grinning. He had a lot of freckles, and his hair stood every which way on his head, and nobody had ever called him pretty.

"I guess," he laughed, "it's because I'm everything a Duke isn't."

Mr. Parsons looked sharply at him, as if sizing him up, and then grinned back at him.

"A good reason," he said. "Now, Tom, let's show these boys how to get back up the cliff."

The Scouts watched the two men with the utmost interest, as Mr. Underwood looped one end of the rope around his waist with a double-knotted bowline, and the two of them began to study the cliff face with the utmost care. They finally selected a crack about two feet wide and three or four feet deep, which ran almost straight up for 25 feet, to a smaller ledge. Mr. Underwood inserted himself in this crack, with his back

against one side, and his feet and hands against the other, and began to push himself up.

“Golly!” said Pickles.

When he reached the ledge, he crawled out and up went Mr. Parsons, with the help of the rope, which the first man belayed around a jag of rock.

When they were both on the ledge, the boys saw Mr. Parsons belay the rope behind his companion, playing it out as the other climbed, and they saw Mr. Underwood, very slowly and carefully, hunt out hand and toe holds, and work up the face of the rock.

The boys almost held their breaths.

“Why does Mr. Parsons belay the rope behind him?” somebody asked.

“So, if he fell, he’d only fall the length of the rope,” said Bobbie, “not all the way to the bottom, and get killed.”

“Golly!” exclaimed Pickles. “Wow! He’s up!”

He was. The boys heard him call down to his companion that the rope was fixed above, and saw Mr. Parsons brace his feet on the cliff face, and go up hand over hand.

“Let’s us do it!” cried Tommy, in excitement.

“Not on your life,” Bobbie replied. “We’re not up to that kind of work yet. I’m not going to carry any of you home on a stretcher. Besides, we’ve got to get down the rest of the way, and eat lunch, and get home. We’ll come back, and find an easier way up over to the left somewhere, to put a trail to the top, and then we can come here whenever we want to, and get practice.”

“But, mind you, nobody is to come alone and try to climb!” said the Duke. “We’ll come together, with a rope.”

“Don’t need to tell *me* that,” said Pickles. “I wouldn’t try it on a bet.”

“I would!” said Tommy. “When are we coming again?”

“Depends,” said Bobbie. “We’ve got a lot of other trails to look after first.” They didn’t need the rope on the rest of the descent, and before long were eating up the last of their grub, and were on their way back to Southmead.

And Bobbie and the Duke didn’t think much more about their meeting with Mr. Parsons.

CHAPTER II

HOW BOBBIE AND THE DUKE GOT A CHANCE TO GO WEST

BUT Mr. Parsons didn't forget it, for one evening two or three weeks later, as Bobbie was at home studying for his final college board examinations, the door-bell rang, and a moment later his mother came in, to say that Mr. Parsons wanted to see him.

“*What* have you been doing?”

“I don't know—nothing,” Bobbie answered, hurrying, in surprise, to the front room.

“Hello, Bobbie,” the man said. “You see, I know you, too. Are you surprised to see me?”

“Yes, sir, I am,” Bobbie stammered.

“Did you ever take your Scouts *up* that cliff?”

“No, sir, not yet. They're too young, most of 'em, and I don't know enough about climbing, either, to risk it. We're working out a trail over to the left, where it isn't so steep.”

Mr. Parsons nodded his head. "That's good judgment," he replied. "You evidently have a head, and use it. Has your friend the Duke got one?"

"I—I think so. Yes, sir. He's got a better one than I have."

Bobbie was still puzzled.

"Good," said the man. "Going to pass your college boards, both of you?"

"Duke doesn't have to—he's in the top seven," Bobbie answered. "I think I am—I only have four points to pass."

He was still more puzzled.

"Good. My nephew, if he's got a head, doesn't use it. He's got to stay at home and tutor all summer, to have any chance to get to college."

"That's hard luck," said Bobbie, politely.

"No—serves him right. I was going to take him with me to Zion and Bryce and the Grand Canyon this summer, and maybe rope a mountain lion, and a few easy things like that. Now he can't go."

"Well, I'd think it was hard luck if it was me!" Bobbie exclaimed.

“How’d *you* like to go—you and the Duke?” Mr. Parsons asked, smiling at Bobbie, whose mouth fell open with astonishment.

“Oh, Mr. Parsons, I’d like it better than anything in the world!” Bobbie exclaimed. “But I couldn’t possibly go. My father couldn’t afford it, and neither could Duke’s. It’s—it’s awfully expensive.”

“But, my dear boy, you wouldn’t have to worry about that—I’m *inviting* you,” laughed the man. “And don’t think it’s a one-sided bargain. My nephew can’t go, and I have my heart set on the trip. No fun to go alone, and no fun to go without somebody along who is strong and active and knows how to take care of himself in the open. This is going to be a real trip, not a fashionable excursion. I’ve got to have helpers along. I happen to have plenty of money—which is no fault of mine, as my father left me a flourishing factory. There are lots of worse ways I could spend it than making you two drag me out of the Grand Canyon, aren’t there?”

“I—I guess so,” Bobbie laughed, weakly. He was struck almost dumb by the prospect which had suddenly opened before him. He and the

Duke had never been west of the Catskill Mountains! Here was a chance to see one of the great wonders of the world—and to see a mountain lion! He turned red with embarrassment.

“I—I’d have to ask my folks,” he said.

“Suppose you ask your parents to come here,” said Mr. Parsons, “and while I’m talking to them, you can run across the street and ask the Duke what he thinks about it. Bring him back here, eh?”

Bobbie brought in his parents, much mystified, and ran across the street to the Duke’s house.

When the two boys returned, Mr. and Mrs. Frost and Mr. Parsons were chatting merrily. It was all fixed!

“And how about you, Duke?” Mr. Parsons asked. “Do you want to go?”

Duke grinned from ear to ear, speechless.

“Think your folks will let you?”

“If Mr. and Mrs. Frost will let Bobbie, they surely will let me.”

“Good. Then I’ll see you two next Sunday. We’ll have another go at that cliff.”

He said “Good-night,” and went out to his car.

The two boys were still dazed by what had happened.

“Why do you s’pose he picked on us?” Duke wondered. “Why, he never saw us ’cept that day over on the mountain.”

Mr. Frost looked very happy. “I only know what he told mother and me,” said he, “and it made us kind of cocky. It’s up to you boys now to keep us so.”

“What did he say?” Bobbie demanded.

“If I told you, it might make *you* cocky—too cocky. One thing was that he liked the way you took care of the younger boys.”

“The *real* reason was because you had that foolish rope you spent all your savings for,” said Mrs. Frost. “It’s too much for me, I must say. Spend twenty dollars for a little piece of rope, so’s you can risk your neck climbing cliffs, and then get rewarded for it by a trip out West! And us sensible people never get farther than the Hudson River!”

The boys laughed, and so did Mr. Frost.

“There’s something in what mother says,” he remarked. “Mr. Parsons really does want you because you seem to know something about rope

climbing. Seems he's one of those nuts, too. Well, get back to your books, both of you. If you let this excitement cost you your college boards, Bobbie, I won't send you to college at all. Don't forget that."

"No, sir," said Bobbie.

But the truth is he didn't get much studying done the rest of that evening.

CHAPTER III

THE SCOUTS REACH SALT LAKE CITY AND SWALLOW SALT

OF course they couldn't leave till after Bobbie had taken his college board examinations late in June. July third was finally chosen as the starting date. Meanwhile, the Scouts had to get equipped. They both had money in the savings bank, accumulated from caddying in past years, and from other work, and they decided it couldn't be put to better use than for equipment, and not ask their parents for anything. Mr. Parsons had been on three or four climbs with them, they now called him "Number One" because he generally climbed number one on the rope, and he said it sounded chummier than "Mr. Parsons." He insisted on only one item of equipment—mountain climber's boots, with tremendous thick soles studded with Swiss hobs all around the edges as well as in the center of

the soles. These they sent for early, to get them broken in. But he also said they'd ride a good deal, probably, so they got khaki riding breeches and leggings. They had their scout hats and shorts and other equipment for hiking, and packs and axes and cooking utensils. But the last in the list Number One said they wouldn't need.

"I've got enough camp equipment and we can get a cook to use it," he laughed. "What you'll mostly need is agility. I'm taking a big and a little movie camera, and you're going to be the actors."

"How about a gun?" asked Duke.

"What for?"

"Well, you said something about maybe an old mountain lion——"

"No guns! We're going to catch Mr. Lion alive, with your rope."

"Come, kitty, kitty," coaxed Duke, to an imaginary cat, holding in his hand an imaginary lasso.

"Yes, just like that. It will be much more exciting than shooting it. I'll take your picture as you catch it."

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“That’ll be a comfort to my bereaved parents,” said the Duke.

“Where do I come in?” asked Bobbie.

“You hold his hind legs,” Number One replied.

Early in the afternoon of July third, while a few premature firecrackers were popping, the two boys kissed their parents good-bye, and drove off with Mr. Parsons, to catch the main line train west. It was a hot day. It was hot in the train. They stowed their luggage, and went out on the back platform of the observation car.

“Now we’re off, I’ve got an awful confession to make,” said Number One. “This is going to be a hot trip. It’s going to be hot getting there, and hot when we’ve got there. I hope you like heat.”

“This isn’t hot, it’s just pleasant,” said the Duke, wiping his forehead.

“Oh,” said Number One. “Well, we’ll try to show you some *real* heat later.”

The next morning, not long after breakfast, they reached Chicago, where they had to cross the city to the Northwestern station. They had

all day before them, for the Salt Lake train didn't leave till evening, so they set out to see the town. The streets were hot and more or less deserted, for of course it was the Fourth of July, but there was a cool breeze out on the lake front, and they crossed Michigan Boulevard and the park, and saw the towering skyline of the city behind them.

"Looks as big as New York," said Bobbie. "But I want to see a gunman. Bring on your gunmen!"

However, the city was calm and peaceful. They had lunch at a restaurant on top of a building overlooking the lake, they went to a movie, and then had dinner, and after that got aboard their train and soon moved out into the twinkling signal lights of the yards, embarked on their journey into the West.

They crossed the Mississippi in the night, and the State of Iowa, and the next morning were crossing the Platte into Omaha. And all that day they were crossing Nebraska—mile after mile after endless mile of corn and wheat fields, with few towns, yet everywhere, among the vast fields, small houses and big barns.

"I'm getting woozy," cried the Duke. "If I don't see a hill, a real hill, pretty soon, I'll do something desperate."

"Such as?" asked Number One.

"I—I'll read the society notes in 'The Spur,'" said the Duke, pointing to one of the magazines in the observation car.

"Don't do that! Be patient. You'll see hills to-morrow. And put a blanket over you to-night."

"Blanket!" both perspiring boys exclaimed.

"Yes—blanket. We cross the Divide in the night. But maybe you'll be up—it's before two o'clock."

"Will I! Think I'd sleep while I was crossing the Divide?" cried Bobbie.

But long before night came they saw hills, such as they were—the low, rolling banks of the Platte River valley, which now grew narrower, shut in by these bounding walls.

"Do you realize, boys," said Mr. Parsons, "that you are comfortably rolling along at fifty miles an hour, sitting in an upholstered chair, on the trail of the covered wagons? This river valley has seen more hardship and struggle and

romance in its day than most spots. It was the pathway that opened the West. Down by that shallow river, half lost in sand flats and alders, the pioneers watered their oxen and built their camp-fires. Over those low hills that hem us in the Indians scouted them, and sometimes attacked. This very railroad we are on, the Union Pacific, was the first road pushed out and out across the continent, in the face of hostile Indians, and financial panics, and graft and politics. Old General Dodge, who built it, had to fight about everything and everybody, from red Indians to congressmen and financiers, to get the job done. But he got it done. In 1869, he met the Pacific railroad, which was being built east from California, and the rails were joined at the upper end of Salt Lake. I never come over it without thinking of the guts it took to build this line across the wilderness, and over the mountains and the desert. It's always been like a romance to me."

The boys looked out of the window. A motor was rushing along the highway which paralleled the road. An airplane beacon of the transcontinental mail route had just been lighted, and

flashed against the gathering twilight. The train rushed smoothly on.

"I guess we have it pretty soft these days," said Duke.

"Too soft," Number One replied. "That's why I like to get out into the wilds, and be on my own. I don't want to feel that I'm softening up and couldn't do what the old timers did. If you Scouts ever feel you are getting soft, beat it for the tall timber!"

"In an ox cart?" Bobbie asked.

"No—that takes too long," Number One laughed.

After supper they reached Cheyenne, Wyoming, and got out on the platform to stretch. Cheyenne suggested to both Scouts the wild West.

"Maybe we'll see a cowboy!" they exclaimed.

What they saw was a large station, with all the latest magazines on the rack, and behind it the brightly lighted streets of a town, with shops and movie houses just like all other towns. They got back in the train disgusted. But they did notice that the air was fresh and cool, and presently it got still cooler. They were climbing.

The engine coughed steadily. At Sherman, in an hour or so, they were on the highest point of the trip, 8,013 feet, though it wasn't the Divide. They got out again at Laramie for a few moments' stop. Here they were at 7,151 feet. The stars were very bright, and the air cool, but they could see nothing of the "snowy mountains" which the time-table said were visible to the southwest.

"Well, boys, we cross the Divide at about 1:30," said Number One. "I think I'll turn in, but I suppose you want to stay up."

"I would, too, if there was a moon," Bobbie answered, suppressing a yawn.

"If you get up early enough, and look to the left, maybe you'll get a peep at a snow mountain. Good-night," said the man.

The boys were up soon after six. But already the train had crossed Wyoming and was running down a narrow and desolate canyon, which held a trickle of water, a highway, and the railroad, and little else but rocks and sand and sage brush. The rocks rose high on both sides, shutting out the view. Neither Scout had ever before seen anything so desolate.

“So this is the West!” Duke exclaimed. “I wish somebody would bring in some of those great open spaces. All you can see is rock walls——”

“Look! Look quick!” cried Bobbie, pointing eastward.

Through a gap in the canyon wall they caught, but only for a moment, the top of a far-off, lofty mountain, shining white in the sun.

“A snow mountain!” they both exclaimed.

Then the rock walls shut in upon them again.

When Mr. Parsons joined them at breakfast, they were still following down the stream, now and then past a lonely little ranch house with sparse irrigated fields on the bank. The walls were growing higher. Number One pointed out to the highway.

“The old pioneer trail,” he said. “How’d you like to have driven an ox team down this canyon before there was any road, and without knowing what you were going to find ahead of you?”

“What did the pioneers find?”

“They found the Devil’s Gate—we’ll see it presently,” Number One replied, “and they had

to turn back, and go up a side canyon, and find a way to get through, because the precipices of the Devil's Gate came down into the river."

Soon they saw these cliffs, now cut through by rail and road, and rolled suddenly out of the canyon into a wide plain, with fields, orchards and houses. Soon they were in Ogden, and piled out for a stretch. Standing in front of the depot, they looked straight up a long, wide street, the main street of the city, and directly at the end of it rose a high mountain.

"We've got an hour—let's walk to the foot of that mountain—see, it comes right down into the city!" exclaimed Duke.

"All right—come on," Mr. Parsons smiled, and winked at Bobbie. "Only not too fast, it's hot again."

They walked up the street, past the Mormon church, the court house, the hotels, and still the street rose toward the big mountain. Now they had reached the residence section. They walked a mile. Number One glanced at his watch.

"Twenty minutes gone," he said.

The mountain was apparently no nearer. They pushed on, till they could see what inter-

vened. Their street went on out into farther reaches of the city. Beyond that was evidently open country.

“ Well, it’s holding its own!” laughed Bobbie. “ I say we let it stay there.”

“ Say, how far is it, anyway?” Duke demanded.

“ I should guess maybe eight or ten miles,” Number One laughed. “ You’re out West, son, and things a mile away look close by. You’ll get used to it.”

“ You’ve got your great open spaces at last,” said Bobbie.

They had to hurry back to make the train, and in an hour were in Salt Lake City.

“ Here’s where we get out for good,” Number One announced. “ I’ve got a surprise for you. Maybe you won’t like it. But from here on we travel in a Ford, and go where we feel like.”

They left all their luggage at the depot, and were soon at the dealer’s, where a car was waiting, ordered in advance.

“ I ran it a thousand miles, as you directed, to limber her up,” said the dealer. “ All she’ll need now are a few kind words.”

“No gas?” asked the Duke.

“Practically none,” said the dealer. “The air’s so fine out here, cars run mostly on that.”

“You don’t mean hot air, do you?” Duke grinned.

“And remember, you’re going to give me something on this car when we get back,” added Mr. Parsons.

“Where you going?” said the dealer.

“Oh, the Grand Canyon, maybe Lee’s Ferry, Escalante—a lot of places.”

“Escalante, eh? And Lee’s Ferry? ’Spect to have any car when you get back?”

“Sure— isn’t it a Ford?”

“You win,” laughed the dealer, as they got in.

“Now,” said Number One, “my proposition is that instead of leaving right off, we go have a swim in Salt Lake, and see the town, too, and start early to-morrow. Those in favor ——”

“Aye!”

“That makes it unanimous.”

They parked the car near the station, and took a trolley line which ran straight out for sixteen miles, to Saltair, the pleasure resort on the Lake. The Lake, as they had seen it from the train,

looked close by. But, as the Duke said, nothing is close by out West. The road ran over a causeway through miles of desolate salt marshes before it reached a kind of Coney Island establishment on deep water. From here they could look back at the city perched on a shelf at the foot of the Wasatch Mountains which towered almost 10,000 feet above, and south at another big range of mountains close to them, and west and north across miles and miles and miles of gray-green water.

They hurried into rented bathing suits, and the Duke prepared to dive into the Lake.

“Hold on!” called Mr. Parsons. “I don’t want to cramp your style, but if I were you, I’d slip in feet first, and not splash.”

“Why?”

“Oh, well, if you like salt in your eyes, go ahead.”

Duke went in feet first. So did Bobbie. Duke, who was a fine swimmer, at once struck out with a crawl stroke, to show his speed. He buried his face and churned the water, and should have traveled at a great pace. But he didn’t. Instead, he stuck his head as far out of the little

waves as he could, and began to choke and spit and rub his eyes.

“Gosh, how this old water stings!” he cried. “And how it tastes! And you might as well swim in molasses, for all the speed you can make!”

“Gee, it’s great!” cried Bobbie, who wasn’t a good swimmer. “I don’t have to work at all to keep up. See, I can float standing up!”

Just as he spoke, a wave hit him in the face, and he, too, began to spit and choke.

“Maybe you boys will learn something if you live long enough,” Number One laughed. “But you’ll probably choke to death first.”

After that, the Scouts were content to keep their mouths shut, and their heads above water, and for half an hour enjoyed the curious sensation of bobbing about in water so full of salt that you cannot sink in it.

Cool and refreshed, they rubbed the salt crystals off their bodies, dressed, had some lunch, and went back to their car in the city.

The afternoon was spent in sightseeing. Nothing interested the Duke so much as the water which flowed down the gutters of the old

town, from the irrigation ditches above, a relic of the early days when the gutters were tapped by each householder for irrigation. Bobbie was most interested to look back over the city at the great mountain wall, and at the deep cut in it made by Emigration Canyon.

“It was through that canyon that the Mormons came,” said Mr. Parsons. They had motored up to the highest point they could reach above the city, almost at the mouth of the canyon. Right above them rose the bare, forbidding mountain walls. Below them were the roofs of the city, the distant capitol on its hill, and then the great reaches of the Lake, stretching out of sight between mountain barriers, into the west.

“Talk about romance!” he went on. “Brigham Young had led his people, the Mormons, all the way from the Mississippi valley, out across the prairies, through Wyoming, to be blocked at last by these Utah mountains and canyons. The oxen were getting exhausted. So were the people. At last they found a way through—Emigration Canyon, they called it later. Out of that gap they emerged—and stood

almost where we are now—and just imagine, if you can, what they saw ——”

“They didn’t see a city, that’s sure,” said Bobbie.

“No—they saw a desert, and a great lake cutting right across it and blocking all further progress. They were through the mountains, but that was as far as they could go. They must have known at once that it was here or nowhere they would settle. They knew that down out of these canyons came water from the melting snows. They found a river coming out just south, and named it the Jordan ——”

“A good name, too, ’cause it flows into a dead sea,” said Bobbie.

“And they found even better water in City Creek canyon, which we saw above the State capitol. They ditched this water on to this desert shelf, which once must have all been under water when the Lake was bigger, and began to raise crops. They hauled logs out of the canyons with oxen, and built homes. They made the desert blossom as the rose, for a fact, and they erected this city—all the result of those ox team pioneers who emerged, half starved,

through that gap in the mountains. Isn't that a romance?"

"It sure is," said the Duke. "But why was everybody so down on the Mormons, then? You'd think, from the history I've studied, that they were terribly wicked people."

"That's another story," Number One answered. "You see, they were a peculiar religious sect, and one of the things they believed in during their early days was polygamy ——"

"That means having more than one wife, doesn't it?"

"Yes—at the same time. That was against the law of the country, and against all the sentiment of the rest of the country. The Mormons were finally compelled to give it up. But it doesn't pay to judge anybody too harshly because he believes in something you don't. The fact remains that the Mormons were brave, hardy, hard-working people, and they were really law-abiding. I suppose, even to-day, there is less lawbreaking in Utah than almost any State, and more coöperation. Well—the first class in history is adjourned. Let's go find a hotel."

"One thing the Mormons did, anyhow," Bob-

bie remarked, as they drove along, "was to lay out wide streets. I never saw such wide streets."

Number One laughed. "I guess Boston sometimes wishes it had been laid out by Mormons, instead of Blaxton's cows," he laughed.

They found a fine hotel, in the heart of the city, looking out over the Temple grounds, and spent the evening packing the car with their duffle, to be ready for an early start. The duffle brought by Number One, the boys discovered, included three sleeping bags with pneumatic mattresses, and a nested camp kit. When the car was packed, there was room on the front seat, but none on the rear.

"Looks as if somebody would ride on the hood," the Duke remarked.

"We'll get you a saddle in the morning," Mr. Parsons laughed. "Now, for bed—and an early start."

CHAPTER IV

THE SCOUTS REACH ZION CANYON IN SPITE OF THE DUKE'S PUNS

BOBBIE and the Duke were sleeping soundly, and their room was still dark, when Number One came in and shook them.

“Oh, have a heart!” the Duke mumbled.
“Why, I just got to sleep!”

“Two hundred and sixty miles to go to-day,” said Number One.

“What’s that to a Ford?” Duke sat up and rubbed his eyes. “Fifty per—only a little over five hours.”

“And I didn’t know but you’d like to take the loop drive around Mount Timpanogos, and see a glacier——”

“Wow! A glacier!” Both boys were out of bed and under the shower like a shot.

The city was still asleep, the streets bare in the rising sunlight, as the Duke stowed himself

in somehow amid the dunnage, and Number One took the wheel, with Bobbie beside him, and they started south, over a paved highway. Off to the west they could see the open stretches of the great lake. On their left, still hiding the sun, rose the great wall of the Wasatch Mountains. They sped merrily along down the valley at a lively clip.

“This old haunted house is knocking ’em off like a sweetheart,” Duke remarked.

“Are you light headed, or does that mean something?” asked Number One.

“’Course it means something. Means a lot.”

“Do you know what it means, Bobbie?”

“Sure,” Bobbie laughed. “A haunted house is the same as a load of iron.”

“Well, that’s *very* clear now. How stupid of me. You’re not referring to this car, by any chance, are you?”

“Sure,” said the Duke. “That’s what our garage man calls any car that costs less’n two grand—a haunted house, or a load of iron.”

“And what does knocking ’em off like a sweetheart mean?”

“Oh, gee, honest, Number One, if you were

his grease ball, he'd call you a dumb clunk. That means hitting on all four."

"I see. Know any more?"

"Well, I hope she don't kneel down with a couple o' balonies and everything shot but the stoppers ——"

"Whoa!" cried Number One. "Don't go too fast. A balony's a flat, I suppose, and stoppers are brakes?"

"Ray, ray! The boy's good. One hundred per cent."

"Oh, I'll learn a lot, if I stick around with you bright guys long enough," Number One laughed. "But suppose you keep your eyes peeled for a left turn at American Fork, because that's where we start around that cute little hill you can just see peeping up ahead."

The boys looked up at a summit still white with snow.

"How high?" they asked.

"Twelve thousand and six feet, the map says."

"Can we climb it?"

"Not and get to Cedar City to-day. Cheer up, you'll get climbing enough later."

Twenty-five miles out of Salt Lake, they turned up a side road east, and began to climb through a wild gorge. The road was narrow and none too good, and they ascended almost 4,000 feet in fifteen miles, till they could see the great mountain and its snow fields towering almost directly above them. Then they dropped down, by a better road, to the paved highway which descends through Provo canyon, and came down and down, through a spectacular gorge by a rushing stream, till they broke out of the range on the south side of the mountain, back into the valley, at the city of Provo.

“Some ride! And old sweetheart never skipped a beat!” said the Duke. “We got to give her a name.”

“What do you suggest?”

“I think she’s a he, and ought to be called Brigham, after Brigham Young,” said Bobbie.

“Call her that, anyway. Good old Brigham!” said the Duke. “Brigham’s not to blame for punching me in the ribs. It’s this camera tripod.”

“Let Bobbie try the rear—what do you say?” said Mr. Parsons.

"We'll stop at a store and pick up something for lunch, anyhow."

Bobbie inserted himself into the dunnage after they had stocked some crackers and cheese and fruit, and Brigham sped on, through the little city of Provo, and on down the great southward stretching valley. The mountains marched at their left. Out across the valley to the west they saw Utah Lake, and then more mountains.

"All islands once, in a vast inland sea," said Number One. "But wait till we get to southern Utah. Then you'll see just how the earth was made."

Past farms and ranches they sped, through villages, across irrigation ditches. The road was pretty good, long stretches of it paved, and they kept a good pace. They pulled up at noon to eat their lunch, and then Number One climbed into the rear, and Bobbie took the wheel. The mountains kept right on at their left. Late in the afternoon they passed close to Mount Belknap, 12,133 feet.

"The West is quite extensive," Duke remarked. "There seem to be several Rocky Mountains.

“Gosh,” he added, seriously, “I never saw so much country! It goes on, and on, and on!”

All three were pretty weary when Brigham at last rolled into Cedar City, a town of two or three thousand people, where the bus line starts for the Parks, and where the Escalante Hotel awaited them. They weren't long in getting washed, and finding the dining room.

“And to-morrow, we'll be in Zion!” Bobbie exclaimed. “Any climbing there, Number One?”

“Two or three people have tried it,” the man answered. “I'm saying nothing till you see for yourself.”

Again they were off early, with but sixty-five miles to go.

“And now, little pupils,” said Mr. Parsons, as he stepped on Brigham's accelerator, “you want to keep your eyes peeled. We are entering Dixie, and ——”

“We are *what?*” Duke demanded. “Where do you think you are?”

“I know—and you don't,” Number One laughed. “We are entering Utah's Dixie. They call it that because, before the railroads

came, and the Mormons had to raise everything they used, they came down here and raised cotton. They say they can grow anything down here which can be grown anywhere in the United States."

By now Brigham was rolling along southward over a good highway, with a steep, two thousand foot wall beginning to rise on the left, and on the other side nothing much but rocks and dust and a few scattered desert shrubs. The boys looked out on this desolate scene, and just then a signboard appeared by the highway.

"Yeah, they can raise signboards, just the same as the rest of the country," Duke laughed. "Where are the hot dog stands?"

"While you are waiting, take a look at that cliff on the left. That's the Hurricane Fault."

"Some hurricane," said the Duke. "I got a lot o' faults, but none as big as that."

"He's feeling pretty good this morning," said Number One, to Bobbie. "Let's forget him. You know what a fault is? It's the geological term for a buckle in the earth crust. One edge of the crust on a crack rises over the other. That cliff wall is such a fault. You're going to

see, in the next month, about every kind of a geologic exhibition there is. You're going to see how the earth is made better, I suppose, than you can see it anywhere else on the globe."

Now and then, as they whizzed along, they passed scattered small houses and barns and green fields, irrigated by some stream from the Fault. But there was little habitation till they turned off the main highway, eastward, around the end of the Hurricane Fault, and came down into the valley of the Virgin River. Both boys set up a shout as red and white cliffs appeared on the north side of the highway, dazzling in the morning sun, and from high points on the road they looked down into hollows of emerald, with fruit trees, orchards, gardens, houses, surrounded by a world of naked stone and desert.

"They are like oases, the farms, aren't they?" Bobbie exclaimed. "Gosh, it took some nerve to come here, and make those oases, though! This must have been a wild land once."

"The Mormons had to have cotton," said Number One, "and now they grow cantaloupes. Wait till we come out! They'll be ripe then. You've got something to look forward to!"

"I'd like one now," said the Duke. "It's hot in Dixie."

"We're low—not over 3,000 feet, I guess, 4,000 anyhow. Up on top of those far cliffs, where the pine trees are, it's probably cold. Another thing we'll get on this trip—all sorts of climate."

The colored cliffs to their left and now far ahead of them piled up higher, and more rugged. They passed through two or three small hamlets, dusty and hot looking, and turning northward, faced brilliant rock mountains, into which the road seemed to run. The Virgin River had divided. They were following up the left fork. At the Park entrance they stopped, to give their names to the khaki clad ranger who came out from his little house beside the road.

"And now we are in Zion!" Number One exclaimed. "Which will you climb first, boys?"

They had put the top of the car down, to see better, and that was lucky, for the great ramparts of the canyon rose so sharply from both sides of the narrow valley floor that you had to tip your head back to see the tops.

"There's the highest one, over there," said

Mr. Parsons, pointing to the left, "at the very entrance. It is called the Great West Temple. It has never been climbed. Or, as one of the natives put it, 'the hand of man has never set foot on the summit.'"

The two boys didn't even laugh at this bull. They were staring at the great upward sweep of vermilion sandstone, that turned into dazzling white stone and went on up and up, and then was capped by a strip of red again, which was quite flat on top, and evidently bore trees. But there were no trees on the great upsweeping precipices.

"I think I'll begin on something easier, if you don't mind," said Duke. "How high is that bird?"

"Nearly 8,000. It rises 3,805 feet above the river. That's quite a lift in one jump."

"I'll say it is. Hasn't it got an easier side?"

"They try all these peaks from the back, I guess, but they haven't got any easy sides."

The car moved slowly up the canyon, and the boys stared, with open mouths, at the procession of sandstone peaks, on both sides, and learned their names—West and East Temple, The

Watchman, The Sentinel, the Altar of Sacrifice—with a great smear of blood-red on its face, the Twin Brothers, the Mountain-of-the-Sun, the Three Patriarchs.

“And while you’re about it, you might as well learn the name of the little river down there in the alders, which has carved all this out—it is the Mukuntuweap.”

“It must have begun to weep a long time ago to do all this,” said the Duke.

“He’s at it again. No use,” laughed Bobbie. “But, honestly, Number One, did that little river cut this great canyon down three thousand feet or more, and side streams separate the peaks?”

“Every bit.”

“How long did it take?”

“Ask me something easy! Millions of years, maybe.”

“But we have streams back home, lots of ’em, bigger than that, and they haven’t cut any canyons.”

“Because they are down to the granite, or igneous rock, and it’s the difference between cutting glass and cheese. Also, back home, the

glaciers in the ice age removed a lot of country and pushed it into the Atlantic Ocean. Look at the Hudson River. It is at tide water level way up to Albany. It can't do much cutting. But suppose that it started nearly 10,000 feet above sea level, the way this stream does. We'd have quite a canyon around Albany, I guess. Well, here's where we live a while."

Brigham swung off the highway, around a drive, and stopped in front of the Lodge. Several husky bell hops sprang forward to help.

"Don't we camp?" the boys asked.

"Nix," said Number One. "Not here in the Park. I'm like a chap I knew once who asked me where to go West to rough it. I said, 'How rough do you want it?' and he said 'Of course, I want a room with a bath.'"

The boys looked disappointed, and Number One laughed. "Cheer up, we'll get camping. But we've got a lot of dunnage, and my camera, and so on, and I'd rather have 'em locked up when we go off anywhere. Come on—out you get!"

The Lodge was the large central dining and recreation hall, and all guests slept in separate

two-room cabins. So the boys and Number One had a little house, as it were, to themselves. As soon as their dunnage was stored, and Brigham parked in the garage, they sat down at a table by a window, for lunch, and looked out across the narrow floor of the canyon to a sharp peak across the way, which was enough off the perpendicular to carry trees nearly to the top.

"Looks as if that could be climbed," said the Duke.

"Lady Mountain, they call it, maybe because it *can* be climbed," Number One answered. "In fact, there's a trail up it."

"A trail!" both boys gasped.

"Well, they call it a trail. Steel cables, and ladders, and so on, to help you."

"When do we climb it?" Bobbie cried.

"To-morrow."

"Wow! Why not have a try this after'?"

"No—we've got to get our canyon legs first. Put on your climbing togs, though, after lunch. We'll have a walk and a swim."

There were three miles more of the Canyon beyond the Lodge, up which the road ran, and as they walked along, the boys soon came in

sight of the finest peak of them all—the Great White Throne—a massive 3,000-foot slab first of vermilion and then of pure, dazzling white sandstone, the level top bearing trees. It is a true monolith, one of the five great monoliths of the United States.

“There’s a climb for you,” Number One remarked to Duke.

The Duke gazed long at the smooth, shining precipice. “Nobody but a fly could climb that,” he said.

“It has been climbed, twice,” said Mr. Parsons.

“Quit your kidding!”

“No kidding. Two men, at different times, climbed it alone, from the back side. They both had to climb barefoot.”

“What happened to ’em?”

“One fell, after spending the night on top, and was rescued alive but a nervous wreck. The other got down all right, but his nerve was gone. He took another climb two days later, on an easy peak, to get his nerve back to tackle West Temple, and he fell and was killed.”

“Cheerful, eh, wot?” said the Duke, staring

at the beautiful great slab of red and white precipice. "If I tackled that bird, I'd want a lot of rope, and a lot of pitons to drive into the rock."

"Of course," said Number One. "But it's no safe climb, even so, for the sandstone is too soft. I'm sure my hand will never set foot on that summit."

Presently the road bent to the left, following the stream, and Number One pointed to a sort of cave a little way up a cliff, at the top of the talus heap, really nothing but an arched indentation made by a piece of stone falling out of the cliff. On the flat floor of this arched recess was a small structure made of stone.

"Cliff dwelling," said the man.

Both boys sprang off the road and began to scramble up the rocks. The last of the climb was up the face of the cliff itself—not a great distance, to be sure, but enough to show them the extreme difficulty to find hand and foot holds in this soft, smooth sandstone, which had been trimmed down by the water just as if with a knife.

As they came up on to the ledge, they saw the "dwelling" was a tiny affair, made of rocks

laid up roughly and once evidently mud plastered, and wasn't large enough to live in.

"What was it, a cliff doll's house?" Duke demanded, as he prepared to crawl in through a two-foot opening.

"Easy!" cautioned Number One. "No knowing who lives in there now. Let's look over the top, first."

As they stood on a loose stone, and peered in, for the roof had mostly disappeared, they were greeted by an unmistakable sound—an angry rattle!

"Hello—there he is! There's the old cliff dweller, in the corner!" cried Bobbie. "Go on in and get him, Duke."

"Can't enter a man's house without a search warrant," said the Duke. "Besides, I was reading the National Park rules, and it's a crime to disturb anything you find in a cliff dwelling."

"I'll be good," laughed Bobbie. "But what was such a little house for, Number One?"

"Nobody knows," Number One replied. "The Grand Canyon has scores of 'em. Most people believe they were storehouses for food caches. You see, the cliff dwellers didn't have

extensive irrigation dams and ditches, and they had to grow crops where they could in this arid land. Maybe they came up here and had a garden by the river. A few people think they buried their chiefs in these little houses. Funny thing, but when the pioneers reached this country, the Piute Indians, who lived along the Virgin River, and in the forests on the plateaus, wouldn't come into the canyon at all. They were afraid of it, just as our New England Indians wouldn't climb the White Mountains. If they descended from the cliff dwellers, they had changed a lot, and descended a long way."

Climbing down, the party went on along the road till it ended in a lovely grove of trees called the Temple of Sinawava, and then followed a foot trail for another mile into the Narrows. Here the thousand foot walls got closer and closer together, till at last there wasn't even room for the trail, and to keep on you had to wade in the stream. The bottoms of the rocks were covered with dripping water, which seeped down from the winter snows far above, and flowers grew up every crack and crevice, making a rock garden such as the boys had never seen. Far up

the open slit of the Narrows, to the north, gleamed the white cone of the Mountain of Mystery.

“How far on does this gorge go?” Bobbie asked.

“Eight or ten miles, they say. I’ve never been up it. It’s dangerous, because if a rain comes, the water has been known to rise forty feet in a few minutes.”

“And not much chance to climb out,” the Duke remarked, surveying the absolutely straight and smooth walls of red sandstone which hemmed them in.

“Not much!” said Number One, grimly.

They walked back a way, crossed the stream, and took a trail which led high up on the shelf around a side canyon, or rather amphitheatre, gouged out of the west side of the canyon. Here there was a spring on a shelf, moss, trees, flowers, in the shadow, and over their heads, rising without a break, as smooth as a piece of sheet steel, towered a vast slab of sandstone to the top of Lady Mountain.

Duke took a look at it, and turned away. “It makes me a little bit sick,” he said.

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The trail led them around the lower slope of Lady Mountain, and brought them back across the river to the outdoor swimming pool. And by this time they were all ready to go in. Their first day in Zion ended with a splash.

CHAPTER V

THE CLIMB UP LADY MOUNTAIN

AFTER breakfast the next day, with lunch in a pack, and a coil of rope over Bobbie's shoulder, and on their feet their hob-studded alpine boots, the three stood in front of the Lodge, with a Park ranger, and surveyed Lady Mountain. Behind them the other guests on the veranda looked on with interest. The ranger was pointing out where the trail went.

"Do you mean to say they are going to climb up that place?" one woman demanded.

"Wish I was going with 'em," a small boy said wistfully.

A large, energetic woman came down from the veranda, and stood close by, listening.

"You don't want to take another passenger, do you?" she finally asked.

The boys looked at Number One, to answer.

"Sorry, Madam," he said, "but not this trip.

We are going to have all we can manage with that camera and tripod, and we don't know the trail. Maybe next time ——”

The Duke's face fell.

“Gosh,” he whispered to Bobbie, “imagine hauling that dame up there!”

“It's Lady Mountain,” Bobbie reminded him, with a grin.

“I know what somebody can do!” Number One exclaimed. “Here, Duke—the tripod.”

He set up the camera, at one side, so that it took in the little crowd around the veranda.

“Now, boys, start toward the mountain,” he said, “and the rest of you please wave your hands. Ready? Shoot!”

Bobbie and the Duke started down the drive, turning their heads and waving at the crowd. The crowd waved back.

“Good-bye, Clark Gable,” somebody called.

“So long, Chevalier.”

“Shake a day-day when you get to the top!”

Number One ground the crank, and turned the camera till it showed only the retreating boys and the mountain beyond. Then he shouted, “All over!”

They now started in earnest, with the camera in Number One's pack, and the tripod on the Duke's back. They passed the pool, crossed the river on a foot bridge, and after a brief and easy rise on a good foot trail, came to the point where the Lady Mountain trail branched off, and started upward. It didn't lose any time about it, either. Almost at once there came a very steep pitch, over broken rock, where a steel cable was fastened into the stones by means of iron spikes. Number One tested it well before he threw any weight on it.

"These pitons ought to be reset every year," he declared. "They loosen up in this soft stone. Better not use the cable any more than necessary. Let's imagine we are on a pioneer climb."

"When do we take some pictures?" Duke demanded, toiling behind with the tripod. "I'm Clark Gable; I want to act."

"Your name should be Gabble, not Gable," Number One laughed back. "Wait till we get a really exciting pitch."

"If you look down, it's exciting right now," said Bobbie. "I could almost jump into the pool."

But presently the trail grew less steep, and slabbed upward toward the left, till it reached a point where further progress looked pretty hopeless as they approached a hundred foot smooth, upright slab blocking the way, with an almost sheer drop below it. Here was more cable, leading steeply upward under the slab, to the right again, and reaching a gully which had to be crossed and climbed out of by means of ladders made of dead tree trunks.

“Take a nip of water, boys, while I set the camera up,” said Number One. “Not much. Our canteens have got to last us all day. Warm enough, Duke?”

The Duke took the tripod off his perspiring back, and made no reply!

Number One sent Bobbie up a ledge to one side, with the rope, which he made fast, and Number One came up on it and mounted his camera in such a way that he could get the boys as they climbed under the slab, and crossed the gully and so on out, to the top of the cliff. They waited his signal at the bottom, and then began to climb. It wasn't easy work, and the drop below them wasn't reassuring, and they paid

strict attention to the job, almost forgetting the camera, which was busily grinding. As they finally climbed out, and looked back, it was pointing up at them, and Number One was saying, "Fine! You're good actors, because you didn't act at all. Now you'll have to come back and get me up!" So the boys made the descent, and once more the ascent.

"Takes time to make a movie, doesn't it?" said Bobbie.

"And sweat," said the Duke.

The trail was now fairly easy again for some distance, running off to the left at the top of a tremendous cliff. They could look down directly on to the valley floor. Then it did a hairpin turn, and made for the white, shining peak, running steeply up rough rocks, and along a ledge with precipices above and below. Here they got out the camera again, and made pictures of the ledge, with the summit beyond. Then it went in behind the summit, so that the valley disappeared, and presently ran straight up, steeply, to the narrow top.

Again the camera was unslung, and Number One took the boys scrambling toward the peak.

Then he went ahead, and took them as they came up over the final rim.

“Wave your hats! Show some animation!” he cried. “You’ve just conquered a mountain.”

“Whoops!” they shouted, waving. Then they flopped on the ground.

“I left my animation down about 500 feet,” said Duke, “and I haven’t enough left to go back for it.”

“I hope you find it on the way down,” laughed Number One. “Take another drink and look around. It’s time for the first class in geology.”

From the precipitous summit where they were perched they could look directly down into the canyon, almost 3,000 feet below. But they could also look along the rim, and see the tops of the other peaks. They saw that all these peaks were really blocks of sandstone carved by water out of what once must have been a level plateau. The tops were flat, and bore trees. Back from the canyon and its side canyons they could see the forest stretching, and rising gradually to the north. Out through the mouth of the canyon, southward, they knew the land was much lower.

“You can plainly see, boys,” Number One

was saying, "that all this southern Utah country was once much higher. There must have been at least one layer of sandstone on top of this, because some of it is left on the top of West Temple. The sandstone that was once above us, and all that is underneath us, was deposited on the bottom of a sea, pressed into rock by the weight, and then heaved up. Maybe it sank and rose several times. Finally, when it stayed up, erosion began to eat it away. You'll see presently, when we go to the Grand Canyon, that this country descends toward the Colorado River in a series of great cliffs, like giant stairs—the white cliffs, the red cliffs, the vermilion cliffs, and finally the Grand Canyon itself. Somewhere about 5,000 feet under us is the kind of hard bed rock our New England hills are made of, and New York built on."

"Some day, then," said the Duke, "all this mountain we are sitting pretty on will be down in the Gulf of California, eh?"

"Yes. And by that time the Gulf of California will be filled up. Mexico will have a lot of new land that once belonged to the good old U. S. A."

“Do you think we ought to start down?” the Duke inquired.

“We’ll have time for lunch,” laughed Number One. “They say the cliffs are receding about two inches a year.”

“Then it’s all right, if we eat fast,” said Bobbie. “But first I want to look over here.”

He moved to the rim at the right, peeped over, and then abruptly lay down on his stomach.

“Come on over, Duke—and come this way,” he called.

Duke drew near the edge, and also lay down. The two Scouts thus peered down the face of the great sandstone slab which constitutes the northern face of Lady Mountain, a 2,000-foot drop as smooth as sheet steel, without one single ledge or crack or chimney to break the fall.

Duke drew back. “If I look down there, I sha’n’t want any lunch,” he declared, and went quickly back into the shade of a stunted pine.

“Easy, boys,” Number One cautioned. “When you’re climbing, don’t let your imaginations get busy. Better come away, Bobbie.”

Bobbie came, reluctantly. “It fascinates me,” he said. “A sheer cliff like that, which no

human being could climb—makes me feel sort of small.”

“You’ll be a peanut, then, before we get home,” Number One laughed.

They ate their lunch, rested a while, and then began the descent. It proved slower and more laborious than the ascent, especially because with the camera and tripod on their backs they had to face the rocks on all steep places, watch their footing very carefully, and move slowly. On one small cliff the boys roped down the straight face, while Number One ground the crank, and he took two or three other pictures, all of which required much time. It was five o’clock before they reached the Lodge again, hot and dog tired. The crowd on the veranda greeted them with the information that with a spy glass they had been plainly seen on the summit.

“Come to the pool, and you’ll see me on the bottom,” said the Duke.

“Going to try the Great White Throne tomorrow?” somebody asked.

“Haven’t been measured yet for my wings,” grinned the Duke.

“Do you mean you’d have to fly there?” a woman asked.

“That wasn’t exactly what I meant, but it will do,” the Duke replied.

“And to-morrow,” Number One announced, as they were splashing in the cool pool, “we’ll get ourselves saddle broke a bit. We’ll ride up onto the rim, and back on the plateau, and camp for a night or two. Maybe we can ride to West Canyon. That suit you?”

“Will, if you’ll provide a mountain lion for me to rope,” said the Duke. “I’m feeling ambitious again.”

CHAPTER VI

BACK FROM WEST CANYON TO FACE A CLIMB IN THE DARK

NEITHER of the Scouts was familiar with horseback riding. They put on their clean, new khaki riding breeches in the morning and felt extremely self-conscious. They also felt helpless as they watched the two guides pack the sleeping bags and other duffle, and throw a diamond hitch over the loads on the pack animals.

“Gosh, that’s one I couldn’t do!” said Bobbie.

“Too complicated to get just watching.”

“Say, Bob, do you suppose these blooded Arabians will buck and chuck us off?” the Duke asked. “I’m feeling like the Prince of Wales already.”

“Me, too. Grab his mane, and hang on!”

Presently they were up in their saddles, feeling strange but elated.

“Whoopie!” cried the Duke. “Where’s your camera, Number One? I’m Tom Mix.”

"You'll be Tom Mix-up, if you get fresh on that horse."

"You mean Mix-down," said the Duke. "He's a good old horse, aren't you, Pegasus?"

"His name is Bill," said one of the guides, as he swung with one easy, careless motion, into his saddle.

"No—not this trip it isn't," the Duke declared. "It is Pegasus. What's yours, Bobbie?"

"Man o' War," said Bobbie.

"Not that kind of a horse—it's Dolly," said the guide. "Clk-clk."

The cavalcade started, single file, up the bridle path—five riders and two pack horses, with a guide at each end of the little procession. The horses didn't trot, but walked sedately, and the Scouts discovered that all they had to do was to sit relaxed, with a little weight on their stirrups, to ride easily and comfortably. But somehow their horses knew that the riders were green. A horse always does know that. The head guide went steadily along, but Duke's horse especially insisted on stopping at every bit of grass or green he saw, plunging down his head beside the

trail, and grabbing a piece. The Duke kicked him in the ribs, but it did no good. He wouldn't go on till he had that mouthful, or the horse behind butted him.

"Say, why didn't you feed Pegasus this morning?" Duke called to the guide. "He's most starved."

"Hold his head up," the guide called back.

"What do you think I am, a steam derrick?" cried Duke, tugging at the bridle, while Pegasus calmly stopped again, and grabbed a tuft of grass by the roots.

But it wasn't long before Pegasus and the other horses were too busy to eat, and there was nothing to eat, anyway, for the trail began to go up the side of a cliff, to reach a shelf above. It went up for 600 feet by a series of twenty-one short switchbacks carefully built of stones, and known as Walter's Wiggles, after the ranger who constructed them.

"Somebody said this was the only place in the world where a horse can be going two ways at once all the time," the head guide called down, as his horse was making one of the sharp turns.

"Whoa!" cried Number One. "Let me get

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a picture of this, will you? Everybody hold still."

He got his small still camera, all he had brought on this trip, out of his saddle bag, went back on the trail till he could get them all in, and snapped.

"Your horse moved, Duke," he said, coming back.

"Looking for grass," said the Duke. "Gosh, what an appetite!"

The trail now reached the shelf, with the cliff overhanging it, and crept along. Presently it reached and entered a side canyon, so narrow that the sun can enter it but a few minutes a day. It was damp and pleasantly cold and mossy green.

"Refrigerator Canyon," called back the guide.

"Suits me," said the Duke.

They crept on, and up, the trail going along narrow places, and over abrupt drops, where an eastern horse would refuse to travel, and at last emerged on the rim of Zion, into the plateau country of pines and other forest growth. Much of the way had been so steep that the riders had been obliged to lean forward, and throw their

weight onto their stirrups, and when the guide drew up and dismounted, the Scouts were quite ready to rest. They swung their right legs over their horses' backs, and stepped to the ground. And then something happened. They reeled, almost helpless, and the Duke actually did sit down abruptly on the ground.

"How come?" he cried, looking up in comic astonishment.

"Haven't got your saddle legs yet, have you?" Number One asked. "You'll get used to it before we get back. Takes different muscles than you ordinarily use."

"I'll say it does," Bobbie remarked. "I'm as stiff as a board. I'm not a tenderfoot—I'm a tender-all-over."

"It's worse goin' down-hill," the second guide remarked. "I seen people at the bottom o' the Grand Canyon so stiff we had to lift 'em off their mules, and stand 'em up careful against a rock, so's they wouldn't break."

"Why didn't you use 'em for ninepins?" the Duke asked, getting to his feet, and hopping up and down to take the kinks out.

Presently they mounted again, left the rim of

the canyon behind, and rode northwestward through the yellow pines toward the cliffs of Horse Pasture Plateau, which rose still higher than the plateau they were on.

“One more step up on the giants’ stairs,” said Number One as they climbed.

From the top a tremendous prospect spread out. They could look southward, over the forest, to the yawning red hole of Zion, and far out beyond that to the misty purple lower country toward the great river. Northward they got a glimpse through trees of still higher country—Cedar Mountain, and to west and east they saw, gashed in the green plateaus, great red and pink scars which were other canyons.

“The whole place is full of canyons!” Bobbie exclaimed.

“Boy, you’ve said it,” their guide drawled. “There ain’t a man alive can count the canyons in this country, and there ain’t a man alive who’s seen half of ’em. In fact, there are lots of ’em nobody has ever seen, except maybe Indians. They keep discoverin’ new ones all the time.”

“It would be fun to take a pack train and go exploring,” Number One suggested.

“Fun for who?” said the guide.

“Me, for instance.”

“I reckon you never explored much in this country,” the guide drawled. “If you go in winter, you get buried in snow-drifts. If you go in summer you get baked. If you go in spring, you get caught in high water where you can’t climb out, and get drowned.”

“That still leaves the autumn,” Bobbie suggested.

“Ain’t no autumn here,” the guide answered. “One day it’s summer, and the next day the Parks close, and there’s a snowstorm.”

“He’s one of the most enthusiastic explorers I’ve ever met,” said the Duke.

“Boy, I’ve explored!” the guide answered. “I’ve been from Tropic to the big river, and forded it at the Crossing of the Fathers, and come out around the Rainbow Bridge into Arizona. There wa’n’t enough left of the horses to say so by the time we got across the Colorado. If one of ’em had stood between you and the sun you could ’a’ seen his dinner digesting, if he’d had any dinner to digest, which he hadn’t. It was hotter ’n the hinges, and the wind sucked

up the canyons in a hurricane, and blew sand into all our grub. Boy, when you started a biscuit toward your mouth it might be O.K., but by the time it got there it was a chunk o' sandstone ——”

“ I've had biscuits like that,” the Duke cut in.

“ We never would 'a' got through,” the guide went on, “ if we hadn't carried a lot o' drills and TNT. Had to stop in one place two days and blast a trail to get us out of a canyon.”

“ It sounds good, doesn't it, boys? ” said Number One.

“ Fascinating — yes positively fascinating,” laughed the Duke.

“ Well, I guess when we get to Bryce, we'll take a run down to Tropic, and see if somebody will take us exploring. You wouldn't consider it, Joe? ”

“ I got a job here—can't leave,” Joe grinned. “ But I can give you the name of a feller in Tropic who has horses.”

“ Will you? ”

“ Mean it? ”

“ Of course I mean it.”

(The Scouts pricked up their ears.)

“ You better write to him a couple o’ weeks or more ahead, so’s he can lay up provisions, and get his horses fattened up. Get ’em down in those Bad Lands, and all they have to live on is their own fat.”

“ Fine—we’ll do that as soon as we get back to the Lodge. These Scouts wanted to do some real roughing out West. Think it will satisfy ’em?”

“ Say, they’ll be pickin’ sandstone out o’ their teeth all next winter.”

“ I’ll be able to grit my teeth, won’t I?” said the Duke.

“ He’s got another attack coming on!” cried Number One. “ To the saddle, men!”

They mounted once more, and rode on northward, through the open glades of the yellow pines and white cedars, now and then seeing a mule deer beside the trail, and once a coyote, looking much like a police dog which has misbehaved, as he went slinking off into the forest, with a backward glance at the riders.

In mid-afternoon they came to a spring, and decided to camp there instead of going on and making the rough, hard descent into West

Canyon. Truth to tell, the boys, unfamiliar with riding, were glad enough to call it a day. They helped in making a leisurely camp, and the Duke cooked the dinner. They had no tent, for at this season there was little prospect of rain, but slept in their inflated sleeping bags under a group of thick cedars. The next day they rode on and made a rough, precipitous descent into the upper reaches of West Canyon, almost as impressive as Zion, but with no road in from the mouth, no camps. It was as wild and lonely as if Man had never been there. They rode out in the afternoon, camped at the spring again, and the third day rode back to the Lodge. By this time the stiffness of the first day had disappeared. Even the steep descent into Zion didn't trouble the boys, and when the horses reached the valley floor and the bridle path, and seemed to smell oats, and broke into a sharp trot, Bobbie and the Duke set up a cheer, kicked their horses, and told Joe, the head guide, to get out of their way.

Joe glanced back over his shoulder, grinned, made a funny sound, and touched his horse with his spur. The horse gave a sharp bound, and

started off at a gallop, with Pegasus and Bob's horse obeying the lead. In two seconds Bobbie and the Duke were bouncing up and down in their saddles, hanging on for dear life. The Duke's hat flew off, and Pegasus had no intention of stopping for him to get it. Faster and faster they tore after Joe, who was sitting his saddle as easily as though it were a rocking chair. The three of them thundered up to the paddock, and stopped so abruptly that the boys nearly took headers.

"Like that?" Joe asked.

"I'll say!" Duke cried. "Wish you'd started it up on Wallie's Wiggles."

"You'd lost your shirt as well as your hat if I had."

"Gosh, I got to go back and get that old hat," Duke said, trying to turn Pegasus around. But Pegasus had no intention of leaving home and oats again *that* day. While the Duke was kicking him and pleading, up came Number One and the pack animals, with the hat.

After Mr. Parsons and the boys had taken a plunge in the pool, and come up to the veranda of the Lodge for dinner, they encountered the

chief ranger scanning Lady Mountain with field glasses. He looked a little anxious.

“Somebody up there?” Number One asked.

“Yes, I’m sorry to say, there is,” the ranger replied. “A tourist came in to-day, a young fellow, and about three or four o’clock somebody told him there was a trail up. He said it couldn’t be far, and started off. I wish I’d been around to stop him.”

“He might make it, and get back over the worst of the trail before dark, at that,” said Number One, “if he’s a strong climber, and knows what he’s about.”

“Climbers who know what they’re about don’t start off at four o’clock to do that mountain,” the ranger grunted. “I suppose I’ll have to get the boys and go after him. I don’t relish climbing there in the dark, I can tell you. I wish the fools would stay at home.”

“Let us know if you decide to go,” said Number One quietly. “We’ll get our dinner now.”

They ate dinner quickly, though they ate plenty of it, after three days in the saddle, and went down to the lobby. The lone climber had not returned. It was getting rapidly dark in

the canyon, though some light was still left on the tops of the peaks, but it was fast fading away.

“ I hate to let you folks go,” the ranger said. “ It’s my job. But from what I saw the other day, you know more about climbing than some of my men, and you know that trail pretty well ——”

“ I’ll say we do!” laughed the Duke. “ Mr. Parsons made us go up and down it forty-eleven times for his old movie!”

“ We’ll get our clothes on,” said Number One, gravely. “ You’ll want all the flashlights you can gather, and it will be better not to depend on ’em, exclusively, either. We ought to have oil lanterns to climb by, and keep the torches for emergencies.”

“ I’ll attend to ’em. Meet here as soon as you can.”

“ Now, boys,” said Number One, very gravely, as they put on their alpine boots and climbing clothes, with sweaters in their packs in case they had to stay out on the mountain, “ this is no picnic we are going on. It will be hard and dangerous, and I want you to obey orders, and

always proceed with the utmost caution. Promise?"

"Yes, sir," said both Scouts, their faces serious.

They went back to the veranda. All the guests were gathered there, buzzing with excitement. There were three rangers with three oil lanterns, and enough electric torches collected to enable all six in the climbing party to have two, which for the present they put in their packs or pockets. The chief ranger and Number One both had first aid kits, another ranger had a small ax in his belt, and the third a coil of rope.

"We ought to have a horse blanket and some pins to make a stretcher with," said Number One.

"That's so," the chief ranger answered, and sent to the stables.

When the blanket arrived, it was made into a pack for one of the rangers, and the party started out into the night, the three lanterns bobbing, while the veranda crowd watched them go in a tense and nervous silence.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESCUE OF THE LOST CLIMBER ON LADY MOUNTAIN

EVERY other man in the procession carried a lantern. They walked single file, and close together. Bobbie looked up as they crossed the Mukuntuweap, almost straight up, and saw the top of Lady Mountain directly above him, cutting black against the stars. The idea of trying to come down there, alone, in pitch blackness, without any lantern, made him faintly sick.

“Maybe that fellow’s decided to crawl under a rock or something, and wait till morning,” he said.

“Maybe,” the chief ranger replied. “But they say he didn’t even have a sweater, and we know he hasn’t lighted any fire. Maybe we’ll all have to spend the night up there.”

The ranger wasn’t happy. It was evident that he didn’t like this job a little bit.

When they came to the steep climbing, Mr. Parsons held a consultation with the ranger, and they decided to rope. The ranger led, Mr. Parsons was number two, then Bobbie, then a second ranger, then the Duke, and finally the third ranger. The leader, Bobbie and the Duke carried the lanterns. The rest each got a flashlight free in his pocket to use if needed.

“Now, careful, everybody,” said Mr. Parsons. “Keep the slack of the rope between you and the man ahead free of the ground, but don’t take it up enough to pull him back. Be sure you have a good foot and hand hold on every step, and if anybody calls that he’s slipping, stop dead in your tracks and brace! Don’t get eager or anxious. Keep the pace, and watch your slack!”

They now began to climb. With a lantern or flash in one hand, it was not easy work, though they had no difficulty in following the trail. Every now and then they paused and shouted in unison, and then waited with strained ears. But their voices seemed to die against the black cliffs of the mountain. They could see the lights of the Lodge below them, and even hear a motor chugging up the road. But no sound came down

from the precipices above, or from either side. They came at last to the bad ladder crossing, still without any response to their shouts, or any sign of the climber. The first man up the dead tree ladder pointed his flash downward from the top, and those below pointed theirs up, as one by one they climbed out of the steep ravine, and reassembled in single file on the top. Here they gave another shout, and listened.

“Hark!” said the Duke. “Did you hear that?”

“I heard nothing but a faint echo,” said the ranger.

“No, ’twasn’t an echo. I heard a cry, very faint, up ahead. I’m sure I did!”

“Come on, then!”

They climbed steadily but cautiously, for they were aware of the great cliff which came up almost to the trail side on their left. Above them were the stars, below the black hole of the canyon. After a few hundred feet they stopped and shouted again.

This time they all heard it—a faint cry, as if from somebody very weak. It seemed a little ahead of them, and to the left.

“He’s off the trail,” the ranger said. “Probably hurt. Come on.”

After 200 yards more, they again shouted.

This time the cry was unmistakable, and sharply to their left, down the slope.

The ranger twisted to untie himself. “I’ve got to go down to him,” he said.

“Wait a minute,” cried Number One. “Don’t unrope. The rest of us will get off the rope, and let you down. Then I’ll come.”

With a lantern tied to his belt so his hands would be free, and also so that it couldn’t get lost, and with flashlights playing on the rocks as he descended, the ranger started down the steep, rough incline. Nobody knew how far it was before the actual precipice began. Bobbie and Number One stood by the rope, belaying it around a firm rock and playing it out. After a moment, the ranger disappeared from sight, dropping down over a steep ledge, but the rope kept playing out. Nearly a hundred feet of its one-hundred-and-twenty was gone before they heard him shout.

“Let me go down!” begged Bobbie.

“I’ll go,” said one of the other rangers.

"Neither of you will go, yet," said Number One. "Here, play me down on the other rope. We may need 'em both to get him up."

The ranger's rope was made fast under his arms, and the Duke played him down, out of sight.

Listening with strained ears, the four above, on the trail, could hear three voices now.

"The bird's alive all right," said a ranger. "I wonder if he walked off the trail, or fell off."

"It bends around just above here," the Duke suggested. "He probably missed the turn and kept straight on, down the mountain. It's a wonder he didn't walk off the edge of the precipice."

"I'll say it is!"

"He must be hurt, they are down there so long," Bobbie reflected. He and the Duke, of course, were both holding the ropes firmly belayed around rocks, and waiting for some signal. But there was no strain yet on either rope.

"Hope we don't have to bring him up that slope on a stretcher," said a ranger. "Boy, if we have to carry him down, we're going to know we've done something!"

Just then there came a shout from Number One, and his head appeared above the lodge fifty feet below, as they played their flashlights down the rocks.

"Bobbie," he called, "you and one of the rangers get braced behind a rock, and both of you belay our rope around your shoulders. Show him how, first. Take it up steadily, and don't let it slack. Start when I shout 'Go.' Duke, just hold the other rope fast, and coil the slack around the rock as I come up; make it steady now."

"Is he hurt much?"

"We don't think so," said Number One, as he disappeared again.

After another wait, there came the cry of "Go!" out of the darkness below, and Bobbie and a ranger, braced behind a rock with the rope first around the shoulder of one, and then of the other, to insure a double brace, began to feel a tug. As soon as the tug relaxed, Bobbie would hitch the rope up with his right hand, and pull the slack around his shoulder with his left. Then the ranger would do the same. The Duke was busy with the other rope. The third ranger stood

at the edge, playing his searchlight down the rocks.

For two or three minutes nothing happened, except the slow—very slow—shortening of the ropes. Then, suddenly, over the rim of the sharp drop, rising out of inky dark into the range of the searchlight, as if it was emerging from a vast black hole, came a bloody head, wrapped in a white bandage—a sight testing the best of men to witness!

“Good God!” cried the startled ranger, almost dropping the flashlight. Bobbie said nothing. He was too busy taking up the slack. But he went sick inside.

The body below the head now began to appear. It was evidently being helped from below. Up it came, the hands—one of them bloody—crawling feebly at the rocks, and behind it came the heads of Number One and the ranger, hoisting it over.

The ranger was climbing unroped. Number One now carried the lantern. The figure crouched on hands and knees while the other two climbed over the rim. One on either side, they got an arm under his, half lifted him, and as

those above drew the rope up, brought him to the path. Here he sank down in a heap with a moan.

“I can’t do it!” he groaned.

Number One spoke sharply. He almost barked. “Yes you can do it. You’ve *got* to do it. Get up on your feet!”

The man staggered up, and stood trembling, a strange apparition in the dim lantern light.

“No bones broken,” the ranger whispered to the others. “Just a skin bruise on his forehead and one hand, where he slipped. But he’s scared to a jelly. Lost all his nerve.”

“Did he fall?” whispered Bobbie.

“Says he did up higher. That’s where he got bruised. Evidently got off the trail around here somewhere, and started down there. Only thing that saved him from walking off the precipice was seeing the lights of the Lodge below him, right under his feet. Then he realized he was on the lip of the cliff, and he crawled up to a ledge and I found him hugging a rock the way a frightened baby hugs its mother, too scared to do anything but lie there.”

Number One was now roping the party for

the descent. The ranger again led. He went number two in order to help the rescued man, who came number three. One of the other rangers came number four, to help from behind, and Bobbie was number five, as anchor man. The Duke and the third ranger came separately, on the other rope, so they could be free to help when needed. They proceeded very slowly and cautiously, with a lantern in Mr. Parsons' hand to show the lost man his footing, and the ranger behind him holding the rope gently taut to give him confidence, and playing a flashlight around his feet.

The man wobbled badly as he walked, and on all steep places he turned face in to the rocks and crawled down. But he got to the ladder all right. Here, however, after one look, he sat down and moaned that he couldn't do it. In fact, he *wouldn't* do it.

"Who knows the fireman's hold—the way they bring a body down a ladder?" the ranger asked.

"I think I do," Number One replied. "I'll try it. You go down and brace the ladder at the bottom, and catch us if we fall. Bobbie, you and

somebody else ease me down. Keep the rope pretty taut, in case I slip."

The others picked up the moaning man, and laid him over Number One's shoulders, and lashed him there with the second rope. Then Number One, with Bobbie and a ranger braced to lower him with the rope, and hold him if he fell, started down the ladder. With a groan of relief, the chief ranger greeted him at the bottom, and helped him out of the ravine into the trail on the far side, and unlashed his burden while the rest came down.

Here they rested a while, gave the injured man a drink, with a dash of aromatic spirits of ammonia in it, from a first aid kit, and laughed and joked to try to put some courage into him. Then they resumed the descent. Slowly they crawled along, till at last they were down the final steep place, and stepped out on the regular five-foot leveled path which runs around the lower slopes of the mountain. With a shout of joy they unroped.

"Now we are almost there—no more climbing down," said the ranger cheerfully, to the lost man.

But he, instead of laughing too, simply doubled up like a jack knife and went down on the trail like a log, in a dead faint!

“All in!” cried the ranger, stooping over him. “Make a stretcher, boys.”

The two rangers sprang into the brush, with Bobbie holding a lantern, and quickly cut and stripped two small trees. They laid them, two feet apart, on the blanket, folded it over and pinned the ends. Then the man was laid on it, the rangers picked up the pole ends, and with lanterns before and behind, they started on for the Lodge.

The rescue was almost over.

A few steps, and they met a party coming up the trail—people who had watched their lanterns and were arriving to help. Other hands took the stretcher from the tired rangers, and in ten minutes they were at the Lodge. A doctor had been sent for on a chance, and was just arriving in his car. The poor climber was rushed off to be attended to, and put to bed, and Bobbie went into the Lodge to look at the clock.

“Gee whiz!” he exclaimed, coming out, “what time do you think it is?”

“ I feel as though it was eight P. M. day after to-morrow,” said the Duke.

“ Well, it’s half-past three A. M. to-day, at that,” said Bobbie. “ Me for the alfalfa.”

“ And you’d better stay there till noon, boys,” said the ranger. “ I want to thank you three, but I guess you know your Uncle Sam is grateful. I don’t know how we’d have got that idiot down without you.”

“ I bet he don’t start up another mountain to-morrow,” said the Duke.

“ If he does, he can stay there,” grunted the ranger. “ Come to the kitchen and get some hot coffee.”

The Scouts and Number One got under the shower baths in the Lodge and drank about a quart of water apiece, even after the hot coffee. Then they crawled wearily into their beds.

“ If anybody wakes me early, he dies!” said the Duke.

“ That goes for me, too,” said Bobbie.

“ Which makes it unanimous,” said Number One.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GRAND CANYON AT LAST!

IT was noon the next day before any of them awoke. As soon as they were dressed they hurried over to the Lodge to learn how the man they had rescued was getting on. He was still in bed, but reported as coming around all right. The crowd on the veranda was still buzzing about the affair, and made Bobbie and the Duke tell the story.

“Gosh, you’d think we were heroes, or something, to hear ’em talk,” the Duke remarked, as they went in to lunch—which was, for them, breakfast.

“If that’s being a hero, I don’t want to be one—too hard work,” laughed Bobbie. “I’m sore all over from hanging onto that rope.”

“Too bad,” said Number One. “I was going to suggest that we have a go at the Great White Throne on our last afternoon.”

"Yeah, it's a shame," grinned the Duke.

They all three had pep enough, however, to hike up the East Rim trail to the top, and get a view of the Throne from near by, and the evening they spent repacking their duffle. In the morning they said good-bye to Zion, while the waitresses and bellhops at the hotel stood on the veranda and sang, and the guests waved farewell. Down the road they sped a couple of miles, to the mouth of Pine Creek Gorge, and turned left on the new highway which leads direct to Mount Carmel.

"Now, boys, I suspect you are going to see something," Number One said, as they swung into the gorge, under the cliffs of East Temple. "I've never been over this new road myself."

"How are we going to get out of this place?" Duke demanded, looking ahead where the gorge narrowed to a slit, and ended in a sheer 3,000-foot precipice.

"I see!" Bobbie exclaimed. "Look over there." He pointed to the right.

The others looked, and saw that the highway turned up the great talus slope on the south side of the gorge, and climbed it by a series of long,

easy switchbacks. Then it ended at the base of the precipice.

“And where do we go from there?” demanded the Duke, as Brigham began to climb the first switchback.

“Well, I’m trusting Uncle Sam’s engineers,” Number One laughed.

At the top of the last switchback they discovered that the road disappeared right into the rock! They were now in a wide, high tunnel, with a fine cement floor, leading up-hill steadily. Every few hundred yards, a huge window was cut in this tunnel, looking out into the gorge, and at the last window the gorge was so narrow that you could throw a stone to the farther side, and they were so high up in the cliff that the drop was tremendous. The tunnel went on for a mile, through the solid rock of the mountain and suddenly emerged into dazzling sunlight on the east side.

And dazzling is the word, for the land they emerged into was like nothing they had ever seen before—a world of stone, stone rolled and tossed into smooth mounds and hollows like a frozen sea. There were a few stunted pines in the hol-

lows, but most of the mounds were naked of all verdure, and shone white and pink and ochre in the sun.

“These are the bad lands, all right,” Number One exclaimed. “Imagine getting into this country before there was any road!”

“How could you?” the boys demanded. “There’s no water, and no grass, and how’d you find your way in this maze of round hills?”

“You’d have to carry oats for your horse, and you’d have to know where the water holes are, I guess,” said Number One. “This is what they call cross-bedded sandstone. See the layers of it marked in that slope, criss-crossing each other.”

“The hills all look like the big sand heaps you see on the Cape Cod dunes,” said Bobbie.

“Most geologists think that’s what they are,” Mr. Parsons answered. “There is a layer of cross-bedded sandstone all across this Utah country, and it runs down into the canyon. A lot of geologists think it was formed above water, not under it, by wind action. The sand was heaped up, and then when new layers were built over it, after the earth sank under the sea again, the pressure turned the sand piles to stone. Here

the top layers have all been peeled off again, and it certainly looks like sand dunes once more."

"Let's get out and walk a ways, and climb the highest one we can find," the boys urged.

They left the car beside the highway, and climbed over the smooth, domelike surface of a sandstone mound which was perhaps 100 or 200 feet high. The surface was pitted by wind action so that it was like climbing on fine sandpaper. Their rubber soles stuck firmly, though it was as steep as a house roof. From the top they looked in every direction, for miles, over similar sandstone dunes, with here and there a green tree between, but no sign of house or water or any place where man could live. The sun beat down mercilessly on this naked rock world, and the heat and blaze of it, reflected from the rock, beat up again into their faces.

"The bad lands, eh?" said the Duke. "I'll tell the world! The desert can't be as bad as this, 'cause, anyhow, the sand is soft. Here you don't even dare to fall down."

They returned to the car, and jogged on. After 25 miles they came into a north and south highway, in the bottom of a valley cut by a

stream. Here they picked up a few irrigated patches of land, and after another 18 miles, going south, they came into the town of Kanab.

“Some metropolis!” cried the Duke, as he surveyed the two or three dusty streets, between the one story houses, the dusty poplar trees beside the red irrigation ditches which ran down the gutters, and the three or four dirty little Indian children who stared at them as they climbed out of Brigham in front of the hotel. Behind the hotel and the village houses was the slit where the Kanab Creek flowed, and beyond that a few green bits of pasture for cattle, and then the red and pink tumbled steps of the naked cliff walls.

“How’d you like to live here?” Number One asked.

“Might be worse,” the Duke replied. “You can get to Zion or the Grand Canyon in half a day. But it sure makes a fellow from the East homesick for a green lawn.”

Seven miles more, after lunch, and they had crossed into Arizona, and came into a still smaller village, with but one street, Fredonia, the only town in the State of Arizona north of the Colo-

rado River. It, too, had irrigation water in the gutters, and a few dusty poplars, and brief fields under cultivation, or browsed by cattle. Then the car slid rapidly down-hill, and started across a wide strip of desert.

“Take a good look all around,” said Number One. “You are crossing the prismatic plains. Look back up north, and you can see one of the main steps in the giants’ staircase.”

The boys looked, and saw sweeping around for miles and miles the great wall of the vermilion cliffs, and far north of that the next step up of the white cliffs. Looking the other way, they saw only desert, going off indefinitely to the southwest—bare, yellow-gray and pink earth, with scattered clumps of sage.

“All that,” said Number One, “is Zane Gray’s country of the purple sage. There are your great open spaces, Duke.”

“I’ll say! And what’s ahead?”

The road was pointed straight across the plain, toward a high mesa, covered with green forest.

“That’s the Kaibab Forest, on the Kaibab Plateau. Seems strange, doesn’t it, that we go in an hour from this hot desert to a cool forest?”

120 Boy Scouts at the Grand Canyon

Erosion left that plateau—3,000,000 acres of it, and the altitude did the rest. You'll see. Look back, boys."

He stopped the car, and they looked back across the plains to the Vermilion Cliffs. The reason for the name, Prismatic Plains, was at once clear. In the shimmering heat, the whole floor of the valley took on strange colors, purple and pink and vermilion, and seemed to shimmer in the far distance almost like water.

"Gosh, it's beautiful!" the Duke exclaimed. "I wish Tommy Cowan could see it—the funny little tad. He'd throw a fit."

It took them some time to cross the plains, though the Kaibab Forest looked quite near when they started. At last they began to climb again, reached the brow of the plateau in a forest of low nut pines, and soon, on an excellent government road, for the Kaibab is a national forest, were rolling along through a magnificent but strange wood. The timber nearly all consisted of yellow pine, with a few scattered groups of silvery white cedars and fir, and there was almost no undergrowth, no dark, green, mossy forest floor as in an eastern forest in a rainy land. The

big pines had reddish scales of bark, like sheets of copper, and they stretched as far on either side as the eye could see.

Suddenly Bobbie, who was now in the front seat, pointed excitedly. "What was that?" he cried. "It looked like a squirrel, but it was black and white, like a skunk."

"A Kaibab squirrel," laughed Number One. "You've described it, all right. It is found nowhere else on earth—only on this plateau. It lives almost entirely in and on the products of the pine trees, and I suppose, being ringed with desert on three sides, and the Grand Canyon on the fourth, can't get anywhere else."

"Why should it want to?" the Duke said. "This looks like a pretty good place to me. Show me another, Bobbie, I didn't see that one."

They drove along, looking for squirrels, and soon another ran across the road ahead in full view, about the size of an eastern gray, but with a white tail like a plume, and a black body.

"Wow! That's some squirrel!" shouted the Duke. "Wish I could take a pair home. S'pose they'd live?"

"I suppose the forest superintendent would

give you the works if you tried to take any of his squirrels away," Number One replied. "See the deer?"

He pointed. Resting under the shade of a cedar lay three or four mule deer. One of them roused, erected his long ears, and stared at the car, but none of them offered to move from where he lay.

"Well—bring on a lion now," said the Duke.

"You don't see lions from a motor," Number One replied. "By the time you see a lion, you'll know you've done something."

The road wound on and on through the forest, or through wide, open glades of green grass, almost like New England pastures. Across one of them a coyote was loping along, like a sneaky dog. They passed the V T Ranch, now converted into a tourist camp, reached the height of land, (over 9,000 feet) and the Grand Canyon Park entrance, and presently, still going through forest, rolled up the drive at the Grand Canyon Lodge.

"I suppose you want to have a look at the Canyon before we unpack?" Number One asked.

The Scouts looked at each other and grinned.

“Well, go to it. Go right through the lobby, and out the other side.”

The boys went, like a shot. Fifteen seconds later they were standing at the parapet of the stone balcony, and looking into the most tremendous hole anywhere on the face of the globe. But they were on the north rim of the Canyon. From that point on the north rim you do not see the Colorado River and the bottom of the Canyon. You are many miles back from the river, and you look down into the depths of a side canyon, and out over the tops of mountains as high as Mount Washington, which rise from the canyon floor, to the open space where the main canyon lies, and across that space, hazy with color of every known hue, to the wall of the south side.

Number One came out and stood beside them.

“Lots of people have tried to describe this,” he said, “but the best description was that of the little girl, who said, ‘Papa, what happened?’”

“It’s so big, it makes me kind o’ sick,” said Bobbie, sheepishly. “I’ll get used to it, but gosh! it hits you all of a heap at first!”

“Well, let’s unpack, and then we’ll take a

little hike, or run the car over to Cape Royal before dinner.”

They hustled their dunnage out of the car into a cabin like those at Zion, and then drove eastward, around the head of Bright Angel Creek, and then south over the Valhalla Plateau, a great forested peninsula which juts fourteen miles into the Canyon. At the end of the road, twenty-three miles from the Lodge, they left the car and walked a quarter of a mile to the extreme end of the point.

And then they saw the Canyon!

Under their very feet the walls dropped sheer away nearly 3,000 feet, left and right, to the floor of side canyons which led directly into the granite gorge of the Colorado. In front, a narrow neck of rock led out to the top of Wotan's Throne, itself a mountain 7,700 feet high standing up in a hole! Almost due east they looked across thirteen miles of hole, and over the palisades of the desert, to the shimmering prismatic mystery of the Painted Desert. The whole vast erosion sweep of the Colorado, coming down from the north, and then turning west almost around the point where they stood and gouging

out the greatest hole of all, was plain to them, bathed in sunset colors which heightened and made mysterious its own pinks and reds and greens and yellows.

“Gosh all hemlock!” was all the Duke could find to say.

Bobbie didn't say anything.

Neither did Number One.

They just stood and looked, for five minutes, three tiny specks, on the rim of rainbow-colored immensity.

Finally Bobbie spoke.

“The south rim looks lower than us. It must be, because you can see right over it, and way down into Arizona, to those big blue mountains. Why didn't the Colorado River, when it started to cut this cunning little hole, keep on south? Why does it flow *across* an incline?”

“Nobody knows,” Number One answered. “Probably, though, the river was flowing westward when the land gradually rose to the north of it. The river cut down in faster than the land rose, so it kept on going west, cutting against the pitch. But you notice the river is close to the south rim. That's because the land on top pitches

away from the rim, and there are no streams coming into the Canyon. On our north side, all the water drains into the Colorado, and that's what makes all these side canyons, and has pushed the north rim a dozen miles back, or more, from the big stream. Well, boys, if we want any dinner, we must beat it now. To-morrow we'll go down into that hole, and see what the inside of the earth is like."

They got back to the hotel just in time to crash the dining-room doors before the head waiter got 'em shut, and after dinner, going out on the veranda to look over the mystery of the Canyon in starlight, they found it was actually chilly.

"First time I've been cool in two weeks!" said Bobbie.

"D-d-d-d-delicious," laughed the Duke.

"We are up over 8,000 feet," said Number One. "Funny thing, altitude. Here we are in the climate and flora of Canada. To-morrow we'll travel fourteen miles to the Colorado River, and be in the climate and flora of Mexico. Shall we walk, or go on donkeys?"

"You going to take your big camera?" asked the Duke.

“ I thought some of it.”

“ Donkeys!” said the Duke.

“ Of course, I could take the little movie, and we could pack a blanket apiece, and sleep side of the river, and hike on across to the south rim. It might be fun to say we’d crossed the Grand Canyon on our own power.”

“ Hooray!” cried Bobbie.

“ I’m hitting on all six,” said the Duke.

“ You mean you’re knocking ’em off like a sweetheart, don’t you?”

“ I never use slang,” the Duke grinned.

“ Well—man power it is, then. But don’t think you’re in for a picnic. Bed now—and a good sleep and early start. We won’t travel much down there while the sun is overhead.”

Before they turned in, the two Scouts went out of the cabin, in the cool starlight, to the rim, and looked across the shadowed mystery. The wind was rising. It seemed to be sucking down into the earth, and wailing as it went.

“ Don’t know that I blame it much,” the Duke remarked. “ I bet I dream about that hole!”

CHAPTER IX

DOWN THE KAIBAB TRAIL TO THE BOTTOM OF THE EARTH

NOBODY slept well. The wind howled all night, and shook their cabin, and at 8,000 feet the altitude, to which they weren't yet accustomed, made them restless, also. They rose before sun-up, and went out to the rim to see the sunrise colors flood the Canyon. They had breakfast as soon as the doors were open, and consulted the ranger about the weather.

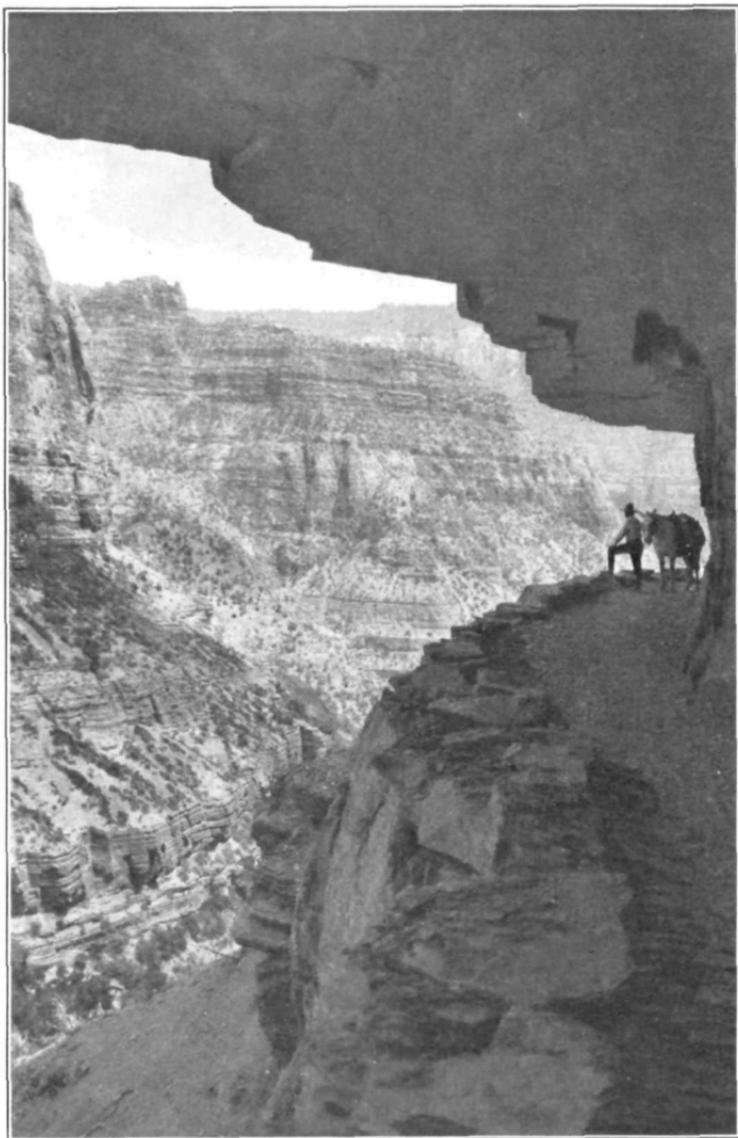
"No rain," he said, "but this wind will probably blow all day. You planning to hike down?"

They said they were.

"Good at hiking? And do you mind steep drops?"

"We've seen a few," they said, thinking of their cliff climbs.

"Well, you're going to see a few more," said the ranger. "Better lie up in shadow during the noon hours."



Kaibab Trail, Grand Canyon National Park.
Permission of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company.

With a single blanket apiece, small movie camera and films, extra socks, a clean shirt apiece, cups and lunch, and with their alpine shoes on their feet, the three started off up the road to the head of the Kaibab Trail. They were an hour or two ahead of any of the parties going down on mules, and would have the trail to themselves.

“All aboard for Mexico!” cried the Duke.

“All aboard for the inside of the earth,” said Bobbie.

“All aboard for the inside of a text-book on geology,” laughed Number One.

The Kaibab Trail, built by the United States Park Service, starts at the head of a small side canyon leading up out of Bright Angel Creek Canyon, and like all trails to the Colorado River, it doesn't lose any time in beginning. It jumps right over the rim, and drops, drops, drops. At first it drops over a slope, covered with big trees, and here they didn't notice the wind much. Then it has to switchback down the pink limestone, in the open, and they felt the force of the gale which seemed to be sucking up now from the canyon below. The limestone, which lines the entire canyon, on both sides, just below the rim,

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was here streaked with various colors, in vertical bands, and is called the Ribbon Cliffs. This top formation, or layer, of limestone is about five or six hundred feet high. Under that they came to the belt of Coconino sandstone, 400 feet thick, which is a soft gray in color, but is generally called the white belt.

“Here’s your cross-bedded sandstone again, boys,” said Number One, as they walked down the switchbacks and through a little tunnel in the rock. Below the sandstone, the trail went down 1,200 feet of the red supai shales and sandstones, which are soft rocks, hence eroded faster, and are not so steep. But the wind was blowing a gale, and the sharp sand particles stung their faces, and they kept, too, on the inside of the path whenever they could and wherever it was on the edge of a sheer drop.

Then they came to the red wall. The red wall is limestone. It runs all around the canyon, 550 feet thick, and straight up and down as the side of a house. So far, the trail had, for the most part, been slabbing along talus slopes as it gradually descended the side canyon. But there was no talus slope for the red limestone. It was

everywhere sheered down as if cut with a gigantic knife.

"Gosh, where do we go from here?" Bobbie demanded.

"Got a parachute?" asked the Duke.

"If we had parachutes, they'd take us up instead of down, in this gale," Number One shouted, as a blast of wind came roaring from the depths below.

At the top of the red wall the trail suddenly swung out, away from the cliff, on the top of a jutting pinnacle. It was very narrow here, not over four or five feet wide, with no guard rail, and a 500-foot sheer drop on both sides. In the howling wind, even these three climbers were a bit relieved when they reached the other end.

"They call that place the Devil's back yard," shouted Number One.

"I'd hate to see his front yard, then," Duke shouted back.

From that point short switchbacks led down to a ledge on the main precipice again, which in turn led to the most interesting portion of the trail so far. A half tunnel, slanting downward at an easy grade, five or six feet wide, and high

enough to enable riders on mules to use it, had been blasted out of the solid rock. On one side, of course, was open space, and sheer drop. The wind was swirling dust into their eyes, and at times they had almost to lean into it to make progress, but even under these conditions the thrill of walking down that half tunnel, in the heart of the red rock and yet on the very brink of an abyss, was tremendous.

Below the red wall they were almost at the mouth of the first side canyon. Dropping rapidly over the talus at the bottom and the next layer of Muav limestone, they reached a point opposite Roaring Springs, which they could see gushing out of the opposite wall, and then came to the hydro-electric plant which pumps the water up to the Lodge above, lifting it the entire distance without boosters—the highest single lift of water in the country. The boys had seen the pipe here and there, clinging to the rocks on the way, and the cables by which the machinery had been lowered from the rim—and they had marveled at the nerve of the workmen who had laid a pipe line, and strung cables, down such an abyss.

At the pumping station, of course, they

reached water—and it was good! The sun was getting high, the trees of the rim had vanished. All around them they saw strange plants growing—cacti and “Spanish bayonets,” and other desert-like things. And it was hot!

“Where’s a good place to lay up for lunch and a rest in the shade?” they asked the superintendent of the pumping station.

“Go on down a little way to Ribbon Falls,” he said. “Good water there, and shade. Most people lunch there—you’ll probably have company.”

“That’s no inducement,” muttered the Duke. But they pushed on, having to ford Bright Angel Creek, which now came in from its longer side canyon, and following that down-stream. The “little way” proved to be nearly three miles, but the descent was gradual, for they had now reached the Tonto Plateau, and it was almost like walking down some strange desert valley, ringed with precipices. Tall spikes of yellow flowers, twelve or fourteen feet high, grew up out of clumps of swordlike leaves, each leaf with a tip as sharp as a needle. The Duke discovered this by putting his hand on one.

"I'd hate to play squat tag in this place," he exclaimed, sucking his palm.

Finally they took off their shoes once more and reforded the creek, and presently came to a side trail, which took them up by a small brook to the base of a cliff. Over this cliff a waterfall was pouring. It dropped fifty feet or so, and hit on top of a great rock. Then it slid softly down this rock over a great, green cascade of maiden-hair ferns! At the foot was a cool pool, in shadow, and along the brook were green plants—monkey flowers and cardinal flowers, Number One declared them, though none was in blossom at this time. To find, in the very heart of the great, hot canyon this cool, green spot, was a surprise—and a welcome one. First they drank, and then they plunged their heads in the pool, and then Number One took a movie of the falls, and then they started to eat their lunch, sitting in the shade, with the spray of the waterfall blown now and then pleasantly in their faces.

Before they had finished, half a dozen tourists appeared, with two guides. The women were staggering, for they had just dismounted from their mules, and were very stiff.

“Don’t I know how they feel!” said Bobbie.

Down they flopped by the water, and one of them declared, “I shall never get up. I know I never shall! Oh, that wind! And that precipice! If I’d known what I was in for, ten mules couldn’t have dragged me down here.”

“I wish they hadn’t,” the Duke muttered to himself.

“Cheer up, Bessie,” one of the men remarked. “The worst is yet to come.”

“If there’s anything worse, I shall jump right over, and end it all,” she declared.

“Look at the pretty waterfall.”

“There’s nothing pretty in this dreadful hole,” the woman said. “It’s all horrible.”

“Oh, get her a limousine and a poodle dog, and ship her back to Park Avenue,” the Duke whispered. “She makes me sick.”

“Sh!” cautioned Number One. “She probably never got out in the open spaces before. She’s keeled over by ’em. This hole affects some folks that way.”

“I can understand,” said Bobbie. “It’s so whacking big, and so terribly steep, that I can imagine a tenderfoot who’d never climbed going

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green in the gills. Have a heart, Duke, as Pickles is always saying."

The Duke grinned. "Pickles makes me think of Tommy Cowan," he answered. "How that kid would love it here! Some day, when I get rich, I'm going to bring him, just to see his face!"

Presently the mule-back party departed. But as Ribbon Falls are only five miles from the river (they had hiked nine already) Number One and the Scouts lay in the shadow till long after three o'clock. They all three had dull headaches from the wind and hot sun combined, and they dozed till they were cooler, and rested. At 3:30 they set out once more, saw a deer across the creek, saw where beavers had been gnawing down small trees in the creek bed, saw a small cliff dweller's food storehouse up on a cliff, and finally dropped down out of the Tonto shales, which is the layer which forms the Tonto Plateau, into a rapidly narrowing gorge, with steep sides of dark and hard rock.

"Now, at last, we are getting down to what is called rock bottom!" exclaimed Number One.

"I'm glad there is a bottom," the Duke replied. "Are we getting into the granite?"

"Schist, anyhow," Number One said. "They call it the granite gorge, but it is mostly schist and gneisses. Anyhow, it is hard rock, the real bed rock, the kind of rock we have right on top at home. See how straight the water has cut it."

There was just room at the bottom for the trail and the creek. The walls rose higher and higher, straight up. The creek wound and twisted so you couldn't see far ahead or behind.

"Gosh, talk about being in the bowels of the earth," Duke exclaimed. "I feel as if I was trapped in the small intestine."

It was, indeed, a gloomy place. Sometimes no sun could reach them. Once they passed the mouth of a side gorge, Phantom Canyon, with no trail at all leading up to it, which looked grim and dark and ominous. They found themselves hurrying, in spite of the heat.

Then, quite suddenly, the gorge widened. They saw an irrigation and power dam and pipes, and below green grass and trees, and soon came to the Phantom Ranch, with its small lodge house, its sleeping cabins, its corral for the mules,

a garden, trees, tropical flowers, a fountain, down here in a hole between two 6,000-foot walls!

“ Shall we sleep in a cabin, or outside? ” asked Number One.

“ Outside! ” cried the boys.

They walked on past the ranch for half a mile, and again quite suddenly Bright Angel Creek Canyon ended abruptly at the Colorado River.

“ Well, boys, there she is—the wickedest river in the world! ” Number One exclaimed.

The water was fairly low, now, leaving a considerable beach of soft sand. They stood upon it, and looked at the great greenish-brown stream which was pulling steadily along at a resistless pace, between its almost sheer 800-foot walls of dark, solid schist or “ granite. ” Bright Angel Creek, clear as crystal, emptied into it, and the clean water was at once swallowed up in the dark, silt-laden Colorado. The sun did not reach them down here. But looking up, they could see it shining brightly on the red and pink cliffs of the south rim, 5,000 feet above their heads.

“ How’d you like to be wrecked on this river, at a place where no trail came down? ” Number One asked.

"Has anybody?" Bobbie asked.

"They have—a lot of 'em. A few expeditions have come through the whole river, from way up at Green River, Wyoming, down to Needles, and a few more from the middle of Utah. But a lot have tried it—and only the river knows their end. You must read the account of Major Powell's pioneer expedition when you get home, and Dellenbaugh's book. It's a terrific adventure."

"I'd like to try it!" the Duke exclaimed. "The old river don't look so bad, if you had plenty of grub."

"Yes? Well, I'm sorry you can't see some of the rapids in it. Right here there's a beach. But imagine terrific rapids between sheer walls, with no way to lower the boats down from the shore. You just have to get into mid-stream and trust to God. And do it for a thousand miles. I heard a man who went through tell about it once. He said nobody in his party laughed after they entered the canyons, far up in Utah, till they came out below the canyon way to the west of here."

"I can understand that," said Bobbie, throw-

ing a stick out into the water, and watching it swept rapidly down-stream.

They cached their packs and blankets on the shore, and went back to the Phantom Ranch for dinner—a good dinner, too, all brought down on mule back from the south rim.

“Walked down, eh?” said the proprietor of the Ranch. “Some gale in your face, wasn’t there? Never knew it to blow harder. Hope it means rain. I’d like to get cooled off. Went up to 125 here yesterday.”

“That’s almost warm enough for you, Duke,” Number One laughed.

“Going to hike out again to-morrow?”

“How far is it to El Tovar?”

“Ten miles—good trail. Or you can cut over the Tonto and go up Bright Angel Trail.”

“Boys, are you game to keep on to-morrow across the Canyon and out?” asked Number One. “I’d sort of like to say I’d hiked across this hole.”

“You bet!”

“Rather!”

“They got more ambition than a mule,” laughed the proprietor.

After supper they saw the woman who had been complaining at luncheon. She was being helped to her cabin by her husband.

"I know I shall never have any use of my knees again!" she was saying.

"That's more 'n she can say of her tongue," grunted Duke.

"Oh, forget her," laughed Bobbie.

"I can't. She makes me sick. Why don't such people stay at home?"

"Well, she won't bother us to-night. We'll have the whole beach to ourselves," said Mr. Parsons. "And I, for one, am ready for it. That's a long fourteen miles, in a hurricane."

"It's the grandest day I ever spent!" Bobbie exclaimed.

They went back, in the darkness, and found their packs with difficulty. The wind had died down now. The stars, in the slit of sky overhead, seemed very bright. There was no sound except the soft, rushing hiss of the great river beside them, forever engaged on its task of chewing away the rocks of the earth crust. There was no need of blankets over them. They spread

them on the dry sand, hollowed to fit their bodies, and lay down.

“It’s strange here, isn’t it?” said Bobbie. “Way down in this hole, 6,000 feet below where we were this morning, and all cut by this river. How long do you suppose it has taken it, Number One?”

“Your guess is as good as mine. Hundreds of thousands of years, anyhow. Remember, a lot of upper layers were stripped off first, as we saw up in Utah. This is just a drainage ditch at the bottom of a vast denudation.”

“And some day the old river will be down another 2,000 feet, and then it will be quiet as the Hudson.”

“Sure,” said the Duke, “and then Number One will let me go down it in a canoe.”

“Your long white whiskers will get tangled up with the paddle by that time,” the man laughed. “If it cuts down an inch a year, how long will it take to cut 2,000 feet? There’s a problem for you. Quick!”

“I can do that—wait—twelve years for a foot—that’s only 24,000 years. Not long to wait for such a canoe trip.”

“ Well, you might as well sleep while you wait.”

“ O. K., chief. Please leave a morning paper for me, will you? ”

“ Gee whiz,” cried Bobbie, “ we haven’t looked at a paper for days and days. What do you suppose is happening up in the world? ”

“ Who cares? ” said the Duke. “ Little things like politics and baseball don’t seem important in the Grand Canyon.”

“ They belong to Time. This belongs to Eternity,” Number One added.

“ That’s a big idea to sleep on,” was Duke’s last remark. “ Good-night, folks.”

CHAPTER X

CROSSING THE CANYON—AND THE GIRLS WHO WERE A SCREAM

THE night was hot, and under the shadow of those gloomy walls every time one of the party woke up, as he confessed the next morning, he felt as if he were in a prison. They rose very early, and went to the mouth of Bright Angel Creek for a dip, before there were any tourists about to see them. It was then that they discovered that by going on around to the west, they could look down a long flight of rapids, and see the sort of going the Colorado River offers.

“You may have it!” Duke exclaimed. “Not for me, thank you!”

They had breakfast at the Phantom Ranch, filled their canteens, and started off for the south rim, crossing the river on a suspension foot bridge, wide enough for a pack mule to use. On the other side the Kaibab Trail has to get directly up the granite wall, as there is no side



Kaibab Suspension Bridge—Grand Canyon National Park.
Permission of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company.

canyon for it to follow. This it accomplishes by switchbacks blasted out. Once it reaches the Tonto Plateau, it heads directly for the south rim, which it reaches by switchbacking up the red wall on the broken-down nose of O'Neill Butte, which juts two or three miles out from the rim, like a bowsprit. From the top of the red wall, the trail slabs the Butte, working gradually up to a point under the rim three miles east of El Tovar. There it switchbacks to the top. The three miles to the hotel and railroad of course are perfectly level.

It was hot, hard work climbing the granite wall. The wind of yesterday had vanished, and there was hardly a breath stirring. At the top they rested, drank water, and surveyed the enormous prospect, including the wall ahead of them.

"It looked huge coming down it, but now we've got to climb out of it, it looks bigger than ever," Bobbie declared.

They came presently to the Tonto Trail, which led along the plateau to the famous Bright Angel Trail, but decided to return that way, and climb out by the short route. Half an hour brought them to the switchbacks which drop the

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Kaibab Trail down off the nose of O'Neill Butte, and as they reached this point they were aware of loud screams somewhere above them.

"Somebody's in trouble!" they shouted, and the Scouts started to run.

"Hold on!" cried Number One. "If we run up-hill in this heat, we'll be in trouble too! Slow down, boys. Steady—steady!"

The screams kept on. There seemed to be two people yelling, and both sounded like women. They were coming nearer, too. As the three hikers hurried up, they soon came in sight of the distressed party, and to their complete amazement, they saw two guides calmly riding down, one in front, one behind, two women, who were also on mules. The two women were screaming, first one, then the other, then both together, and hanging on to the horns of their saddles. But the mules were jogging along peacefully, as if it were all in the day's work.

"Well, I'll be ——" the Duke began.

"So will I," said Bobbie, interrupting.

"Me, too!" said Number One.

"What do you s'pose is the matter with them?" Bobbie asked.

“Scared, I guess,” replied the man. “We’d better find a good, wide place on the trail where they can pass us, or they’ll throw a complete fit!”

Just ahead was a jog in the upside wall, and against this the three hikers flattened, and waited for the party on mule back. The screams came nearer and nearer. Then, around the bend, came the head of the first mule, followed by the guide in his saddle. He wore, of course, the usual high-heeled cowboy boots and outfit, with a silver Navajo belt buckle and a five gallon hat. The expression on his face was comical—it was one of settled and abysmal gloom. He glanced sourly at the three hikers flattened against the wall, as his mule slowed down for an instant and also regarded them.

“Having a nice trip down?” asked the Duke, very politely.

The gloom deepened on the guide’s face. He grunted, and kicked his mule ahead without a word.

Then came the mule ridden by the first woman. It, too, stopped when it saw the hikers, stopped entirely and surveyed them with a look of ami-

cable surprise, as much as to say, "Hello, here's something new on the trail." As he stopped, the young woman on his back, who was leaning inward on the saddle, to keep as far as she could from the side of the trail which dropped off, turned a terrified face to Number One and the boys, and emitted a scream even louder than before.

"Good-morning, madam. It's a fine day, isn't it?" said Number One, politely.

"O-o-oh!" screamed the young woman.

The head guide looked back, and made a sound to her mule, which started on again.

The same operation was repeated by the third mule, and the third rider.

When the second guide came around the bend, he grinned somewhat sourly at the hikers, and reined in his animal.

"Any of you want to swap places with me?" he asked.

"Sorry," the Duke replied. "I got a date at El Tovar."

"I hope she don't scream," said the guide with a grin.

"What's the matter with 'em?" asked Num-

ber One. "If they're so scared, why do they come down?"

"Search me. They been yelling just like that since we went over the rim. Don't seem to get tired at all. Told me they were trained nurses."

"Doesn't it make the mules nervous?" Bobbie demanded.

"Naw—it amuses 'em."

The cowboy gave his animal a prod, and moved on again. The hikers stepped into the trail and watched the party sink rapidly down the switchbacks, their screams growing fainter.

"Well, I'll be hornswoggled!" said the Duke. "That's the funniest thing I ever saw!"

"I'm kind of sorry for those poor dames," Bobbie put in.

"Sorry, your grandmother! They don't *have* to go down, do they? If they feel that way about it, why don't they stay on top?"

"Anyhow," laughed Number One, "I hope they've got some throat tablets in their packs. They'll need 'em to-night!"

"They ought to know what to do, if they're nurses," Bobbie said.

"I s'pose when they get home," Duke sug-

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gested, "and somebody asks 'em if they had a good time, they'll say, 'Oh, my dear, it was a scream!'"

Number One looked at Bobbie. "Here's a good steep place—200-foot drop, at the least. Shall we throw him over?"

"I'll be good!" cried the Duke. "In fact, I'll be good to the last drop."

"A quick death is too good for him," Bobbie groaned. "Let's take his canteen away, and leave him to perish of thirst."

"Which reminds me," Number One replied, "that it's getting hot. Suppose we lay up in the shade somewhere, for a couple of hours, and eat lunch and look at the view."

"Just where is the shade you're suggesting?" laughed Bobbie.

It certainly was getting hot, and they were weary with the steady upward grind, though the Kaibab Trail follows easier grades than any other in the Canyon. Suddenly the Duke, after five minutes of silence, exclaimed, "I've made a poem!"

"The heat has gone to his head," sighed Bobbie.

“Let’s hear it,” said Number One, “and get it over with.”

“There once were two nurses, they say,
Who thought operations quite gay,
But on the old Kaibab Trail
They turned very pale
And they yelled and they screamed all the way.”

Number One tried not to laugh, but he couldn’t help himself. Bobbie plodded on in silence for a hundred feet, and then he said, “I’ve got one!” And without waiting to be asked he declaimed:—

“Two little nurses turned quite pale
Climbing down the Kaibab Trail,
The more they screamed the more their mules
Decided tourists are big fools.”

“H’m,” said Number One. “Now it’s my turn, I suppose.” The boys waited. Another two hundred feet, and he spoke again:—

“Two young Scouts on Hermit shale
Saw these maidens frightened pale;
They tried to put it into verse
Which might be better and couldn’t be worse.”

“And that’ll be all of that, I guess,” the Duke grinned. “The drinks are on us, Number One.” And he passed his canteen.

“And here’s a place where we can enjoy ’em,” the man laughed, as he pointed to a place where they could scramble off the trail to the north side of a little cliff, and rest in the shade of the overhang. There they ate the sandwiches brought from the Phantom Ranch, more than half emptied their canteens, and sat till two o’clock, dozing part of the time, part of the time looking out over the endless panorama of the canyon, where the colors on the walls and in the hazy air never remained quite the same an hour at a time. By resting in the shade, this way, during the two hottest hours of the day, they were able to climb on out of the canyon without exhaustion, and to walk briskly along the rim path on the top, three miles to El Tovar, the famous south rim hotel. The south rim, they discovered, is backed by a much lower and scantier forest than the north rim, and it is also much more developed with trails and roads. Just back of the rim was a motor road running east to Desert View, and busses were constantly passing on it. The rim

trail was well packed, and they met several parties of tourists strolling along, or saw them out on the points where you can look over into the abyss, and heard them squealing.

“Tourists make me sick,” the Duke grunted. “Why do they always have to be squealing, or making some kind of a noise? My gosh, *nobody* can make a noise loud enough to do justice to this old hole. Why not keep your mouth shut?”

“Aren’t you a bit intolerant?” Number One suggested.

“Maybe I am,” the Duke replied. “But I’ve noticed this, Number One, with our Scouts. When we get up on a mountain, or some place like that, with a big view or something, the kids who yell and holler aren’t the ones who really appreciate it most. It’s always the quiet ones, like Tommy Cowan, who never says a word, but just looks with his big eyes.”

“There’s probably something in what you say,” Mr. Parsons smiled. “What’s the line in ‘The Deserted Village’? Oh, yes,—

“‘And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.’

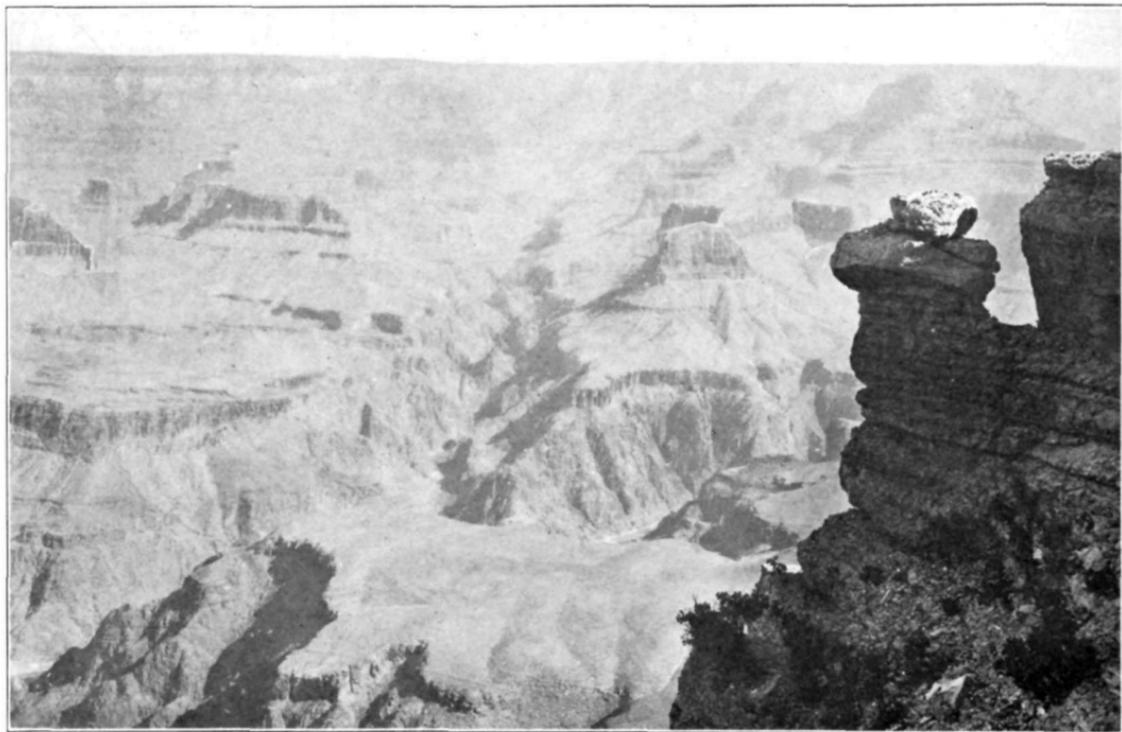
But remember, this is a pretty terrific hole, and

when people from cities, who maybe never were up on even a small mountain, see it for the first time, they get quite a nervous shock, and their squeals are natural explosions."

"Those two women down the trail were exploding, all right!"

"Oh, they were an exception, of course. I'm not holding any brief for them," laughed Number One.

And now, with the sun sinking toward the west, they came to El Tovar. It was almost like getting to a town here on the canyon rim. The hotel was big. Behind and below it was the railroad terminal, with the daily train of sleepers waiting to take the crowd down at eight o'clock. On the very rim of the canyon stood a Hopi Indian pueblo type of house, of good size and apparently made of adobe. Several Indians, with silver ornaments on their belts, and long, straight black hair, were walking about. Crowds of people were on the hotel veranda, or along the stone parapet which protected the rim edge. West from the hotel were more buildings—a cafeteria and lodging house for cheaper board, garages, the studio of the Kolb Brothers, the



The Grand Canyon of Arizona from the south rim looking up Bright Angel Creek
toward Kaibab National Forest.
Photograph by U. S. Forest Service

photographers who once made the trip through the canyon in boats, and—most interesting of all to the Scouts—the head of the famous Bright Angel Trail, a trail to the river made by Nature and the Indians long before white men ever saw the canyon.

From its head they could look directly down into the horseshoe-shaped side gorge which it follows, and see the Indian Gardens on the Tonto Plateau below. Here a few Indians lived and worked the sparse land by the spring, before the Spaniards found the canyon. Three different mule-back parties were crawling, like tiny ants, in single file over the Tonto, or mounting the side. Out beyond, on the left, rose the dark, grim shape of the Battleship. Beyond that was the hole of the granite gorge, and then a tumbled world of buttes and pyramids—a great mountain system a mile high, rising out of a hole!—and beyond that the long, level line of the north rim.

“Gosh!” said Bobbie, with such fervor that the others laughed. “It don’t seem possible that we’ve walked across that hole!”

“Yeah—and we’ve got to walk back,” laughed the Duke. “Let’s go see the Indians.”

“Let’s get some pictures, first.”

They went into the studio, and bought some photographs to mail home. Then they went to the Hopi house, which was really a shop for the sale of Indian blankets, rugs, jewelry, baskets, and so on. It was full of tourists, and the prices were beyond the boys’ purses. Bobbie saw one rug he coveted for his den at home. It was covered with Indian figures, a row of them doing the Corn Dance. He picked it up and felt its great weight of wool. Then he looked at its bright colors again, and sadly put it down. It cost \$100.00!

“Of course, I would want the most expensive one in the place!” he laughed. “These Indians are civilized all right. They know how to charge for things.”

“We might go see a tribe to-morrow who don’t keep shop,” said Number One. “They live in the canyon, just as they have for untold generations. Want to go? You’ll have to climb down and out, on foot.”

“Lead us to it!” the Duke declared. “We want to see real Indians, who don’t keep a curio shop-pey.”

That night they ate a hearty dinner in the great dining room of El Tovar, and after dinner sent post-cards to all their friends, and mailed home their photographs, and when the day's grist of tourists had departed on the train (for the great majority of tourists come in the morning, spend one day, and depart again after dinner, and never really get to know the canyon at all), they talked with a Park ranger and a hotel clerk, and told them about the screaming women.

"That would be Joe, guiding 'em," the ranger laughed. "I can imagine how pleased he was."

"Funny thing about those two," the clerk said. "They are trained nurses, from out east somewhere. You'd think a trained nurse would have nerve, wouldn't you?"

"Cutting this canyon was quite a major operation, at that," the Duke suggested.

"Well, anyhow, they came out here last summer, and started down Bright Angel with one guide. In about half an hour they were back. They screamed so, they had him scared, and they said they couldn't go on. So he turned 'em round and herded 'em right back up. But this morning they showed up again—said they weren't going

to be stumped by a canyon. They'd been thinking it over all winter. Only they wanted two guides, and they were going to stay over night at the Phantom Ranch and get rested."

"You see, boys," Number One suggested, "those girls have got a lot of nerve, after all. It takes a lot of nerve to do something that you're scared pink to do."

"Well, why don't they have a little bit more, and keep their mouths shut?" the Duke insisted. "I say we go home by the Bright Angel, so's we won't meet 'em again."

"You won't meet 'em—they come out tomorrow, and they'll never know what they've missed."

There was no place where they could sleep out in comfort near El Tovar. The camp site was full of motor campers, so there was no privacy without a tent, and the rules were strict about camping elsewhere. In spite of the comfort of a bath, the boys were disgusted at having to sleep in a bed. But in a bed they slept, after a last walk in the starlight out to the rim, to see the great black hole yawning below them.

CHAPTER XI

DOWN HAVASUPAI CANYON TO SEE THE INDIANS

EARLY in the morning Mr. Parsons stocked up with many tins of tobacco, changed bills for silver dollars, which all Indians prefer, bought some provisions at the village store, engaged a car and a driver, and they set out westward, through the scrubby pine forest just back of the rim, to reach the Indian Village Trail leading down to the Havasupai Indian Reservation. They drove for nearly forty miles, the latter part of the trip over semi-desert, with the hole of the canyon always in their consciousness just to the right. The road wasn't much of a road. Tourists soon disappeared from view. They felt, once more, that they were out in the wilderness.

“Have you sent ahead for your ponies?” the driver asked.

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“No,” said Mr. Parsons. “We are going on Shanks’s mare.”

“I hope she’s in good condition,” the driver replied. “You’ve got fourteen miles ahead of you, and it’s no Kaibab, either. They haven’t blasted that trail out to a twelve per cent. grade. And hot! Say, if you don’t look out, your canteens’ll boil over, and scald you.”

“Will the Indians let us camp in their village?”

“Sure—they are friendly, most peaceful Indians there are. Not like the Navajos. But there ain’t any hotel there, mind you. Those Indians don’t want to be civilized. Say, the government built ’em houses once, and they used ’em to store corn and stuff in, and went right on living in their hogans.”

“Their what?” asked the Duke. “That sounds Irish, not Indian. Hogan’s the name of our fullback.”

“Well, it’s Indian, O. K. You’ll see. The Navajos live in ’em, too, but the Hopis live in mud houses like the one at El Tovar.”

At Hilltop, at the head of a side canyon, the road ended. “Here’s where the pony express

begins," the driver cried. "Only United States mail route left where the mail goes down a canyon on pony back, I guess. Good luck—don't let your canteens boil over, boys, and what time and when shall I pick you up?"

"Be here at 3:30 to-morrow," said Number One.

The driver gave him a scornful glance. "You'll never get out at 3:30 to-morrow."

Mr. Parsons suddenly straightened, and looked the driver in the eye.

"I said to be here at 3:30 to-morrow," he replied, very quietly. The driver said no more.

("Gosh," Bobbie whispered to the Duke, "Number One can turn on the old authority when he wants to!")

The driver turned and departed. The three hikers were left alone with their packs, facing a tremendously steep descent into a gorge which led southwestward, away from the main canyon, now invisible, and dropped them down to Havasu Creek, which rises from springs far under the plateau rim and flows north to the Colorado—the only stream of any size flowing into the canyon from the south, within the Park

bounds. It was five miles to the main creek—"And," said the Duke, "they look to me like vertical miles!"

As the driver had said, this was no Kaibab Trail, blasted out with drills and dynamite and with a rock parapet on the outer edge. It was just about what it had always been, a foot and then a pony trail worked out by the Indians, with ingenuity and daring, and most people would think better adapted to goats than human beings.

They went down cautiously, but rapidly, too, for the descent was so steep that you felt you were making progress with every step. Springs began very soon, and they tried the water, but found it so strongly impregnated with lime that it was unpleasant to drink. However, it went well on the head! In two hours they had reached the main gorge, which was quite narrow, and descending that for five miles, they found it began to open out, and also to grow less and less steep, till they were in a considerable amphitheatre, almost surrounded by the red walls of the Supai formation, and opening out at the far end toward the big river. It was a little valley of fertility, irrigated by the creek, half-way down

the great hole of the Grand Canyon, and absolutely inaccessible except by the one trail.

“One man, with a machine gun, could stop an army from getting in here!” said Bobbie.

“Or a bow and plenty of arrows,” said Number One. “No doubt that’s why the Havasupais came here. They say once they lived down in the San Francisco Mountains, but the Navajos or Apaches drove ’em out.”

“Begorra, I bet that’s Hogan,” suddenly cried the Duke, pointing ahead.

“Why, that’s like the Navajo huts up near El Tovar,” said Bobbie. “So that’s a hogan, eh?”

Out of the hut of brush, now peered a little red-brown face—an Indian child. He stared at the strangers, and vanished back into the low, dark interior. They saw other huts on down the trail, more pointed than the Navajo hogans, and using more thatch. There were small, primitive irrigation systems, which fertilized patches of growing corn, melon hills, and fruit trees—peaches and figs especially. They soon met several Indians, who were dressed in rough shirts and trousers, and carried hoes. They smiled amiably.

“Can we camp in your valley to-night?” Number One asked one of them, a wrinkled old man.

“Me no sabe,” he replied.

A younger Indian now came up. “He no sabe English much. You want?”

“We want to camp to-night if we may.”

“How you get here?” the Indian asked, looking around for their horses.

“On these.” And Number One pointed at their feet.

The Indian looked amazed. He also didn't look any too well pleased.

“Oh, sure, you camp anywhere,” he answered, not very heartily.

“What do you suppose was the matter with him?” said Bobbie.

“I guess most tourists pay the Indians for bringing them down on their ponies,” Number One answered. “We'll have to make it up to them. Say—look at that! I must get a picture of it!”

He pointed toward a thatched hut in front of which two little children, naked, were playing, while their mother was preparing food in a

wooden bowl, and just beyond the husband was hoeing a little patch of corn.

Number One unslung his camera, and walked over. "Do you mind if I take a picture?" he asked.

The woman frowned, and shook her head, while the children looked up and stared. The man dropped his hoe, and drew near.

Number One took a can of tobacco from his pack, and a silver dollar from his pocket. The change was immediate. The Indians smiled, and took the gifts. "What you want?" they said.

"Just forget me, and do what you were doing."

The Indian parents lined up beside the children, in a family group.

"No, no!" laughed Number One, shaking his head. "You"—to the man—"go back and hoe. You"—to the woman—"do what you were doing."

Meanwhile the Duke had produced from his pocket a post-card he had bought and not used—a bright colored card. He gave it to one of the little children, who took it in silence, and began to stare at it comically. The Duke stepped back,

and Number One set his small camera in motion, as he held it up to his eye to sight. The noise caused both kids to stare at him, fascinated, and one of them laughed, while the other, terrified, started to cry.

“Grand!” cried Number One. “Boys, could you stand a bit more walking?”

The Scouts said they could. So they moved on, and another tin of tobacco and a dollar bought them a guide, who led them past the tiny village (there are less than 200 Havasupai Indians all told) and down to the head of the valley, where they saw the first of the three superb waterfalls by which Havasu Cr ek leaps down to the Colorado. Few visitors to the Canyon ever see these falls. Navajo is the first. The boys would have liked to see all three, but the heat was intense, and the long trip down had done them pretty well in. Neither Scout objected when Number One decreed that they go back and find a camp spot and rest.

There were melons growing in the Indians' gardens, but they weren't ripe yet, much to the Duke's disappointment. In fact, there didn't seem to be much they could buy to add to their

provisions. Bobbie noticed two or three of the younger squaws opening canned food, to prepare dinner.

“That’s civilization,” laughed Mr. Parsons. They saw a mescal pit, full of blackened stones, where the mescal buds are roasted in spring, but of course it was too late in the year for this ceremony. The Scouts inspected the pit carefully, recognizing its likeness to an oval pit of stones they had seen coming down from the north rim.

“That pit over on the Kaibab must have been a very old one,” said Number One, “probably used by cliff dwellers or early Indians, in the long ago, and here are these Indians, still roasting the buds in the same way!”

Number One gave away the rest of his tins of tobacco, to various Indians, and the three hikers went back up the trail till they were above the village some little way.

“I shall relish this water more above than below the settlement,” said Number One. “I wish we had something to boil it in.”

“Wait!” cried the Duke. “I most forgot!” He fished in his pack, and brought out first a large can of pineapple, which they had bought

at the El Tovar store. Then he produced a little tin of tabloid tea. "I've had this in my pack for a year," he said. "Now's the time to use it! This water tastes like the dickens, anyhow. This tea will make it taste better."

"Yes, but how will we get hot water for the tea?" Bobbie demanded.

"We'll eat the pineapple first, and save the tin. Foolish question number 28,371."

"Well, before we do anything, let's sneak a bath, and wash our shirts."

It was now getting late, but they found a sheltered spot up the creek and sat in the water and washed out their hot, dusty clothing, and then wrung it out to dry over the hot rocks, going about making the smallest possible fire, out of driftwood sticks, in shoes and trousers.

"Whoop—heap big chief," cried the Duke, streaking his skin with two dabs of red mud.

"You feel livelier than I do," Number One confessed.

"I sound livelier than I feel," laughed the Duke.

Dinner was a very sketchy and frugal affair. They first ate the pineapple and drank the juice,

then propped the can, full of water, over some coals to heat, and toasted bacon on sticks, which they ate on bread without butter. They had no sugar for the tea, and no dessert but sweet chocolate, which had become sticky and soft in their hot packs.

"I feel like happy Hooligan," said the Duke, as he stooped over the tiny fire, naked to the waist, and poured hot water into their cups from the tin can.

"I'd hate to tell you what you look like," Bobbie replied.

When they had finished this frugal and certainly simple dinner, they put on their shirts, which had dried in the moistureless canyon air, and strolled stiffly back down the trail till they could see the village. Night was coming fast in the canyon, though a glow of sunset lingered behind the red cliffs above the little valley. They could hear a few voices, and see a dot of firelight here and there, where some squaw was cooking before her hogan. But there were no electric lights, no motor cars, no road, no sound of radio. Just the black mounds of the hogans, the dots of firelight, ponies browsing on a bit of grass, an

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occasional sound of guttural speech, a laugh, once the cry of a baby.

“Forget the tin can you saw, boys, and there’s a primitive village, just as it was before any white man set foot in Arizona.”

“All but one thing,” Bobbie answered.

“And that?”

“In those days, I bet we’d never have come this near without getting an arrow in the chest. They’d have had a watch out.”

“That may be. They don’t have to worry about the Navajos any more. But we’ve got something to worry about. We’ve got to be out of here at 3:30 to-morrow. And we’re going to start at 4 A. M. So we’re going to bed right now.”

“And I don’t need a bedtime story, either,” said the Duke.

CHAPTER XII

A CLIMB IN THE HEAT, AND ANOTHER PUN BY THE DUKE

NONE of the three will forget that next day in a hurry. They rose at four, in semi-darkness, after sleeping on dry sand near the creek, with their blankets under them, and nothing over them. They boiled more water, and had sugarless tea and bacon and butterless bread for breakfast. They made more tea, and filled two canteens with it, as an experiment. Then they packed their blankets, and set out, as the sun was catching on the tops of the red cliffs far above them, to plod up out of the hole.

Even at that early hour, it was extremely hot in the narrowing gorge. Going down, of course, you don't mind it so much, but going up, not by an easy, graded path, but by an Indian trail, takes every bit of energy you have.

"I read a story in some book about the canyon once," said Number One, "which told how the

Havasupai Indians work for the government on the Park trails. A foreman told one of the Indians just where to follow a grade. When he came back, he found the Indian had ignored the grade entirely, and dug straight up.

“ ‘Don’t you savvy grade?’ the foreman demanded.

“ ‘No savvy,’ said the Havasupai.

“ ‘What do you savvy?’

“ ‘Just diggin’,’ said the Indian.”

“Just digging his toenails in, on this trail,” panted the Duke. “Well, I’ll try some delicious tea.”

He took a swig from his canteen, and spat it out with a wry face.

“Me no savvy lukewarm tea,” he grunted. “I got to drink that old creek water, lime or no lime. The Park guide book says it’s perfectly pure. I read that in the hotel night before last.”

“Not too much, boy,” Number One cautioned.

On and on they plodded. They met nobody. They drank frequently of the clear, clean but lime-filled water—they couldn’t resist, in spite of the taste. They ducked their heads into it. They rested in shadow. Then they toiled on again.

“We aren’t doing better than a mile an hour, I bet,” said Bobbie.

“Oh, not as bad as that,” Duke cried. “Gee whiz, start at five—fourteen miles to go—that would bring us out at seven o’clock! Say, that old driver would give us the raspberry!”

“Can’t you give us a marching song to cheer us on?” asked Number One.

The Duke shook his head. “It would be a dirge,” he said.

“I can give you a poem,” Bobbie announced.

“Let’s get it over with, then ——”

He was silent for two minutes, and then emitted this stanza:—

“Two young Scouts to have a good time,
Lapped up quarts and quarts of lime;
After that they couldn’t go faster
For fear they’d both turn into plaster.”

“Not bad, not bad,” the Duke said. “But not so hot, either. I can make a shorter one:—

“Don’t drink the water, clear and bright,
For it will make you stalactight.”

“Honestly, Number One, don’t you think for

a pun like that he ought to go back and live with the Indians all summer?" said Bobbie.

"No," Number One replied. "The poor Indians have a hard enough life as it is."

"Well, *you* make a poem, Number One," the Duke grinned.

Number One shook his head. "You've got me licked," he confessed. "I'm too hot to think."

He looked at his watch. "We were a mile above the village when we started," he said. "That made thirteen miles to go. The side gorge is in sight ahead, so we've come eight miles, and it's now only nine o'clock."

"Hooray—two miles an hour, Bobbie! Better take your speedometer and have it fixed."

"The last five *will* take us a mile an hour," Number One went on. "That means only an hour and a half rest, at the outside. We'll go till noon, and lay up an hour, and we'll get there at 3:30, or bust, boys. Shall we?"

"Rather!"

Nobody talked much on those last five miles. It was a steady grind up, up, under a pack and blanket roll that grew hotter and heavier, and with their faces burning from the heat of the

rocks, and the perspiration pouring down their bodies. At noon, they flopped, munched a piece of dry bread apiece—all they had left—and drank what the Duke now called mortar. At 1:30 they set out again, going very slowly, to avoid high heart action and heat prostration, and frequently pausing for a moment. At 3:30, almost to the dot, they emerged at Hilltop, at the end of the road.

And there was no car there!

“Well, what do you know about that!” cried the Duke.

“Of course, he never believed we’d get here so early,” Number One frowned. “I wonder how long he’ll keep us waiting?”

As a matter of fact, after fifteen minutes, they saw dust across the desert, and presently the car appeared. When the driver saw the three hikers, he stepped on the gas, and tore up to the road.

“A little late—I had a flat——” he began.

“Go down and tell that to the Havasupais,” said Number One. “I told you to be here at 3:30. That doesn’t mean 4:00!” (He winked at the boys, but the driver didn’t see that, and turned red.)

They got in, and sank down on the seats.

“Something to be said for automobiles,” the Duke sighed, wearily, as they began to travel eastward. “Thirty an hour instead of one.”

“But they can’t go where we’ve been!” cried Bobbie.

“Thank goodness for that,” said Number One. “There’d be a hot dog stand and a filling station in the middle of the village, if they could.”

The Duke sobered. “That’s true. I don’t care if I am half dead. We’ve hiked back five hundred years, haven’t we? And in the space of fourteen miles!”

When they got to El Tovar, they were ashamed to go into the big dining room, they were so travel stained. “In fact,” said Number One, “probably they wouldn’t let us in!” So they went to the Bright Angel cottages, got a room, had a bath, Number One shaved for the first time that day, and they ate a good dinner in the central restaurant of the cottages. At nine o’clock, they were in bed, and glad enough to be there. They all three had headaches from the heat.

The next morning they started off down the

famous Bright Angel Trail, early, to get ahead of the numerous mule-back parties. It is a wide, easy trail, though quite steep in places, and they dropped down fast to the Tonto Plateau, took the Tonto Trail eastward over the Plateau to the Kaibab, and descended the granite wall to the suspension bridge. This was a ten mile trip—possibly a bit more, but down-hill, on a well-graded trail, it was easy going, and not hot till they reached the Tonto. They started at eight, and were at the bridge before one.

As they crossed the suspension bridge, far above the river (it has to be slung far up, to be clear of the high water in flood time), all three wondered how the long steel cables were ever brought down the canyon. Everything else about the bridge was in short sections which could be packed down on mules, like the furniture and supplies at Phantom Ranch. But no mule could bring a spool of steel cable 500 feet long or more!

“We’ll ask at the Ranch,” said Number One.

They got there in time for lunch, and at once asked their question.

“He’ll tell you,” said the proprietor, gesturing toward a guide who was sitting under a cotton-

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wood tree by one of the little irrigation streams which keep the ground cool and green around the Ranch houses.

“Walked ’em down,” said this individual.

“I don’t get you,” the Duke said.

“Gang of us picked ’em up on our shoulders—a man every six or eight feet, and walked ’em down.”

“Sure! Now I see! Gosh, I wish I’d been there! One of those cables coming down must have looked exactly like a gigantic centipede, crawling down the Kaibab!”

“Dunno what it looked like,” said the guide, “but I done things I enjoyed more.”

After lunch, and a rest in the shade, the hikers rented a couple of fishing rods and tackle from the proprietor, and wandered up Bright Angel Creek for trout. They had no luck in the granite gorge.

“If I was a trout, I wouldn’t live in this place, either,” Bobbie declared. “It makes me mournful.”

But coming into sunlight and open space on the lower Tonto, with cottonwoods by the streamside, and the tall spikes of century plants

sticking up over the rocks, and cactus below the great red and pink walls, Bobbie cheered up, and so did the trout. He got a strike, then the Duke got one, then Bobbie landed a nice fish, and presently Number One, taking a rod, got another.

“ Anyhow, I can *eat* fish, as well as either of you can,” the Duke remarked.

They wandered back to the Ranch with the sunlight quite gone from the narrow granite gorge.

“ This place sure gives me the creeps,” Bobbie declared. “ I don’t mind the big canyon. But this slit here—look at it! You couldn’t climb these walls if you were a ring-tailed monkey. If a flood caught you in here, you couldn’t possibly get out. It twists so you can’t see 500 feet ahead or behind.”

“ Come on, boy, don’t let it get you,” laughed Number One, quickening his pace. “ This canyon can do queer things to the imagination.”

They had their trout for supper, and as to-day they were feeling pretty fresh, and as a wind had come up, cooling the air, they went down to the amusement room of the Ranch afterwards, and joined the group of tourists and guides who were

sitting there. A phonograph was going, four people were playing bridge, a woman was telling everybody who would listen that she just wanted to *scream* every time her mule went around one of those *terrible* bends, and looked right out over those *awful* precipices.

“Look!” said the Duke, nudging the others, and pointing to a guide who sat in a corner. “Isn’t that our cheerful friend, Joe?”

It was! The three of them moved upon him in a body.

“We’ve got a question to ask you,” they said.

Joe looked at them. It was evident that he recognized them, and a faint hint of a twinkle fluttered in his eyes. But he didn’t smile.

“Yeah?” he said.

“We want to know if they screamed all the way down?”

“They done same,” said Joe. “And all the way back.”

“No!” exclaimed Number One, incredulous.

“Fact. I reckoned their throats would be too sore next day, but they woke up in good shape, and started in again at the bridge going back, and kept it up to the rim.”

“Were they really trained nurses?”

“They said they was. I needed a trained nurse when I got back. ’Twas worse than listenin’ to an aeroplane engine. A coyote round the camp would be real restful after them dames.”

“I suppose you get all kinds in the course of a summer?” Number One suggested.

“And then some,” Joe replied, rolling a cigarette with one hand, and languidly licking the paper.

“I sort of feel,” said Bobbie, as they finally walked in the starlight down to their bed by the great river, “that Joe regards *us* as among the ‘then some’ kind. I suppose he thinks anybody who would walk instead of ride up and down the canyon is a freak.”

“Joe thinks more than he says, I suspect,” Number One laughed. “But I bet in a pinch he thinks quick. I’d like him on our lion hunt.”

“Are we *really* going lion hunting?”

“We are—maybe day after to-morrow. And Havasupai gorge will be a picnic in comparison.”

“Say, when I get home, I’ll chew nails at the Y. M. C. A. benefit, and raise money for the

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Scouts by bouncing a cannon ball off my chest," the Duke declared.

"Don't you mean your head?" Bobbie asked, as he dodged a left hook, and made himself a bed in the soft, dry sand, beside the river that went secretly hissing by in the starlight, between its towering black precipices.

CHAPTER XIII

ARRANGING FOR THE LION HUNT

THE next day they got out of the canyon, and it was a long, hard pull. The fourteen miles which had seemed short when they went down stretched out and out as they plodded up—especially the first ten, to Roaring Springs, which they had to do in the heat of the desert. They laid up at Roaring Springs for two or three hours, in the shade, and took the last ascent, up the splendid face of the Red Wall and so on to the top, in the later afternoon, when the trail was mostly in shadow. As they climbed, it grew cooler and cooler—or, rather, less and less hot—and finally, before they crested the last precipice under the rim, the familiar pine and fir trees appeared beside the trail.

“Back in Canada,” laughed Number One. “Fourteen miles from Mexico to Canada—that’s going some.”

“And two days ago we hiked fourteen miles

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from 1492 to an automobile—four centuries in a day,” said Bobbie. “This is some country.”

“And don’t I wish our chauffeur was waiting at the rim right now, with good old Brigham,” sighed the Duke.

At the rim, they still had two miles more to go on the road, and the sun had set when they finally reached their cabin, cleaned up, and made the dining room just three minutes before the doors closed. After dinner they went out on the terrace, hung over the mysterious abyss out of which they had climbed. There was a cool wind blowing. They were actually chilly! It was hard to believe that only fourteen miles away, and a mile down, was stifling desert heat.

Inside the hotel, a group of four cowboys, with banjos, was gathering, and the Scouts and Mr. Parsons went inside. The cowboy quartette sat down and began to josh each other. Then they decided on a song, twanged their banjos, and sang:—

As I walked out one morning for pleasure,
I spied a cow-puncher all riding alone;
His hat was thrown back and his spurs was a-jingling,
As he approached me a-singin’ this song—

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along little dogies,
It's your misfortune and none of my own.
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

There were a lot more verses, and the Whoopee chorus after each one. Then more patter, and then another song.

The boys listened, fascinated. But Number One said, "It strikes me those birds play the banjo altogether too well."

"Why shouldn't they play well?" Bobbie demanded. "I s'pose they sit around the ranches winters, and play a lot."

"Maybe," said Number One, and wandered out into the office.

When he came back, he was grinning. The cowboy quartette had just finished another song, and the crowd of tourists were applauding.

"See the big chap on the end?" said Number One. "He plays guard on the University of Utah football team. Two others are on the University Glee Club. The fourth comes from Brigham Young University, which we passed in Provo."

“Heck,” said the Duke, “somebody is always taking the joy out of life!”

“What are they doing here?” Bobbie demanded.

“Working, of course,” laughed Number One, “—bellhops, and things like that. The manager just told me almost all his waitresses and bellhops are college boys and girls, who work summers.”

“Just a bluff, eh, to make us eastern tenderfeet think we’re seeing the real thing?” said the Duke. “I s’pose the old mountain lion we’re going to catch will be a tomcat in disguise.”

“I shall expect you to pat him, to find out,” said Number One. “Feel like bed?”

“I’ve felt like bed since four P. M.,” laughed Bobbie.

The next morning they got out Brigham, and rode back up the highway fifteen miles to the V T Ranch (which isn’t a ranch any more, since the Kaibab was made a national forest, but a tourist and hunters’ hotel). Here they learned that one of the two outfits in the forest which will stage a lion hunt for you was probably out to the west at a place called Big Saddle Camp,

so they steered Brigham into a forest road quite different from the hard, smooth highway, and which wound and twisted, up-hill and down dale, through the depths of the forest. It was little more than a cart track. All around them rose the trunks of the yellow pines and also beautiful, silvery green white firs. They saw many deer, and a couple of coyotes sneaking along like dogs which have been misbehaving and know it. After traveling another fifteen miles or so, they heard dogs barking somewhere ahead, and soon found themselves at the camp. There was a pack of hounds, looking much like fox hounds, lying in the shade, now and then starting a half-hearted fight to keep from being bored. There were two or three tents, and a roughly fenced corral in which a couple of horses were standing. There was a battered and dusty truck parked at one side. And two men were lying under a tree, smoking. They half sat up as Brigham stopped.

“Is this the outfit that will get us a lion?”
Number One called.

One of the men slowly heaved himself to his feet and strolled over to the car, followed still more slowly by the second man. He looked the

car over. He looked Number One over. He looked the two Scouts over. The car was, of course, empty of luggage. All three passengers were dressed in clean clothes, which they had worn to breakfast at the hotel. And the Scouts looked pretty young.

"You aiming to take a pet back east?" the man inquired.

"That was the idea," said Number One.

"My little sister has been crying for a kitty," the Duke added, even more soberly.

A faint wrinkle crept into the corners of the man's eyes. You could just barely detect that he was smiling.

"We can get you one, all right," said he. "That's what we're here for. But you'll have to get a big basket to put it in. It would jump right out o' that open buggy, and run off. They're funny that way—don't like ter ride in automobiles."

"When can we start?" asked Number One.

"Well, me and Jim is pretty busy just this minute ——" the man began.

"I noticed that when we drove up," said Bobbie.

“Yeah. And the hawses are all over on the Powell Plateau, and we’d have to ketch three of ’em for you to ride, and that takes time, ’cause they get kind o’ wild and sorter resent a saddle” — (he looked straight at Bobbie as he said this).

“Also, we got ter get up to the store fer some supplies, just in case we didn’t happen to catch sister’s pussy the first day. And we might need some salve and iodine and bandages and things. Oh, yes, and a cook, and maybe a couple o’ fellers to help a bit ——”

“Couldn’t we get the Governor to call out the militia?” the Duke demanded.

“At least, they got guns,” the man came back, “though probably they don’t know much about using ’em. You got any guns?”

“Not a gun,” said Number One. “All we’ve got are two stills and a movie camera. Let’s get down to business. We want you to tree a lion for us, and rope it, while we take a picture. We don’t care what happens to the lion after that ——”

“You don’t care much what happens to the feller who ropes it, either, do you?”

“No, because we’re sure you fellows are smart

enough to look after yourselves. We want a picture."

"Well, a roped lion gets kind o' peeved at the universe in general, and he kind o' hits out blind like. He might not like to have his picture took, and take a swipe at one of you. What'd you do then?"

"You or Jim would bring him down with a well directed shot through his heart," said Bobbie.

"I'm kinder skeered o' firearms," said Jim, speaking for the first time.

Both Scouts burst into a shout of laughter, but Jim's solemn face never changed expression.

Number One finally got the men down to talking business. They said they could be ready in a couple of days, with an outfit, which would include a rope expert who'd rope the lion, and a gun in case of trouble. After the lion was roped and photographed, they'd let circumstances decide what to do with it. But it would be expensive. It would cost more than just treeing a lion for somebody to shoot. The price was settled on, and in two days Number One and the boys were to be back.

"Better not wear your best clothes, either,"

said Tom Hamblin, the camp leader, who had now told them his name. "Lions have a way o' goin' over the rim when you chase 'em, and it's kind o' rough follerin' 'em."

"Say, they are queer ducks," said the Duke, as Brigham headed back through the forest. "Didn't seem to care whether they got a job or not."

"Probably think we're freaks, not to have guns, and awful tenderfeet," added Bobbie.

"Well, I guess we are," Number One laughed. "But what struck me was that Hamblin had something in the back of his mind he was holding out. What I bet is that this isn't the season for lion hunting, and he half wanted to tell us so, and half wanted to keep the job."

"Oh, hully gee—don't say that! I want to see a lion," cried the Duke.

"He'll do his best, anyhow—I feel sure of that," said Number One, "—if he rides us to death in the process. I suspect, boys, we're in for a hard week."

"Hooray!" said both Scouts.

CHAPTER XIV

CHASING A LION OVER THE RIM OF THE GRAND CANYON

THE second afternoon following, Brigham reached the camp once more. This time there was dunnage in the car, and the occupants were dressed in rough riding clothes. They had Number One's small movie camera, lots of films, two snapshot cameras belonging to the Scouts, a first aid kit, and the Duke's and Bobbie's alpine rope (not to rope the lion with, the boys explained, but to use themselves when the animal went over the rim). Nobody was in camp when they got there but a young chap in cowboy outfit, who was sitting by a tree looking after the dogs, and an older man who was pottering around a camp-fire.

"I'm Joe Squires," said the cowboy, getting up. "Yon's Pap. He calls himself a cook, because he can fry cannon balls. Tom and the

rest'll be in with the horses 'fore dark. Least, I hope they will."

"You going to rope the lion?" the Duke demanded.

"That's the idea," said Joe. He reached down, picked up a rope which lay coiled beside him, leisurely whirled it around, and suddenly it settled over the Duke's shoulders, and he found his arms pinned with a jerk fast to his sides.

"Can you chew gum and make wise cracks, too, like Will Rogers?" Bobbie laughed, as the Duke tried to extract himself but without any great success.

"Lions don't like wise cracks," said Joe. "They ain't got much sense o' humor."

"Do you think we'll really catch a lion?" the boys asked.

"All I can say is, they's lions here—plenty of 'em," Joe replied. "Not so many as they used to be, o' course, before Uncle Jim Owens come into these parts. He used to take Teddy Roosevelt huntin' here. He had a dog he said had helped kill 450 lions—said so right on the dog's collar. Uncle Jim and that dog could get

a lion when they wa'n't none. But I reckon they've left quite a few behind."

Before long there was a sound of hoofs in the forest, the dogs pricked up their ears, and in a few moments Tom and Jim and a third man rode into camp, leading five other horses in a string.

"Brought a couple of extra ones for luck," said Tom.

Not long after Pap, who had been busy around his fire and table made by putting two boards across a couple of stumps, called loudly, "Come and get it, or I'll chuck it to the dogs!" and there was a general rush for the tables and grub.

Joe picked up one of Pap's biscuits, and held it out toward the Duke. "You see," he said, "Pap can fry cannon balls grand."

"Yep, we was short of ammunition once, so we took along a batch of Pap's biscuits," Tom laughed. "We had a dude on that trip who was a ball pitcher on some college team back east, and he threw 'em at the lion when we'd get him treed, and finally one hit him just right, over the eye, and he fell out o' the tree, stone dead."

“Pap dropped one on his toes, once,” Jim added. “That’s why he’s lame.”

“If I was as smart as you fellers,” said Pap, “I’d be president of the United States. Have another biscuit, gents?”

The hunt began early the next morning—very early, in fact, before the sun was up. Breakfast was eaten almost in the dark, horses were saddled, and everybody except Pap was away for the rim, a mile or more distant, the pack of dogs moving on ahead, noses to the ground.

“What’s the idea starting so early?” Bobbie asked.

“Lions feed at night,” said Tom. “Daytimes they mostly go down under the rim somewheres, and sleep it off. Cold weather they get on a sunny ledge, warm weather they get into a cool cave. We start early so’s the scent will be fresh, and the dogs can pick it up. Then they follow it down and rout kitty out—or maybe, if we’re early enough, catch up with the lion and chase it over.”

The dogs, however, were showing no signs of excitement. They nosed along the rim while the hunters followed on horseback. There was no

trail, and the rim was cut into by numerous "washes," or side canyon ends, with points between, so that to follow it was like following the lines made by a row of capital W's, WWWWWWW, or the teeth of a saw. There were many trees, too, and brush. It wasn't easy riding, even at the rather slow pace they took. At least, it wasn't for Bobbie and the Duke, who weren't horsemen, and hadn't been in the saddle since they left Zion.

"Funny thing about this plug of mine," the Duke complained. "When he picks out two trees to go between, he only reckons his own thickness. He don't take my legs into consideration at all."

"Neither does mine," said Bobbie. "I won't have any legs left if this keeps on."

For an hour they rode, while the sun came up and flooded the great hole of the canyon below them with a hundred rainbow colors, and still no lion.

Then, suddenly, the leading dog gave tongue to a trumpet-like bay, and the pack was off behind him in full cry, racing along the rim, cutting across the depressions where the washes

began, through trees and bushes; and behind them tore the horses, Tom and Joe in the lead, Jim with a rifle slung across his saddle following with the horse wrangler, then Number One with his small movie camera in a knapsack on his shoulders, then the Duke and Bobbie, clinging hard to the horns of their saddles, trying in vain to protect themselves from the rub of trees on their legs, the slap of bushes in their faces, and the tearing and scratching of bushes and brambles. They kept up with the two horsemen in front, but Tom and Joe were soon out of sight ahead. For almost an hour they tore on at high speed, the baying of the dogs growing fainter and fainter.

“They ain’t gone over the rim yet, anyhow,” Jim shouted back.

Then the baying ceased. The horses, of their own accord, slowed down, and had to be urged forward.

“Guess it’s a false alarm,” Jim again called back. “If they’d gone over we could still hear ’em.”

It was. A few minutes later they came up with Tom and Joe, who were off their horses,

rounding up the dogs, and beating them with sticks. The dogs slunk together, and looked ashamed, as well as weary. Their tongues were hanging out, and their lean sides heaving.

“Chased a coyote!” Tom cried, angrily. “They will do it, sometimes, the best of ’em.”

“How do you know it was a coyote?” asked Number One.

Tom Hamblin gave a disgusted grunt. “Seen him—we nearly caught up to him. Well, that’s all the huntin’ to-day. They got coyote in their noses—besides, it’s too late, and they’re too tired.”

So back to camp rode the party, getting in not long after one o’clock. The two Scouts fell off their horses. They tried to stand erect and walk away easily, but they couldn’t make it. Their legs almost gave out, they were sore and bruised in every joint, and the Duke had a piece torn out of the shoulder of his shirt and a red welt on the skin under it, and Bobbie had a long briar scratch down the back of his hand and a torn trouser leg. He looked at the tear ruefully, and then at Joe’s leather chaps.

“Say, I know now why cowboys wear chaps,”

he declared. "The Duke and I won't have any clothes left after a few days of this. You got to get us an old lion pretty quick, Tom."

"We'll shoot a deer, and make you some deer-skin pants," Tom laughed. "You'll get used to it, though. Shouldn't wonder if you liked it pretty soon."

"I fear we're tenderfeet," said Number One.

The Duke eased himself down on the ground. "It isn't my feet that are tender," he groaned.

"Wait till you get some o' Pap's grub," Joe cheered him. "That's so much worse than a saddle gall it'll make you forget your other troubles."

The next morning the same routine was begun again, only this time the boys found it harder to get up, they were so sore and stiff. But they made it, and managed to grin at breakfast, and climb into their saddles. The Duke had his coil of alpine rope, of course, tied to his pommel, and both Scouts had cameras. They wanted to see a lion, to follow it over the rim, to photograph it as Joe roped it. But just the same it was hard work getting into the saddle in the chilly morning twilight, and knowing that they might ride for

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hours, in the increasing heat of the day, through brush and timber, with their legs aching and their saddles hurting them at every bump.

Again the dogs moved off. Again the horses followed. Again they followed the rim, out to the points, back around the heads of the side canyons, down hollows, over rocks, always with the great hole of the Canyon at their side, and the heat growing more and more intense as the sun rode high. At noon the dogs lay down and panted in the shade. The riders dismounted, and the two Scouts flopped to the ground. In half an hour they were up again, and kept on till almost three. Not a lion. Not a bay from the hounds. Only the blazing sun over the great hole of the Canyon, and the endless trees behind them.

So they turned back to camp.

“Guess the lions have deserted this section,” Tom announced that evening. “We better move on to-morrow a ways, and see what we can find.”

Up again before daylight. A dark morning, with clouds filling the whole Canyon like a sea. Tents and cook kit put into the truck, with Pap

as driver, and sent over what Tom called a road. The rest, with the extra horses and the dogs, going in procession cross country westward, one mile, two miles, three miles, away from the rim—nothing but woods around them—four miles, five miles, and then a peal of thunder, and a darkening sky, and rain driven by a wind that roared through the pines and fir trees. The boys and Number One had no slickers. They had assumed it never rained in Arizona in summer. In five minutes they were drenched to the skin. The horses hung their heads dejectedly, and plodded along. The wet bushes slapped the riders' legs. The water ran down off their hat brims in little rivulets. Nobody spoke but Tom. He looked back at the procession, grinned, and remarked, "Kind o' wet."

"I wish I had one of Pap's biscuits to throw at him," the Duke muttered.

"This rain would soften even one of them," said Bobbie.

It was a bedraggled and unhappy party which arrived at the new camp in the early afternoon, to find Pap ahead of them, with a fire going, food cooking, and the tents ready to set up.

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The rain, too, had stopped, and before night they had all managed to get their clothes dried out, and felt more cheerful.

“Looks like a good cold night after the rain,” said Tom. “That’ll make the lions hungry. We’ll get one to-morrow, sure.”

“Yeah?” said the Duke.

“I bet this isn’t the right time to hunt lions,” Bobbie hazarded.

“There’s no right time, or, as you might say, there’s no wrong time,” Tom replied. “’Course, like any animals, they get hungrier in winter, and it’s easier to track ’em in the snow—or it would be if there wa’n’t so much snow. I seen it fifteen feet deep in places here on the Kaibab. Dogs can’t work in that, nor horses. You got to follow ’em on snowshoes. And say, boy, goin’ over the rim on snowshoes ain’t so hot! May’s a good time to hunt ’em, or November. Only a little snow then, and cool days——”

“How about the nights?” asked the Duke.

“You get used to ’em,” Tom replied. “But I seen Uncle Jim Owens himself and his dog Pot Hound hunt for most two weeks in May without gettin’ a sniff at a lion, and I seen this

pack right here pick up a fresh track first mornin' out right in August. You got to take it as it comes. That's huntin'."

"You're a philosopher, aren't you?" laughed Number One.

"No, sir, I'm a republican," Tom answered.

That night, after the rain, was bitter cold—or it seemed so to the boys, who had so recently been sweltering in desert heat down in the Canyon. They were glad to get up with the crack of dawn, and to climb into their saddles and warm up as they jogged after the dogs along the rim. They were running a great side canyon now, the Kanab wash, which was less spectacular than the great gorge itself, but there were even more side washes cutting back from it, to make the going difficult. All that morning they wound and twisted along the rims of these side washes. Sometimes you could have shouted across to a man on the other side, and yet it was a five mile ride to get around to him. But not a lion did they see. Again they jogged wearily back to camp.

"How's the grub holdin' out?" Tom asked Pap. "Will it last till we get a lion?"

Pap grunted. "Don't seem so," he said. "We only got enough for a month more."

"Well, I have a hunch to-morrow we'll get one," Tom declared. "We'll back track along the big Canyon. There was a big old she cat got away from us last May at a certain place you'd say only a fly could get down the white cliffs. I bet we'll meet up with her. You'll need that pretty piece of string you carry, boy," he added to the Duke.

The next morning the sun rose red, and the weather soon turned hot—almost as hot as down in the Canyon. The party was off at six, and rode till nine, through hard country, without anything happening. All three of the easterners were still saddle sore, and the heat made them sleepy. The boys, who kept just behind Number One, didn't notice at first that they were falling behind, but about half-past nine Bobbie called out, "Say, Number One, what's become of the rest of them?"

Number One gave a start. "My goodness, I'm ashamed to say I believe I've been asleep in the saddle! This lazy old plug has laid down on the job. Come on!"

He kicked his horse, and they began to trot through the woods. But, in getting around a wash, they had gone back from the rim, and now there was nothing but woods all around them. They let the horses have their heads, thinking they would follow the other horses, but after a few minutes Number One pulled up.

"I believe our plugs are headed for camp, or for home—wherever that is," he said. "What shall we do?"

"Let's sit down and talk it over," the Duke grinned, getting off his horse with an "Ouch!" and flopping under a tree. The other two followed suit.

"I bet we're lost," said Bobbie.

"Hooray!" cried the Duke.

"Why 'Hooray'?" Number One demanded.

"If we're lost, we get a rest till they find us, don't we? Boy, I'm sleepy!"

He closed his eyes. Unconsciously both the others closed their eyes. In two minutes they were asleep.

Sometime later they were awakened by shouting. They opened their eyes to see Tom riding up, yelling at them and waving his arms.

“Hi, you, where you been?” he shouted. “The dogs have got one, and here’s where we go over!”

The three sleepers sprang to their saddles, looking pretty sheepish, and tore away after Tom.

“I’d ought to have tied you three on that pretty string o’ yourn,” Tom shouted back at them. “Next time I will, and lead you like a string o’ pack horses.”

They tore through the trees, and by the time they reached the rim their legs were banged and bruised again.

“Here’s where we go over,” Tom announced, as he dismounted. Joe and Jim were waiting with their chaps off, and the wrangler took the horses to tether. Jim had his gun, and Joe his lariat, and that was all. Somewhere, out of sight below them, and to the left, they could hear the deep, excited baying of the hounds.

“They got it treed!” Tom cried, dancing with excitement. “We got to hurry. It won’t stay up long. Here we go, boys.”

Tom led the way, and over they all went, down a steep incline through brush which tore

at their clothes. Bobbie heard a ripping sound behind him, but he couldn't turn to look.

"Good-bye, my shirt, good-bye!" he heard the Duke exclaim.

The incline suddenly ended at a precipice fifty feet high, in the white coconino sandstone. Somewhere along it there must have been a bigger break, where the lion and the dogs went down, but no time to hunt for it now!

"Where's that pretty string?" called Tom.

But the Duke already had it uncoiled, and around a juniper. He threw the two ends over, and signaled to Bobbie, who ran the double rope under his leg and over his shoulder, and danced lightly down the cliff. The three men opened their eyes.

"Now you do it," said the Duke to Tom.

"Let me see you, first."

The Duke danced down, and left Number One to show the others the way.

"No, we ain't got time now to learn new tricks," Tom declared. "Here, Joe, give us your lariat, and let's lower Jim's gun."

The boys below caught the gun, and then the westerners slid down the doubled rope like fire-

men coming down a pole. Number One came last, roping down as the boys had done. As his feet touched the ground, the Duke was pulling the rope down, and coiling it, and away they started again toward the baying hounds, over the steep slope of the shale belt.

Now the way lay along a 45 per cent. incline of loose stones and gravel, and as they crashed down, almost every step dislodged rocks which bounded at increasing speed toward the hole of the canyon far below them. Sometimes one of these rocks took a jump in the air, and when it came down hit another rock with a loud report, and exploded into sand dust. Sometimes it kept right on and vanished over a precipice far below. But there was no time to think about what would happen to a man if he started falling. On they rushed, working toward a sharp headland to their left. There was a sloping ledge around the base of this headland, and as they rounded it suddenly the baying of the hounds grew very loud, echoing from the cliffs. Tom, who led, gave a great shout.

“There she is!”

The rest tore after him. They came around

the headland into an amphitheatre with some evergreen trees on the sloping floor. And around one of these trees, in a leaping, squirming, baying mass, were the dogs. At first, the boys saw no lion, but as they got near, looking into the thick branches, they suddenly spied a great, tawny cat near the top, its huge paws clutching the limbs on which it straddled, its long tail swishing, its snarling lips parted, its eyes glaring down at them.

“Gosh all hemlock, how big it is!” exclaimed the Duke.

Number One was frantically getting his movie camera out of his pack. The boys unlimbered their stills.

“All set?” cried Tom. “Joe—do your stuff—go up and put a rope around kitty, and see what happens.”

Joe, somehow, didn't seem to be in any hurry. “It's awful thick up there,” he said, “how'm I goin' to get a rope around that cat?”

“I dunno,” Tom admitted. “It ain't my job. All I do is furnish the cat. Thar she be.”

“That gun working O.K.?” Joe demanded of Jim.

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“Sure!” said Jim.

“Say, if you don’t go pretty quick, there won’t be no cat. She’s gettin’ ready to jump. And when she does, everybody look out!”

Still Joe hung back.

“You go do it, with your fancy string,” said Tom to the Duke.

“I’ll have a try, sure,” the Duke replied. “Here, make me a noose, quick!”

He passed his rope to Tom, who began to noose it, and his camera to Bobbie. Number One was about to protest, but thought better of it, for he saw the effect on Joe. It was a dare he couldn’t refuse—and from a tenderfoot! Joe sprang through the dogs to the tree trunk, and began to shin up the twelve or fifteen feet of bare trunk, to reach the first limb. He reached this limb, stood on it, making sure his noose was working free, while both boys snapped him. Number One had the movie sighted, but hadn’t started it going yet. He was waiting for action. Joe now grasped a higher limb, and started to climb again, expecting the lion, as usual, would try to go on higher, and get into more open branches.



Mountain Lion on Kaibab National Forest, Arizona.
Courtesy Union Pacific Railroad.

But it wasn't that kind of a lion. It glared down at Joe, emitting an angry snarl, and suddenly Tom yelled, "Look out, Joe, she's a-comin' down!"

She was. The cat, instead of climbing up, suddenly started down for Joe. Joe didn't wait to cast his rope. He fell past the first limb, he grabbed the tree as he came, and slid down into the boiling pack of dogs so fast you'd have thought he was falling free. As far as the first limb the cat was almost on his head. But she stopped there, and just as Tom yelled another "Look out, everybody!" she sprang. The boys and Number One were all three focussed on her, getting a picture, as she sprang. And she shot straight for the Duke! He had no conception of the distance she could travel through the air, and wasn't prepared at all for it. But he saw her coming, and instinctively dove forward, toward the tree, head first. Over his head went the lion, and was off like a yellow streak, down the canyon, the yelping dogs in mad pursuit.

"Come on, boys, they'll tree her again!" cried Tom, and started after.

The Duke picked himself up, and rescued his

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camera. The fall had jammed the shutter, so no more pictures were possible for him. There was a hole in the knee of his riding breeches, and his hands were full of gravel, but he got his rope coil over his shoulder, and was off after Tom before Number One could get his movie camera back in the pack.

The way led down, and down, over sloping shale, and through tearing, clutching bushes. Then it broke free of bushes for a way, and ahead Tom and the Duke, and Bobbie who was close behind, saw the lion, balked, evidently, by a precipice below, standing on a high, steep rock, outlined plainly against the sky, and snarling and snapping at the dogs, who were springing up the rock around her and trying to reach her.

The man and the two Scouts raced forward, forgetting they were unarmed.

“Where’s that Joe?” panted Tom. “Here’s his chance! Got a free cast at her. Couldn’t miss! Here—give me your rope, and you get a picture, anyhow.”

“No,” the boys panted. “Mr. Parsons wants a movie of it. This is his party, really. Oh, why don’t they hurry!”

The others were coming now, as fast as they could. But they were just too late. Before Joe could get up with his rope, and Number One get the camera out, the lion leaped far over the dogs, on the opposite side and raced along the cliff at top speed, the dogs behind her making the walls ring with their cry.

Again Tom tore ahead, closely followed by Bobbie and the Duke. The chase led them for almost a mile, and then, abruptly, they came around a headland to find the dogs baying impotently on the top of the cliff, or rushing back and forth sniffing.

“That’s queer,” Tom panted. “Oh, I see!”

He pointed ahead. There was a drop, and then a wide crack, or crevasse in the cliff, at least 20 feet across. The lion had leaped it easily! But of course the dogs couldn’t. On the other side was a ledge, which led around a corner and disappeared. To get around meant to climb the wall above a long way, if you could climb it at all, and come down again and work your way around. No dog could make that detour, either.

“Let’s try!” cried the boys.

“No use,” Tom shook his head. “She’s gone

down the red wall by now. Even if we could get the dogs around and go after her, we'd be old men before we got out from down there. No, she's licked us. She's a smart one."

He called the dogs, which were reluctant to give up, and kicked and cuffed them around, and began the return.

Back around the headland, they met Number One hurrying on, and behind him Jim and Joe.

"She go over the red wall?" Jim called.

"She might 'a' gone across the Colorado River, for all of you," Tom replied. "If you'd been up with us, you could 'a' shot her across the crack she jumped, and then Joe 'a' roped her carcass and yanked it back. We'd have a skin, anyhow. Now all we got is a good sweat. Next time I go lion hunting, I'm going to have two more Boy Scouts like these two, to do the ropin' and shootin'. Then we'll get something. They can travel, they can."

"Well, I never claimed to be one o' these marathan runners," Joe retorted. "I'm a horse-man."

"And I ain't tryin' to emulate a mountain goat with a loaded gun in my hand," added Jim.

“And I’m not so young as Bobbie and the Duke,” said Number One.

“Excuses all in?” Tom asked. “O. K. Now we got to get back up.”

In the wild excitement of the chase, neither of the Scouts had paid any attention to the distance they had dropped. Now they looked up, and far above them towered the rim!

“Gee willikins!” Bobbie exclaimed. “Have we dropped all that?”

“Sure, to the top of the red wall,” said the Duke. “That’s better ’n 2,000 feet. And we got a precipice to scale, too—don’t forget that.”

“I’d do better if I had a drink,” sighed Number One. “I could drink up Roaring Springs right now.”

They toiled wearily up the long slope of the shale, toward a place where Tom thought there was a spring. He was right, too. It was only a trickle, but it was clear and cold, and they drank and drank.

“We ought to take along some of this water, and put out the fire,” Tom said.

“What fire?” Joe asked.

“The one you set when you slid down that

tree. I noticed the whole trunk was smoking when you landed.”

“ Say, if there ain’t any more bark on that tree than there is skin on my hands, I’m sorry for it,” Joe grunted. “ I wa’n’t goin’ to stay and try no conclusions with that cat, though.”

“ Yeah, I observed you wa’n’t,” Tom grinned. “ You could ’a’ got her easy, though, when she stood up on a rock down yonder. I was goin’ to rope her for Bobbie to snap, but he wouldn’t let me, till the movie come up—and the cat’s foot went to sleep waitin’, so she jumped.”

They reached the coconino cliffs after a hot, toilsome climb, and skirted along them to find a break they could scale. Finally they came to a place where Number One declared he could make it, and take the rope up. Tom and Joe and Jim looked skeptical, but when it came to cliff work, he was better than they were. In twenty minutes he had the rope up, and anchored, and one by one the others came up with its help, and stood on top. They still had over 500 feet to climb, through juniper and brush, to the rim, and then a mile walk back to the tethered horses. Meanwhile the dogs had back tracked a mile or

more to the break in the cliff they had used on the descent, and were straggling up to the horses, one by one, their tongues hanging out.

And as the party mounted the hungry, thirsty, impatient horses, the sun was setting, and filling the great hole of the canyon with rainbow colors.

“Sunset!” the Duke exclaimed. “Gosh, only an hour ago it was ten o’clock in the morning; and we’ve had no lunch!”

“Don’t I know it!” said Bobbie. “I could eat one of Pap’s biscuits right now, and call it good.”

It was eight o’clock before they got back to camp, and how Tom found his way through the dark forest was more than the Scouts could tell. To them, it all looked exactly alike. Pap was waiting with a hot dinner, and quarts of coffee, and never did a meal taste better. After supper, they sat around taking account of stock. One shoulder of the Duke’s flannel shirt was torn entirely out. There was a hole in the knee of his riding breeches, and not too much skin on his knee, and his hands were sore from the gravel ground into them. Also, his camera was broken.

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Bobbie had fared better, though his shirt was torn, and the side of his leg was black and blue and sore, where his horse had jammed him against a tree. Number One's breeches were ripped down one side by a juniper, he had a deep scratch across the back of one hand, and another on his cheek, and his ankle was bruised when he slipped on the shale. He limped when he walked. All three of the men had torn shirts, or torn trousers, and Joe, the cowboy, looked ruefully at his high-heeled black boots, the cow puncher's pride and joy. One heel was gone entirely, and the leather was scarred and scratched by shale beyond hope of decent repair.

"And we wouldn't give a hoot," said Tom, "if we'd roped that lion, and got a picture of it doin' a dance, before Jim finished it off."

"I don't suppose it's the right thing to say," the Duke put in, "not to a lion hunter like Tom. But I don't give a hoot, anyhow. It was grand sport as it was, and I'm glad the lion got away."

"Do you mind givin' me your reason for that there extraordinary remark?" said Tom, glaring at him in real or pretended anger—you couldn't be sure which.

“Not at all,” said the Duke.

“I know what you’re going to say,” Bobbie added, “and it goes for me, too.”

“Well, I ain’t so well able to read fellers’ minds,” from Tom. “What’s the idea?”

The Duke grew serious. “Well,” he said, “when we got down to where the lion was standing up on that rock, as big and beautiful as a statue against the sky, with the dogs all snarling and jumping around her feet, it sort of seemed to me that she was—she—well, she *belonged* in the canyon. She was kind of the wild spirit of the place. I can’t say what I mean, I guess. But that’s the rough idea. To kill her was doing something to the canyon, destroying something that belongs in it. I’m glad she got away. I s’pose you think I’m a tenderfoot, or a bum sport, or something.”

“I knew it!” Bobbie exclaimed. “’Cause that’s just the way I felt. I’d have liked to see Joe rope her though—and then let her go.”

“Say, when you’ve roped a lion, you don’t step up and untie her,” Joe put in. “Not more ’n once.”

Tom continued to look at the two Scouts in

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silence, and Number One watched Tom, evidently much interested in what was coming next. Finally the man spoke.

“I’ve hunted a whole lot o’ lions,” he said. “As you might say, it’s my business. And they kill a lot o’ deer, and in some places cattle. Too many of ’em is bad. I ain’t sorry for those I killed. But I never struck any hunters before like you kids—who seen in lions what I see. When they go down over that rim, you ain’t fightin’ them alone—you’re fightin’ that big hole. They’re part of it, as you say. And I seen more ’n one of ’em get away when I wa’n’t really sorry. I’d rather have ’em down there than stretched out on some floor back east, for dudes to spill cocktails on. And as I never seen anybody before who could keep up with me down there when I got real excited and was steppin’ on a lion’s tail, let’s shake hands.”

This was probably the longest speech Tom had ever made in his life, and he was pretty solemn about it. He put out a rough, scarred hand, and Bobbie and the Duke shook it, as solemn as he. The others never said a word.

Then he laughed.

“Well, let’s hit the alfalfa, if we got to get up to-morrow and go after that cat again.”

Number One burst into a roar of mirth.

“Say, I’ve got a picture of Joe skinning the cedar—or whatever kind of tree it was. And I’ve got seventeen saddle sores, and twenty-nine cuts, and no pants. I’ve had enough. To-morrow we sleep till seven, and then we go back to our little old automobile.”

“Just as you say,” Tom replied. “Well, I hope you sleep well.”

“I’m asleep now,” said the Duke.

And three minutes later he was.

CHAPTER XV

A PRIZE FIGHT IN A CHURCH AND A STRANGE PROPOSAL

ONE more morning in the saddle, as they rode back to the first camp, where they had left Brigham. Number One paid Tom for the trip and insisted on giving Joe the price of a new pair of boots. Shouting good-byes, the three climbed into their car, and bumped off through the forest, sore, tired, dirty, scratched and ragged.

“Wow! what fun!” the Duke cried. “Hope our pictures come out. If they do, what do we care if the lion got away? We’ve been down the canyon where there isn’t any trail. We’ve chased a lion. Wow, it was grand!”

Number One laughed. “Glad you feel that way,” he said. “I’ll feel better myself after I’ve had a bath and a shave.”

“Aw, say, don’t go civilized on us!” the Duke exclaimed.

“Just for that, I’ll surely take you into the Bad Lands,” Number One retorted. “That ought to be some trip too.”

That evening, back at the hotel, in clean clothes, they lolled in easy chairs and rested their sore, battered bodies, while they read the daily paper.

“Funny,” said Bobbie. “Back home you think you’re lost if you don’t see a paper every day. Out here you go a week, two weeks, without looking at one. Who’s leading the American League, Duke? You got the sporting section.”

“Who’s always leading the American League by August? Don’t be silly. I’m reading about a wild west hold up.”

“Where?”

“Somewhere over west of us. Masked robbers—held up a train—robbed the mail car—got \$100,000 worth of securities being shipped to Los Angeles—probably Greta Garbo’s weekly salary—and were seen escaping in a high powered automobile—two of ’em. I wonder if hold-up men ever escape in low powered automobiles?”

“That sounds like old times in the wild west,” said Number One—“all but the automobile.”

Speaking of automobiles, we leave to-morrow for Bryce Canyon."

"How far?"

"Map says 165 miles."

"A mere nothing to Brigham."

Bobbie took a few bounces on his bed when he got into it, and admitted it was softer than the bare ground.

"Now *you* are going civilized, too," groaned the Duke. "You're tenderfeet, both of you, though you won't admit it."

"Let him talk," said Number One. "He's got a surprise coming."

They were late in starting the next day, for Brigham had to be packed again, and they barely made Kanab in time for lunch at the Union Pacific hotel there. Eighteen miles north, the Mount Carmel highway to Zion turned off to the left. They kept on north, climbing the white cliffs, and cresting the divide. Now the stream by the road flowed north, not toward the Colorado. They passed through several small Mormon villages beside the dusty road, going down-hill all the way. There weren't any real mountains to be seen, only rolling hills, and all

the stream valley was irrigated and green with crops and pasture.

As they reached a fork in the highway, two men with police badges exposed, and revolvers at their hips, suddenly stepped out in the road and stopped them.

"Let's see your driver's license and registration," said one of them, to Number One.

"What's the big idea?" asked Mr. Parsons, producing them.

The two officers looked at the papers carefully, then at Number One, and at the car, before replying.

"Train robbery," they said, handing the papers back. "Night before last. Said to be headed east in a car."

"A high powered car," said the Duke.

"You can change cars," one of the sheriffs remarked. "Where you going?"

"Bryce."

"Beat it."

"Say, do we look like hold-up men?" Bobbie laughed, as they drove on.

"Lucky they didn't catch us yesterday, coming in from the lion hunt," the Duke answered.

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The road now passed directly under the arch of a natural bridge, as it wound up a red stone gorge, and then into forest land on a high mesa top, 8,000 feet above sea level. As it always does on a mesa top, the air grew cool and fresh, and presently they entered the Park gates, and pulled up at the lodge, among the pines. Dumping their baggage into a cabin, they hurried out to the rim, having no idea what sort of a place they were going to see.

On the rim they pulled up sharp, in amazement. Bryce Canyon was unlike either Zion or the Grand—as unlike as possible. In fact, it wasn't like anything the boys had ever seen, or dreamed of.

“As the farmer who saw the giraffe would say, ‘There ain't no such place!’” Number One exclaimed.

They were looking down not into a canyon at all, really, but into a “break,” or gigantic amphitheatre gouged out of the side of the lofty mesa by frost and rain. There was no stream at the bottom, and never had been, except melting snow water in Spring. The limestone, in layers of pink and yellow and salmon and white, had

broken out and been carried away wherever it was soft, and wherever it was hard it remained, carved into walls and towers and fantastic shapes of every sort. Looking down into Bryce was like looking down upon some great city set in a hole a thousand feet deep, where every other building was a sky scraper or a church spire, and almost every one bore on its top a sculptured statue or strange ornament.

“To-morrow we’ll go down there and see what it’s like,” said Number One—“unless you want to go now, and miss dinner?”

“The No’s have it,” said the Duke.

The next day they spent exploring Bryce, on foot, going down one of the trails which are cut out of the soft limestone in switchbacks down into the depths, and then wind around for miles amid the masses of this unbelievable, fantastic world of pink and white minarets and cathedrals and sky scrapers and statues. They amused themselves by picking out the various forms—birds, animals, urns, men, women, and at last the best of all—Queen Victoria, twenty feet tall, with a muff! But the trails were easy walking, and there was no excitement of danger in Bryce. It

was a little jewel, not a vast and awful spectacle, like the Grand Canyon. They came back to the rim, and gazed out over the land beyond the open end. Northeastward, not far away, they could see the long, 9,000-foot high rampart of Escalante Mountain, stretching east, and suddenly dropping down. Out to the east they could see the green patch of irrigated land around the frontier town of Tropic, where Joe, at Zion, had told them a man who outfitted trips could be found, and then the purple mystery of the Bad Lands, stretching to the horizon. To the southeast rose, far off, a blue hump—and that, their map told them, was Navajo Mountain.

“It’s across the Colorado River,” said Number One. “Under it lies the great Rainbow Bridge. The very year we were fighting the battle of Lexington a Spanish priest, Father Escalante, came up from Mexico, past Navajo Mountain, crossed the Colorado by about the only ford there is, and worked up over those bad lands to this part of the world, and finally got to upper Utah. That would be some trip, even now. See, here on the map is the town of Escalante, down at the east end of Escalante Mountain. It looks as if

it was farther out into the Bad Lands than Tropic. Let's go there to-morrow, and find out, before we tackle Joe's friend."

"And there's a town, Boulder, 25 miles beyond Escalante, and no road to it," Bobbie pointed. "We might go there."

"Maybe. Anyway, we'll go to Escalante, and see if anybody'll take us out into the Bad Lands, on the trail of the old Padre."

Escalante, by the road map, was only 47 miles. It would have taken them less than two hours at home to make the distance. But southern Utah isn't Massachusetts. For five miles they had a good gravel road. Then they branched off the main highway to the Park, and struck north by a dirt road of scraped adobe toward the western end of Escalante Mountain. Then they began to climb. They climbed steadily, out of semi-desert country into pine forests again, till they had reached 9,200 feet. And there the "improved road—generally good in all weathers," as the map said—began to go down. It dropped about 4,000 feet in the next twelve or fifteen miles. It was all right when dry, but Number One said he'd hate to try it after a rain—and it

looked like rain. In fact, they could look out through the trees and see two or three thunder showers moving like sheets of silvered gunmetal over the distant mesa. They gave Brigham all the gas they dared, which wasn't much, and slid down into Escalante without mishap, just after noon.

As they pulled into the dusty street of the dusty, sleepy little village, with its irrigated patches of green around it, and the red cliffs of Escalante behind, and beyond, to the east, the mysterious desert, they met a man driving a cow.

"Where does the road go from here?" asked Number One.

"Back," said the man.

"Can't we get the car to Boulder?"

"Can if you take it apart and pack it on mules."

"I guess this is the place we want," laughed Mr. Parsons. "Where do we eat?"

"Over there," said the man, pointing to a brick building a little larger than some of the others.

"It's no Waldorf-Astoria," said the Duke, as they inspected it.

“Going civilized on us?” Bobbie and Number One both laughed.

Before evening they had learned a lot about Escalante, both from observation and inquiry. It seemed to them they had never before seen such a self-sufficient place. There was only one road to it. Behind it was the great red cliff of Escalante mesa, in front of it were the Bad Lands, right around it were irrigated fields and pastures. The people apparently had water enough from the winter snows of the mesa top to irrigate their fields, and make electric light, and their fields grew enough to give them plenty of food. When they needed a new house or other building, they went to a clay pit and made enough bricks for the building. Then they stopped making bricks. When it was time to mow alfalfa, or reap the melon crop, or do other farm work, they all got together and did it. When it wasn't time for such occupation, they sat around in the sun, or, in hot weather, the scanty shade, and talked. Just now everybody in town seemed to be sitting around in the shade talking. The man leading the cow, and the woman who cooked their luncheon, were the busi-

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est folks they saw. But everybody looked happy, everybody was big and apparently well fed, and the children were rosy cheeked and lively and very well behaved.

The boys inquired about getting through to Boulder.

“Yes,” said one of the Mormons (for everybody in Escalante belonged, it seemed, to one or the other of the two Mormon churches), “I guess Boulder is about the biggest town in the U. S. A. without a road to it. Takes all day, good riding, to get there on a mule or a horse. But we’re going to build a road to it.”

“Why spoil its distinction?” asked Number One.

“Well, you see, a feller there has got a Ford, and he kind o’ wants to use it more. He took it apart, and carried it over on mule back, and put it together, and rides up and down the town street, but that’s a little restricted, and he is getting ambitious.”

“How about getting a pack train here, and somebody to guide us, and going out into the Bad Lands, maybe to the Colorado River?” asked Number One.

“ You ain’t been touched a little with the heat, have you? ” said the Mormon, casting a knowing glance at Number One.

“ No, ” laughed Number One, “ but these boys didn’t get exercise enough chasing a lion down the Grand Canyon; they want to do some exploring. We’d need horses, and guides, and we came to Escalante because we thought we could get ’em here. ”

“ We folks don’t go out into that country much for a picnic—least, not in Summer, ” the man replied, “ and there’s only a few people in town know much about it. There’s a heap o’ canyons between here and the big river nobody’s ever seen, I reckon, ’less it was the old Indians used to live on the cliffs. And if you don’t know where the water is, and the grazin’, and the passes, and the quicksands, it’s mighty mean country. ”

“ Who is there here that does know it? ” Mr. Parsons demanded.

“ Well, I been out there as much as anybody, I reckon, ” the man replied. “ I never been as far as the big river, though, and I wouldn’t try to go there with the rains coming on —— ”

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“I should think the rains would make the going better—give you water,” Bobbie put in.

“Say—you ever get caught in a narrow canyon with a big shower up at the head?” asked the Mormon.

“Not yet,” Bobbie confessed.

“Well, don’t. That’s my advice. Not unless you know all the places where you can climb up the sides in a hurry.”

“Couldn’t you arrange to take us in as far as you know the country, for a few days, anyway?” Number One urged. “People here don’t seem to be very busy right now.”

“Well, I dunno. It’s powerful hot in there.”

“We’ll expect to pay a fair price for the job, of course.”

“Money don’t mean much here in Escalante,” the Mormon replied. “Ain’t much to do with it when you get it. If I could find a couple o’ young fellers to go with us, it would probably be because they was tired of settin’ round, and wanted some excitement. Tell you what—I’ll see to-night what I can do. Everybody’ll be at the picture show and the fight ——”

“Fight! Where?” the Scouts cried.

“Social Hall, back of the church yonder. You’ll find me there—name’s John Calvin Smith.”

He turned and walked away.

“What do you know! A fight in the church hall!” Bobbie exclaimed. “We going?”

“Try to stop us!” laughed the Duke. “Wonder who the fighters are?”

They learned at supper. Two young men, it seemed, had recently come to Escalante looking for work. There wasn’t any work, but they were strapped, and couldn’t get out of town again. So they had volunteered to meet the local boxing champion, each to box him three rounds, for half the receipts. The church Social Society was to get the other half. To make the occasion more impressive, there was to be a movie first.

As they were learning these facts from the woman who served them at the little hotel, they noticed a stranger sitting at one of the few other tables. He didn’t look like a tourist but he was certainly not a native of Escalante. Both Scouts observed that he was listening to every word they said, and especially did he listen, though he pretended not to, when they told the man of the

house, who came in to talk to them, about their hope to go out into the Bad Lands.

But they forgot all about him as they went out into the street, and joined the procession moving to the hall—all the men, women and children of the village, and all shouting and laughing.

The hall was packed, and soon the movie started. There was no talking apparatus—the picture was an old “silent,” which was pretty well worn, and twitched and flickered badly. But nobody seemed to mind. However, right in the middle of the third reel, the light in the projector suddenly went out. The hall lights came on presently, and somebody announced that the projector bulb had gone bad, and the operator was out trying to find another. Everybody waited cheerfully for nearly half an hour, and then the announcement was made that there wasn't another proper bulb in town—which meant within 65 miles.

“Everybody out of the hall now,” said the announcer, “and we'll set up the ring. Then come back to see the grand championship challenge battle!”

Without a murmur of protest, everybody went

out into the street, and waited around for the signal, and then everybody cheerfully paid a second admission to get back in! Some ropes had been strung on the stage, to make a kind of ring, and chairs placed in the corners. The two visiting challengers were first introduced—one of them about a middleweight, the other a light heavy, from the looks of them.

And now came the introduction of the village champion, Steve Pedersen! At the mention of his name, the small boys cheered, the women applauded, the men stamped their feet. On to the stage he came, while Bobbie and the Duke and Number One craned their necks for a look. He stood about six feet three, and he must have weighed 215 pounds! He wore sneakers and khaki pants, and a sleeveless undershirt which disclosed huge, tanned arms. His corn-colored hair stood up on his forehead in a stiff pompadour, and his light blue eyes twinkled with good nature. He strode across the stage to shake hands with his opponents. His every move was full of confidence.

The lightweight took one look up at him, cried out, "Excuse me!" and went under the ropes,

over the front of the stage, and sat down in the audience. He was perfectly willing to step out of the picture.

“Hey, get up there and earn your money!” cried half a dozen voices.

“I want to get out o’ Escalante, but I don’t want to be carried out!” the former challenger retorted. “I’m no Jack-the-Giant-Killer.”

“How about David and Goliath?” a voice shouted.

“I don’t know that I blame him much,” said Number One to the boys. “David had a sling.”

The good-natured crowd turned from razzing the quitter, to watch the fight between the other challenger and their champion. The referee put the gloves on both boxers himself, two village men volunteered to act as seconds for the challenger, somebody had brought a dinner bell for a gong, and the timer held it in one hand, with his watch in the other. He gave it a ring as a signal to start—and the fight was on!

It was at once apparent to the Scouts that Steve Pedersen, the local champion, had more strength than skill.

“If he ever hits that other guy, good-night!”

whispered the Duke. "But a good stepper could keep out of his way for a week."

And the challenger was taking care to keep out of his way. He kept dancing around the ring backwards, being much lighter on his feet than Steve, just out of reach of the big fellow's punches, and every so often, when he had Steve off his balance, he would dart a jab in under his guard, and then retreat before the other could settle himself for a return blow. It didn't look as if it was possible for him to hit Steve hard enough to hurt him ("It would take a trip hammer to hurt that Swede," said Bobbie), but before the round was over he had set Steve's nose to bleeding, and raised a red bump over his eye that was fast swelling the lid. It might easily affect his seeing clearly.

This was just as bad for most of the audience as if he'd really been hurt. The women saw the blood, and the swollen eye, and they saw the little chap dancing away unhurt, and they began to shout at Steve to "hit him one!" Right behind the Scouts sat an old woman with her son and daughter and grandchildren. Even she began to shout.

“Give it to him, Steve!” she cried. “Soak him one in the jaw!”

(“Listen to Grandma, will you?” the Duke laughed. “This is good—Grandma at a prize fight, in a church hall!”)

The challenger emerged from the first round with all the points. But Steve wasn't grinning any more. The poke in the eye seemed to have annoyed him. He spent the second round not so much trying to hit his challenger, or to avoid being hit by him, as pursuing him as close as he could get, every second of the time, and making him run backwards, and dodge and weave, at a great rate. He got hit himself several times, his nose kept bleeding, and his eye was closing up. But he didn't seem in the least tired, while at the end the smaller man was plainly winded.

“Steve's no fool,” said the Duke. “He's going to wear the other guy out, and then finish him. I bet nothing could tire that Swede out. Wow! What a tackle he'd make!”

The little fellow still had the fight on points at the end of the third round, but Steve had landed one blow on his body, that knocked most of his wind out, and he was staggering at the

end. The crowd were yelling encouragement to Steve as the fourth round began (for the crowd made the challenger fight for his deserting partner, too), and the challenger staggered gamely out of his corner, and began his backing tactics. But he was too weary now to keep out of the way. After a minute, Steve caught him, with a right to the jaw, and dropped him for the count, while the hall broke into cheers and yells, and Grandma pounded Bobbie on the back in her excitement.

But everybody agreed that the challenger was a game fighter, and somebody volunteered to take the two young men back over the mountain in his car free of charge, and they were given half the gate receipts just the same, even if the small chap had refused to fight.

“Don’t blame you, really,” somebody said to him. “I wouldn’t let Steve hit me for half the income of John D. Rockefeller.”

And then Number One and the boys saw John Calvin Smith approaching them. They also saw, near by, the man who had eaten dinner at the hotel.

“Well, I found a couple o’ fellers who’ll go

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with us," said John Calvin Smith. "Can't stay long, though. Got to get back and pick melons."

"Who are they?" Number One asked.

"One of 'em's the little feller you saw fight just now—if he can see out of both his eyes by day after to-morrow ——"

"You mean Steve, the Slaughtering Swede?" demanded the Duke.

"That's him, I guess. T'other's Art Vergen. He's not so big. Only takes a regular size horse to carry him."

"When do we start?"

"Take us to-morrow to get an outfit together. Day after—early."

The three easterners started back for their "hotel," scarcely noticing that the stranger, who had been standing near them all the while, was now coming along behind them. As they separated from the crowd, he drew close and showed plainly that he wanted to speak to them.

"Pardon me," he said, "but I couldn't help overhearing your plans for a trip into the Bad Lands ——"

"Couldn't you?" said Number One. "How hard did you try?"

The other man smiled slightly. "I didn't try," he said. "That's my business."

("A dick!" whispered the Duke to Bobbie.)

("S'pose he thinks we robbed that mail train?" Bobbie whispered back.)

"I'm afraid I don't quite see why our business should be any of yours," Number One was saying, none too amiably.

"You wouldn't, unless I told you, so I'll lay my cards down. I'm a Post-Office Department inspector. There was a serious mail robbery a few days ago. The hold-up men are supposed to have fled in this direction. They may be hiding out somewhere east, in the Bad Lands. They couldn't cross the Canyon on the Lee's Ferry Bridge without being spotted, and they couldn't get through the Navajo country south of the river, even if they knew the ford ——"

"But how could they get into the Bad Lands? Nobody could leave a car in this town, and go on into the desert, without everybody in town knowing it."

"Oh, they didn't come through here, of course. There are plenty of tracks farther south they could run up in a car, hide the car, and beat it

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into the Bad Lands. They could even have confederates to help 'em. But I can't get in there without an outfit, and that attracts attention. If you take me along as part of your dude outfit, see, any confederates they might have wouldn't be so likely to get the word to 'em, and I could have a chance to look for tracks of 'em, anyhow."

"No, I don't see," Number One replied. "In the first place, how do I know you are what you say you are?—and in the second place I have two boys in my charge. I didn't tell their parents I was going to take them on a man hunt, for train robbers, who are no doubt fully armed. I don't want anything to do with it."

"Oh, say, Number One, we ——" the boys began, but Number One gave them a look which silenced them.

"I can soon prove to your satisfaction that I'm what I say I am," the man replied. "I have full credentials, and if you want you can wire to the Salt Lake City post-office. As for the rest, if you go in without me, you'll be just as much in danger, if there is any danger. If those birds shoot at all in there, they'll shoot on sight. They won't stop to ask if you're a detective. Of

course, if they *are* there, and see you, they'll beat it as fast as they can. Then it would be my job to chase 'em, not yours."

"How would you chase 'em alone?" the Duke demanded.

"By getting out faster than they could," the man grinned, "and using the wires. There'd be somebody waiting for 'em whichever way they came out."

"That sounds all right," said Number One. "But things don't always work as you plan 'em. We came here to hunt for cliff dwellings and dinosaur tracks, not bandits. Why should we risk our lives, and spoil our fun?"

"You can hunt for dinosaur tracks just the same. All I ask is a chance to go along, and hunt, by myself, for horse tracks, or human tracks. It can't make any real difference to you, and you'll be doing Uncle Sam a big service."

"That's right, Number One," exclaimed Bobbie. "Gee whiz, the old bandits got \$100,000. If we got a chance to help pinch 'em ——"

"I'll tell you to-morrow," said Number One, to the detective. "Show me your credentials now."

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The man brought them from his room. There was no doubt about them. Then he said good-night, and left.

“Well, boys, this is a tough place,” said Number One.

“Looks easy to me—let him come,” said Bobbie.

“I’ll think it over——”

“Anyhow,” said the Duke, “we’ll have the Slaughtering Swede along. He’s good for ten bandits before breakfast.”

But Number One didn’t laugh. He went gravely off to bed.

CHAPTER XVI

OUT AT LAST INTO THE BAD LANDS

IN the morning, Number One had made his decision. The inspector could go with them.

“I don’t suppose there’s one chance in a million of the bandits being in there,” he said, “or of our meeting up with ’em if they are. If we did encounter ’em, having him along wouldn’t make any difference. I suppose we ought to help the Postal Department if we can. What do you think?”

“Sure, we ought,” the boys declared. “Maybe we can rope the old bandits, to make up for missing the mountain lion.”

The inspector, whose name was Douglas, was introduced to John Calvin Smith as a tourist who wanted to make the trip with them. If the Mormon had any suspicions, he kept them to himself. All he said was, “That means two more horses.”

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Steve, the Slaughtering Swede, whose right eye was still half closed, and nicely black, and Art Vergen, were packing up blankets, cooking utensils, provisions (including some oats for the horses), and going over a check list to see that nothing was forgotten. A small spade was included.

“Going to dig for gold?” asked Bobbie.

“No, for water,” Steve answered.

The following day they had a five o'clock breakfast, and met at John Calvin Smith's place just out of the village. Douglas was wearing an old and much worn cowboy outfit, including a large Stetson hat, and he had an army canteen on a belt, which he carefully filled.

John Calvin Smith looked him over, with a slightly puzzled frown. Then he walked up to him, and tapped him under the left armpit.

“What's the idea?” he said. “Think you're in Arizona?”

“I always carry it, for safety,” said Douglas.

“Not with me, you don't. I learned long ago the feller is safest who hasn't got a gun—and so's everybody around him.”

Douglas laughed. “You're too observant,

Smith," he said. "Shouldn't have tried to put one over on you. My fault."

Then he told Smith who he was. The Mormon didn't look any too pleased, but Steve and Art grinned merrily. Maybe there'd be some excitement! Anyway, it was too late now to turn back. The pack horses were loaded, and all was ready. Smith, with a grunt, swung into his saddle, and turned to watch the others mount, his eye estimating at once their horsemanship. Douglas swung up easily, gave his horse a pat on the side of the head, and tried it out with a turn or two. It was obvious even to the Scouts that he was thoroughly at home in the saddle.

"You didn't borrow them clothes," Smith commented.

Douglas laughed. "I was born on the range," he said, "when there weren't any fences."

They were off—seven riders, and four pack animals. John Calvin Smith, slouched easily down in his saddle, led the way. The boys and Number One rode behind him, followed by Douglas, the pack animals, and finally Steve and Art. Out over the Bad Lands ahead of them a hot, red sun had risen. Glancing back, as they

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moved away from the little town and its surrounding fields and dusty trees, they could see the red wall of Escalante Mountain and the road winding up. They were bound for a land without roads, without trees, without towns—a wilderness of rocks and canyons and barren mesas.

“Any special place you want to go?” Smith called back.

“The Colorado River!” said the Duke.

“To a cliff dwelling,” said Bobbie.

“I might find you one of them,” said Smith.

“Yep, I think I know where there is one.”

He rode on in silence. The world around them grew wilder and more lonely and naked. The sun grew hotter and hotter. They plodded on, down a sort of dry canyon, till noon, without any visible track, though Smith seemed to know where he was going. At noon, he halted the train in the shadow of a cliff wall, and they ate a lunch without a fire. There was no water for the horses, and none for the riders except what they carried in canteens and a canvas water bag. Then they rode on.

About two o'clock Smith looked back again.

“ I s’pose you boys are about ready to quit, aren’t you? ” he asked.

“ How do you get that way? ” the Duke demanded. “ We don’t quit till the horses do. ”

“ Well, that’s good, ’cause you got some fun coming. ”

The dry canyon had now opened out into a wider expanse of domelike rock hills, exactly like petrified sand dunes. They were composed of cross-bedded sandstone, and they had been scoured smooth by the sand blasting of the winds. Some of them were two or three hundred feet high. The stream which had once made the canyon the party had just descended wandered off through this barren waste, having cut itself a deep, narrow gorge, impossible to follow. Smith put his horse up over the smooth stone of a low dome, and the rest followed. The hoofs of the horses rang on the stone, and the animals didn’t like the going at all. They were uncertain of their footing, and proceeded gingerly. The boys didn’t like it, either.

“ For two cents, I’d get off and walk, ” said Bobbie.

“ I would for one, ” the Duke answered.

“ Only I refuse to get off before old John Calvin does.”

They looked back. Art and Steve were off already, leading their horses, and encouraging the pack animals. But Douglas sat calmly in his saddle, his eye roving the naked country.

The Scouts turned back and paid strict attention to their horses, nervously ready to jump off if they slipped.

Meanwhile the midsummer sun, beating down on this expanse of smooth, naked rock, was cruel.

Around a bend of the dome, down the other side, up another dome, then around the side of that—and John Calvin Smith dismounted! Bobbie and Number One were off their horses in the next second, but the Duke remained in the saddle.

“ What’s the idea? ” he called to Smith.

The Mormon grinned. “ You can stay on if you want to, ” he said. “ But you’ll have to have your tombstone sent out here. ”

The Duke got off. “ Well, in that case —— ” said he. “ I don’t want to make a lot of trouble for my folks. ”

Smith led the way along the edge of a steep

pitch, almost a precipice, leading into a hundred-foot-deep hole. There was no way around it except by the rim, and the rim was only four feet wide, before it broke into a sharp upward pitch. This wouldn't have been so bad if the rim had been level, but it slanted toward the hole. A man, especially with spiked shoes, or rubber soles, had no trouble, but a horse found it slippery and ticklish. Even Douglas dismounted, and led his horse over. The pack animals were led across, one by one, and everybody breathed a sigh of relief when the passage was safely negotiated.

"I don't care much for bald rocks," said Smith, wiping his brow.

"I like 'em better with hair, myself," said the Duke.

They continued to lead their horses for an hour, down smooth bald rocks, and then through broken country, pitching abruptly down toward another small canyon.

"Will we find water at the bottom?" Bobbie called to Smith.

"If we don't there's going to be some mad horses," Smith replied. "Look out when we

get near the bottom, or your horse may trample on yer, in his hurry."

And that was almost what happened. The horses seemed to smell water, for in spite of the difficult going they began to hurry, and crowd on their leaders. Coming around a headland of rock at the bottom, they saw a small oasis here in the desert—green plants, some low trees, and in the center, a gleam of water.

"Hold 'em back!" cried Smith. "We want ours first!"

Douglas was on his horse now, and trotted rapidly ahead, apparently ignoring Smith's warning. Smith shouted to him, but he kept on. But they saw him rein his horse near the water, and scan the ground ahead carefully.

"Looking for tracks," said Number One.

The rest came up, when he signaled they could. The horses were held back by main strength while Smith filled two buckets from the little pool—evidently a spot where some underground stream came to the top—and then the horses made for it, almost fighting each other in their eagerness to drink.

"Here's where we camp," said Smith.

But the day's adventures weren't quite over yet. Douglas, to be sure, had found no tracks. They were alone in the stony wilderness of red rock. But as Steve and Art were cooking supper at a tiny fire of dead cottonwood twigs, there was a sudden moaning and whistling down the narrow canyon ahead.

"What's that?" cried Bobbie.

"Sugar for your coffee," Steve grinned. "You'll see."

They saw—and quickly. A cold wind, a baby hurricane, suddenly hit them. It came sucking up the canyon driving a hail of fine sand ahead of it. It swirled and howled. They covered their faces and eyes, or rushed to hold tarpaulins over the supplies. The hurricane was gone almost as soon as it came. But it left them with smarting eyes, and with shivering bodies, for it was not only cold itself, but it caused such quick evaporation on their sweaty bodies that, as the Duke said, it was as good as an electric icebox.

Then they ate supper. One bite of bacon, and the Duke announced, "Steve, you are more than right. The bacon is sugared, too."

"I know now what it means to grit my teeth,"

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said Bobbie. "Gee, this coffee is half full of sand."

"Don't go civilized on us," smiled Number One.

That night they all scooped beds in the dry sand, and lay down under the desert stars. The Scouts were dog tired, and were soon asleep. But before they dropped off, they saw Douglas stealing away from camp, and vaguely wondered why.

"Can't find any tracks in the dark," muttered the Duke.

"A detective has to do *something*," Bobbie answered.

"Well, I'd call it a day, just riding this far. Good-night."

Bobbie only grunted.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SCOUTS DISCOVER A CLIFF DWELLING AND SOMETHING EXCITING INSIDE IT—A LONG CRAWL TO SAFETY

THE next morning when they woke up for breakfast, the inspector was coming into camp.

“You been out all night?” the Duke asked.

“Not quite,” he grinned.

“Any signs?”

Douglas shook his head. “Not a sign.”

That day, which seemed even hotter than the day before, they moved on, in what seemed to the boys a generally southerly direction, through country that changed its character with every mile, but was never anything but savage, hot, desolate and hard. They crossed strips of amethyst sand, worked their way over a flat mesa, threaded down a dry canyon, and once more, toward night, came down through a break

in a cliff wall into an oasis of shrubs and green, with a trickle of water flowing down a stream bed, and made camp.

“ I don’t see how you do it,” Number One said to Smith. “ I haven’t seen a single track ahead to guide you all day long, and yet you hit water and feed at night.”

“ Been here before,” said Smith.

“ How many times? ”

“ Two or three—last time only six years ago.”

“ Only six years!” laughed Number One. “ If you can remember this trail for six years, you’re good. I couldn’t get back out, if I started to-morrow.”

“ That’s just what you’re goin’ to do,” said Smith. “ This is as far as we go. It’s as far as I’ve ever been, and I ain’t curious what’s beyond. I’m too sartin it’s about like what’s behind, and I don’t know where the water is.”

The boys, of course, looked disappointed. Smith noted it.

“ Might stay here a day,” he added. “ Somewhere round these parts I remember seein’ a cliff house once.”

“ How far are we from the Colorado? ”

“ I ain’t rightly sartin. If we’ve made fifteen miles a day, and I reckon maybe we have ——”

“ I’d say so,” the Duke cut in, “ by the way I feel.”

“ —then we’re about two days more from the Big River.”

“ And the going is all like this?” the inspector asked.

“ Prob’ly—only maybe more so.”

While Steve and Art were getting grub ready, the boys and Number One took a stroll in one direction, the inspector in another. The camp was at the junction of two smaller canyons, one of which came down from the north, the other from a westerly direction. The west canyon had only a dry stream bed, however. The water came from the other fork. The two forks were separated by a 500-foot wall of red sandstone, almost precipitous, and all the sides were precipitous. There was, however, a deep break in the wall of the large canyon, below the junction, down which Smith had led them.

“ Not many ways to get out of here,” said Bobbie. “ I wonder where the cliff dwelling is?”

“ Probably up-stream—or maybe down-

stream," said Number One. "I guess we'll have to wait till to-morrow to find it."

"I guess we will," said the Duke, as they heard Steve's enormous voice roaring, "Come and get it!" and setting the echoes to bouncing back from the canyon walls.

Smith didn't remember where the ruin was. He confessed his memory for trails was much better than for ruins. But he was sure it was near the camp site. He had been prospecting around here, he said, and had seen it, up on a cliff side. Did he go up to it? He did not! He wa'n't goin' to break his neck for a couple o' arrow heads and a broken clay pot.

So early the next morning the party split. Number One, with Steve, went up the north canyon. Bobbie and the Duke went up the smaller west canyon. All four were on foot. Smith rode with the inspector down the main canyon. The inspector, of course, wasn't looking for ruins, but Smith promised to come back and report if he discovered any. His last word to the boys had been to look out for quicksand, and if they had to walk in the stream bed, to proceed with caution. The Duke had their rope

in a coil around his shoulder, Bobbie had water in a canteen. They moved up the canyon, around the red headland which divided it from the larger gorge, and disappeared into an unknown world.

“I wonder if anybody has ever been up here ahead of us?” Bobbie questioned.

“Indians, probably,” said the Duke. “Don’t seem to be crowded right now.”

The canyon wound like a letter S for half a mile, between precipitous side walls several hundred feet high. The bottom was stone dry, with no indication of quicksand. But there was room to walk above the stream bed. Then the Scouts emerged from the last twist, and saw that the canyon stretched westward, wider and straight, for a mile or so, and ended in what looked like a precipitous head wall.

“A box canyon,” said Bobbie.

They noticed, too, that on the canyon floor were many small cottonwoods, and up near the head wall they could plainly see green patches.

“I bet there’s a spring up at the head,” the Duke exclaimed. “Some of the water gets down here.”

They moved on. Suddenly Bobbie gave a shout, and pointed to the right. There, perched on a shelf of the red precipice, they guessed a hundred feet above the base, was a cliff dwelling!

Without another word, they raced up the canyon floor till they were below the dwelling, scrambled up the sloping pile of shale and sand at the base of the cliff, and reached the direct ascent. The ledge on which the house stood was certainly seventy-five feet above them, if not a hundred. The precipice was very little off the perpendicular, and there were no footholds whatever.

“How the dickens did anybody ever get up there?” Bobbie demanded.

“There must be a way,” said the Duke. “If the old cliff dwellers got up there, we can. Maybe they had a place farther along, and then walked on the ledge to the house.”

The Scouts went farther along. They could see that the ledge ran around a buttress of the cliff, and that around here there was a lower ledge, only fifty feet over their heads. But the precipice otherwise was as smooth as a house wall, and the ledge ended abruptly.

"Nothing doing," sighed the Duke.

So they went back and followed the scree pile in the other direction. More than two hundred feet to the east of the house Bobbie suddenly gave an exclamation. A dim slanting crevice ran up the rock face, and in this crevice were the faint remnants of footholds, evidently cut out long ago, and weathered by time.

"Can we make it?" said Bobbie.

"We can try," the Duke replied, and started up.

It was hard work, and the Duke came down after a few feet, took off his boots and stockings, tied them to his belt, and started again in his bare feet. He recalled how the men had climbed the Great White Throne. This worked much better, so Bobbie did the same. Half-way up, the crevice slanted still more, and was deeper, affording hand holds. From here on they moved faster, and before long stood on the ledge, which rapidly grew wider and wider, till they were in front of the dwelling.

It had once been a two-story house, but part of the second story had crumbled away. The wooden beams, however, which held it up still

stuck out of the masonry. There was a low door, and two square windows opening out over the canyon. The house came nearly to the edge of the ledge, but left just enough room to get past to the far side.

"This was no place for babies to play!" laughed the Duke, as he put his shoes on, preparatory to going inside. "No telling what may be on the floor," he explained. "Might be a snake or a scorpion, or something."

Bobbie was doing the same thing. He was nearer the door, and the Duke heard him give a sudden low, startled exclamation.

"What's the matter? See a ghost?"

Bobbie pointed. Just under the shadow of the entrance lay a cigarette butt! It hadn't been there long, either. The paper was still fresh.

The Duke drew in his breath. "Well, we're in for it now," he whispered. "How'd anybody get up here without leaving tracks?"

"Bare feet, like us," whispered Bobbie, in reply. "No tracks down the canyon—must have come here from over the head wall."

"Well, they aren't here now, or they'd been out that door. Let's have a look."

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“Wait!” said Bobbie. “If they should be the hold-up men, and started coming while we were here, we got to know if there’s a way for us to escape. Let’s go around the ledge beyond the house first.”

They crept past the house wall, and around the buttress. The ledge soon ended, but there was a jagged edge of buttress around which they could loop the rope. They did so, and let the ends drop. The ends just reached to the second, smaller ledge below at this point. From there, they knew, it was a short drop to the ground below.

“How’ll we fasten the rope on the lower ledge?” asked Bobbie. “I don’t see anything but smooth rock down there.”

The Duke peered over. “I see a crack,” he said. “We can take down a piece of beam from the house and wedge it in.”

They pulled the rope up and left it ready, and went cautiously back, scanning the canyon below for any signs of men.

“Gosh! what if they were up the canyon and have seen us!” Bobbie suddenly whispered.

“We *are* nuts!” said the Duke. “Well, it’s

too late now. I'm going to have a look. You watch at the window."

They both stooped and entered the low door. In the dim interior, where they had expected to hunt for relics of a lost race, they now looked eagerly for signs of recent occupation.

"Quick—you watch at the window!" the Duke cried. "I'll snoop in here."

At first he saw nothing but a few bits of broken pottery half buried in dust on the floor, but there was a second room beyond, and as he entered that he gave an exclamation.

"What is it?" Bobbie demanded.

"Canned goods," came back the answer. "A cache of food supplies. Wait a minute; here's something else!"

There was silence for a moment, and then the Duke reappeared with a white face.

"It's the hold-up gang, all right," he said. "I looked in an old box labeled 'Soap,' and it's full of packages of bonds! I untied one to see."

"Whew! if they catch us here, it's all off with us! Let's beat it and tell the inspector!"

"Let's take the bonds!"

"No—that won't do. If they caught us with

them, they'd plug us sure. Besides, if we got away with the bonds, they'd beat it, and the government never would catch 'em."

"Well, let's go while the going's good."

"Wait!" Bobbie cautioned, under his breath. "Holy grief, there they are now—two of 'em, coming down the canyon!"

"What'll we do?" There was a note of terror in the Duke's voice, and Bobbie was pale as a sheet of paper. They had visions of being caught in this trap, unarmed, like rats.

"Our rope," said Bobbie, after a second. "As soon as they get up to the foot of the steps, they'll be out of sight. It will take 'em fifteen minutes to come up, I bet. It took us that long, easy. We can sneak out and around to our rope, and drop down, and get into the stream bed out of sight of this place easy. Then we can sneak down under the bank, till we're around the bend."

"O. K. Don't show your face too much at the window. Watch 'em, though. I'll find a piece of beam."

"No—don't break any beam to put 'em wise we've been here! My hatchet handle will do."

In breathless silence they watched and waited till the two men had moved out of sight under them, toward the steps in the cleft. Then they sneaked out the door, around the house, along the ledge till the buttress was behind them, threw the rope over, made sure it would run free, and went down to the ledge below. The Duke pulled the rope down as Bobbie jammed his hatchet deep into a crack and made a peg with the handle to loop the rope over. Then down they dropped to the ground, pulled the rope after them, and ran down the débris pile to the stream bed, still out of sight of the house.

Once in the dry stream bed, they went on hands and knees, or crouching low, under the nearer bank, as rapidly as they could downstream. Just as they seemed to be headed for safety, and a peep over the brim showed them the two men still toiling up the steps, slowly and clumsily, the Duke, who was ahead, gave a smothered cry, and yanked his foot back.

“Quicksand!” he exclaimed. “See—my foot started to suck in! We can’t go on!”

“We *got* to go on!”

“I’d rather be shot at than sucked under,”

the Duke answered. "We'll have to take to the bank and run for it."

"No—wait! I got an idea. Let 'em get into the house. They'll be busy inside. We'll each cut an alder bush, and hold it for a screen, and crawl along till the stream bed's dry again."

They whittled with a pocket knife frantically at the stems of two little trees, and got them cut. Then, as they saw the men enter the house, they crawled up on the bank, and holding the bushes for a screen crawled slowly and painfully along, hoping if one of the men looked out and noticed a moving shrub, he would take it for some motion caused by the wind.

Perhaps nobody looked out. At any rate, nothing happened, and at last, with breeches worn through at the knees and skin bleeding, they were around the bend of the S. They didn't dare try the stream bed again, and had crawled at least three hundred yards. Once out of sight, they rose to their feet, and began to run. Without saying a word, they tore along over boulders and sand, stumbling and panting, and dripping with perspiration. The way down the canyon seemed miles, and when they finally burst out

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into sight of their camp, they almost slumped with excitement and weariness.

Nobody was there but Art.

“Say, what’s the matter?” he exclaimed, looking at their knees, and their streaming faces. Breathless, they gave him the news. He whistled, slowly and thoughtfully.

“We got to have a round up,” he finally said. “We got to reach the others. Now, I ain’t goin’ to leave you boys here in case those bums come this way. You each take a hawse, and one of you ride up, and t’other down, the main canyon, and find our gang. You up to it?”

“What’ll you do if they come?” the Scouts asked.

“I’ll probably follow you, bareback, at sixty miles an hour,” said Art, as he saddled the boys’ horses.

The Duke rode up the north canyon, after Number One and Steve. Bobbie rode down after Smith and the inspector. Both Scouts were trembling with excitement, and their knees almost refused to grip the horses’ backs. But a trail horse needs little guidance. He takes his own pace, in his own way, and they both disap-

peared from camp sitting erect, and urging their horses on.

After a mile the Duke found Number One and Steve tramping back down the canyon, for they had been far enough to see its length, and found no signs of cliff dwellings. But it was almost two hours before Douglas rode in, his horse sweating. He had pushed him up the canyon full pace in places, and was almost half an hour ahead of Bobbie and Smith. Smith wouldn't let Bobbie come back faster than a walk.

When Bobbie did arrive, the Duke had retold everything to the inspector, and already Art had his horse harnessed, his water bag filled, a few provisions in his saddle bag, and in his pocket a list of instructions. He was headed out for Escalante, as fast as he could travel.

"What's the idea? What's going to happen?" Bobbie demanded.

"Art's going out for help," the Duke answered. "He'll bring back a posse of men, and wire orders to have all the exits watched, as you might say."

Meanwhile Douglas and Smith held a final conference with Art and Steve. The three na-

tives agreed that they were about thirty or thirty-five miles south of Escalante, and somewhat east. If the bandits had come down into that side canyon over the head wall, as seemed certain, for there were no tracks of them at the open end, that meant they came to it from the west, and would probably go out the same way.

“They’re hiding out, waiting for the excitement to die down,” Smith declared. “They had their food stuff cached there beforehand, o’ course. A man can’t travel far on foot in this country, and carry his livin’ with him. They must ‘a’ operated in from Cottonwood Creek, maybe—that ought to be twenty miles or so due west. And somebody could get up Cottonwood from Paria with horses, and get ‘em down to Lee’s Ferry, for all I know, or anyhow out to a road and so to Kanab. They got a confederate somewheres, I bet.”

Douglas listened, and nodded. “Nobody will get down to Cottonwood, or through Paria, or over Lee’s Ferry, without being spotted,” he said, “unless they start before Art gets to Escalante.”

“If those birds are on foot, they can’t get out

before he does, even if they've started now," said Smith. "Sure you didn't see any horses, boys?"

The boys were sure. "And we didn't see any way you could get a horse down that head wall," said Bobbie. "In fact, I don't see how the men got down it."

"Probably an old Indian step path to the mesa above," the inspector answered.

He took Art's instructions, added a note, and sent him on his way. Art waved good-bye, and put his horse up through the break in the canyon wall opposite the entrance to the bandit canyon, and disappeared from view.

"And now," said Smith, rather sourly, "what do we do, Mr. Inspector? I got several nice horses, and you got exactly one gun. If those birds come down here and want the horses, looks like they'd get 'em, and we'd have a long walk home, if they was any of us left to walk."

"They won't get the horses, or you either," Douglas answered. "Am I boss now?"

"You be," said Smith, "plenty."

"O. K. Then here are the orders."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BATTLE IN BANDIT CANYON— BOBBIE IS UNDER FIRE!

THE rest gathered closer to hear.

“We move camp a mile down the canyon, out of sight of this entrance. There is forage and water down there, though not so good as here, but it’s out of sight. We all go on half rations ——”

“Gosh,” interrupted the Duke, “it’s three now, and I’d forgotten all about lunch!”

“—and then I go up that canyon till I can see the cliff house, and keep watch, till the posse comes and we can smoke ’em out.”

Smith nodded. “Come on, Steve—get the horses.”

“That’s all right,” Bobbie said, “but, Inspector, you can’t get where you can see the house, without their being able to spot you if they are up the canyon. They evidently camp

up by some spring at the head, and you are in sight of that long before you see the cliff house.”

“ Yeah—and you can’t creep in the stream bed down there, and hide, ’cause it’s full of quicksand,” the Duke added.

“ But we’ve got to know—or I’ve got to know—whether they are in there, or have started out,” the inspector declared. “ That information we must have.”

“ There is a way,” said Bobbie, “ or there would be if we could climb this old wall. If the Duke or I could get up on top, we could walk along till we were opposite the cliff house, and see the whole works. Then whoever was on top could come back to this rim and wig-wag signals. If the bandits started to leave the canyon we could let you know down here.”

“ Yeah—that sounds great,” Douglas replied, “ but how are you going to get up there? ”

He looked at the five hundred feet of sheer red precipice which formed both sides of the entrance to what the Scouts already called Bandit Canyon.

Number One had brought out his small but powerful field glasses from his pack, and was

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scanning the wall of the main canyon below Bandit Canyon mouth.

"It looks like a gully farther down," he said. "Let's have a look as we take the horses down."

Camp was hastily broken, and the whole party moved down the main canyon, the boys and Number One scanning the side wall. Half a mile down they all three gave an exclamation, and pointed. Sure enough, there was a rift in the wall, a crack which had been gullied out deep, and looked like a possible way to the top.

"You can do it, maybe," Smith grunted. "I'm sure I couldn't."

"Come on!" urged the Duke.

Number One shook his head. "Not this late," he declared. "I won't risk being stuck up there in the dark even for the United States Postal Department. Maybe we'll try it in the morning, when you boys have had a rest."

They camped at the new water hole, ate a frugal supper, only about half as much as they wanted, and then Douglas and Steve went back up the canyon on foot, to reconnoiter and keep watch. They planned to creep up Bandit Canyon under cover of the dark, and see if the

robbers had a camp-fire going. Bobbie and the Duke planned to keep awake till one of them got back, to hear the news, for Douglas feared the thugs had climbed to the cliff house to get the bonds and then had started out. But when Steve got in at midnight both Scouts had been dead to the world for four hours, and were sleeping like logs. Nobody was awake but Number One, who sat dozing by the embers of a tiny camp-fire.

“They’re there,” whispered Steve. “We could see the light of a fire up near the head wall. Inspector’s keeping watch. He don’t never sleep, that bird.”

Then Steve tumbled into his blanket.

In the morning, armed with two of the biggest handkerchiefs the camp afforded, to use for signaling, with some provisions from the diminishing store and a bag of water, with field glasses and rope, Number One and Bobbie, chosen because he was the best signaler, started up the gully. The rest (Douglas had come back to the camp before morning) waited at the bottom. It was a difficult and dangerous climb. Half-way up they encountered a chock stone which had

wedged in and seemed for a while absolutely to block their progress. But by standing on Number One's shoulders Bobbie managed to throw a loop of the rope upward till it caught over a jag of rock, and with the rope's help they got finally around the obstruction. Once the gully became so narrow they had to climb it like a chimney, back braced to one side, feet and hands to the other, and hitch up. Their clothes were torn, their hands lacerated, when, after two hours, they finally reached the summit. But they were there.

It had been agreed that they would go and spy on Bandit Canyon, and the Duke was to hide out somewhere near the mouth, where he could see the rim they had climbed, and watch for signals. They would signal anyway at five that afternoon, and at eight the next morning, but between times not unless something happened.

Number One and Bobbie found themselves on a bare, desolate, but fortunately comparatively level table land of rock. They could see plainly where Bandit Canyon was cut down into it, and after a rest had little trouble in walking the mile

or so across it to the rim, at a point Bobbie reckoned would be opposite the cliff house.

As they drew near the rim, Number One cautioned Bobbie to go very slowly. "We'll be cut out against the sky, plain as day," he said. "Let's pick out a stone near the edge, and creep up behind it."

They did so. Raising their heads just enough to look over, they gazed across at the cliff house which looked so close that Bobbie was amazed. It really was a narrow canyon. Not a sign of life in or around it! Number One swung his glasses up the canyon to the head wall, and searched there. He exclaimed under his breath, and passed the glasses to Bobbie.

Under an overhang of rock there appeared to be a little spring, for the rock was green with moss, and there were shrubs below it. At one side, almost concealed from sight by a fallen boulder, was a piece of canvas stretched like a kind of tent, and in front of it, rising in a thin, almost invisible spiral, the smoke of a tiny camp-fire, evidently made of twigs. By this fire were two men, heating a noonday meal. Something glinted suddenly on the ground below them, and

Bobbie realized that they had thrown away a can, and the sun had flashed on the freshly opened cover.

“They went up to the house yesterday to renew their supplies,” he unconsciously whispered. “But how do you suppose they get out of there, if they don’t come down the canyon?”

Number One took the glasses again, and studied the head wall for a long time.

“I’ve got it!” he finally exclaimed. “And those men never doped it out, either. Must have been the old cliff dwellers. Fifty feet up, there’s a narrow ledge that runs at an angle up toward the top. It comes around this way, too! There must be old steps cut in the cliff to reach that ledge. Once on it, you can walk out—if you don’t mind walking on the edge of nothing.”

Bobbie took the glasses. “I can see something more,” he declared. “I can’t see the steps, but I can see a piece of rope dangling from the lower edge of that ledge! Look ——”

Number One took the glasses. “You’re right! They strung it there to help ’em down, and left it for their getaway. Probably would have strung one to the cliff house if they’d had

it. You know, Bobbie, that ledge must reach the top not two hundred yards from us, judging by the way it curves around in this direction!"

"Whew! I hope they don't start coming out!"

"First thing we do is to find a shelter up here, where we can rest out of the sun, and hide if they do start out."

"Yeah? Just where?"

They looked over the naked mesa top in vain, but by walking back from the rim they finally discovered a large rock with an overhanging side under which it was possible to crawl and get some shelter from the broiling sun, and also to hide from view if the bandits came up.

Here they lay for three or four hours, eating some crackers and a small can of peaches to quench their thirst and conserve their precious supply of warm, brackish water in the bag. They decided to wait for the coming of dusk before trying to discover exactly where the trail came out. But Bobbie went back to the rim of the main canyon at five, and wig-wagged news to the Duke, whom he finally detected, with Steve,

behind a rock near their first camp. All he signaled was, "Bandits still there."

"O. K.," the Duke signaled back.

Bobbie returned to their rock shelter. He was hungry and thirsty. The morning's climb and the merciless sun had conspired to make him hungrier and thirstier than he thought he'd ever been before.

"Gosh! I could drink a gallon of ice water, and eat five pounds of nice, juicy steak!" he cried.

"We'll be hungrier and thirstier yet before we get out of here," said Number One, grimly. "Art hasn't more than got to Escalante. Nobody can start from there, anyhow, till to-morrow morning. They'll push hard, but it will take 'em a day and a half to get here ——"

"Whew! All day to-morrow, and most of next day up here, on what we got to eat and drink? How can we do it?"

"Don't go civilized," Number One answered.

"We can do it if we have to."

"Maybe it will rain," said Bobbie, "and we can catch some water."

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Number

One, pointing at the hot, brazen sun which was sinking down to the west, over the naked ocean of rocks.

They ate a small can of sardines and drank the oil, opened another of their precious cans of peaches and drank the juice, and finally took one swig apiece of the still more precious water. Bobbie still felt hungry and thirsty, but he realized the need for conserving their supplies. As dusk began to fall, they crept to the edge and spotted the faint glow of the bandits' tiny fire.

"They couldn't make a real fire, anyhow," said Bobbie—"nothing but little dead cottonwoods and brush for fuel."

"We'll probably wish we had that much up here before morning," Number One replied. "Let's spot the top of that ledge."

Keeping just out of sight behind the rim, they moved along a couple of hundred yards, to where they thought the ledge came over, and then crept forward. Sure enough, not fifty feet from them was a place where you could jump down six feet onto a shelf, which sloped downward at a rather dizzy angle, and swung around to the very head of the canyon, above the bandits' camp. It was

three or four feet wide at the start, but appeared to taper down to only two feet.

“It took some nerve to go down there,” Bobbie whispered.

“I suppose it takes some nerve to hold up a train,” said Number One. “A couple of men up here, behind a rock, could pick off those birds easily if they tried to climb out. We’ve got ’em pocketed for fair, if the posse comes in time ——”

“And if anybody else can climb up here,” Bobbie answered.

“That’s true, too.”

They went back to their rock shelter. With no blankets, no fire, nothing but a little powdered sandstone scooped up to soften their “bed,” they huddled together and tried to sleep. Bobbie was cold, hungry, thirsty, and his very bones began to ache before morning. Never had he spent such a miserable night, but he got to the rim of the main canyon and signaled at eight, and received the Duke’s “O. K.”

“How are you?” he added.

“O. K.,” came from the Duke again. “How you?”

“Thirsty,” Bobbie wig-wagged, and went back to the rock shelter.

That day, with Bobbie posted to signal him if the bandits started to climb out, Number One walked westward some distance beyond the canyon head, to see if he could find out what lay beyond, or pick up any trail, but his trip yielded little information.

“I can’t see any signs of trail,” he said, on his return. “And this mesa top seems to go on several miles.”

“They have been down gathering a lot of dead wood,” said Bobbie. “Gosh, I was all hot and cold, ’cause they got right close to where Duke and I cut the two bushes! But they must know the quicksand, and they stopped short. They’re back now, making a fire—haven’t been near the cliff house.”

“No suspicion yet, then. If you and I can stick it out till the guns come to-morrow, we’ve got ’em caught!”

The sun was sinking. It was sinking into a great, dark, angry cloud bank, which had appeared without their noticing it. They hurried back to their rock shelter, and began scooping at

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the softest place they could find in the sandstone, using the edges of an opened can but making mighty little impression.

“Gosh, this stuff looks soft, till you try to cut it,” Bobbie panted.

It wasn't much of a pool—“Not even a good bird bath,” as Number One put it—but when the shower came, a brief but torrential down-pour, they sat under the overhang of their rock, with their undershirts off and left out in the rain to get washed, and watched not only their little pool, but other natural pools, fill up.

“Quick!” Number One cried, as soon as the rain stopped. “Get cans and fill up our water bag!”

“In a minute,” said Bobbie, as he fell on his stomach by a pool, buried his lips in the water, and drank, and drank, and drank.

The fresh rain water put new heart into them. It wasn't half so hard to go hungry as to go thirsty. While their shirts were drying, they crept to the rim, and were amazed to see little silver threads of waterfalls tumbling down into the canyon, and the dry stream bed at its bottom running a brook. Then they saw the two ban-

dits come from under an overhang of cliff, and try to light a fire of wet wood.

Bobbie and Number One went back and munched hard crackers, ate a can of sardines and some chocolate, and drank more water. That night they were colder than before. Most of the night they alternately tried to doze, and walked around to keep warm, and the next morning, with their supplies running perilously low, they both went to the main canyon rim, where Bobbie, after several attempts, managed to make the Duke get his message—"When is the posse due?"

"Noon—maybe," at last the answer came.

"We can't signal enough to explain things—we've got to go down," said Number One. "Besides, those birds aren't going out to-day. They'd have started long before now."

"I'm ready," said Bobbie. "Gosh, my belt is up to the last peg now. I feel like an hour glass. And we've only a few cracker crumbs left to eat."

"Coming down," signaled Bobbie, and then they went along the rim to the gully, uncoiled the rope, and began the long, difficult, almost

precipitous descent. Without the rope, it would have been impossible, but there were just enough jags of rock over which it could be looped to enable them to negotiate the worst places, and they finally emerged at the bottom to find everybody but Steve waiting for them.

They told their story. Those below, naturally, had nothing to report. "If you're taking anybody back up," said the inspector, "you come get some food."

"And coffee, I hope," said Number One.

He and Bobbie were fed a hot meal, with coffee, out of the fast vanishing supplies, and they were both sound asleep when the posse rode down the break in the main wall at four o'clock—a hot looking outfit of a dozen men and six or eight extra horses. Every man had a rifle. Art was leading them. His eyes were red from lack of sleep, and he sagged with weariness, but here he was, on the job!

Bobbie and Number One were waked up.

"Which one of you men can climb?" the inspector demanded. "We got to have a sharp shooter up above."

"Show us the place."

They all went up to the gully and had a look. All the men but two shook their heads.

"We can do it if anybody else can," those two said.

"Get up before dark, then. We attack in the morning."

With food in their pockets, and a refilled water sack, Number One and the two men started for the gully, with the rope.

"Hey, which of us is coming?" called Bobbie and the Duke.

"I didn't bring you in here to be targets," said Number One.

"Well, you didn't come to be one, either," said they. "And who's going to signal?"

"That's so," put in Douglas. "One of 'em ought to go. He don't need to get in the line of fire."

"Me, this time!" cried the Duke.

Number One said, "All right," but not too happily, and the four began the ascent of the gully. The two men with the guns were roped behind Number One and the Duke, the Duke's job being chiefly to see that the rope was belayed whenever they came on up the steep pitches.

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It took three hours, for the rifles, slung on the men's backs, impeded their movements. It was getting dark in the canyon when those below finally saw them go over the rim.

The plan of attack was for those below to move up Bandit Canyon before daylight till they were almost in sight of the head wall, and in sight of a spot on the rim where the Duke would signal. At his signal they would move up the stream bed till they could see the head wall, and send a shot into the bandits' camp. If the bandits then tried to beat a retreat up their rope and out over the ledge, the two men on top would rake the ledge with rifle fire and drive them back. Then they'd realize they were trapped, and either surrender, or try to shoot it out. If they tried the latter, the marksmen on the rim could probably move along till they could get a direct view of them from above, and end the battle.

That night sentinels were posted at the mouth of the canyon, to make certain the trap held. Before daylight the camp was up, and on the move. The job had to be done that day, for there wasn't enough forage in the canyon to keep

the horses another twenty-four hours, nor had the posse brought much food.

As the first rays of the sun hit the rocks at the top of the canyon, Bobbie found himself, with Douglas, Steve, the sheriff and nine deputies, almost in sight of the head wall. He watched the rim where the Duke's white handkerchiefs ought to appear. There was a flutter, two flutters, and then came the signal, "O. K."

He waved a piece of lighted dead brush to signal, from the dark canyon, that they were there—and then the party moved on.

"You stay here!" Douglas ordered Bobbie and Steve. "You aren't armed, and this ain't your job. If you disobey, I'll arrest you both!"

But as soon as the posse was two hundred feet ahead, Steve and Bobbie followed. Around the last bend they all moved, and then the posse fanned out, and crouched behind convenient rocks. Bobbie and Steve did the same. Up at the head wall base, in the heavy shadow, glowed a light. The bandits had started their morning camp-fire, unconscious that any eyes were upon them. There was a sudden spit of flame from behind a rock ahead of Bobbie, a crack, an

answering roar of echo from the canyon walls. Then silence again.

“Why don’t they answer the fire?” Bobbie called to Steve. “Wish I could see if they’re trying to climb out!”

For several minutes nothing happened. None of the posse fired again. Bobbie could see them ahead, behind their rocks. Then, as suddenly as the first shot, came a crack from up on the rim, and the answering roar of the echo.

“They’re climbing out!” cried Bobbie.

“Look, look, what’s he say?” Steve shouted, pointing to the rim.

Bobbie watched the signals.

“Says—wait—gosh, he’s slow!—wait—I got it—‘They going back,’”—and Bobbie dashed forward to Douglas with the news.

“Trapped!” cried the inspector. “You stay behind this rock, do you hear? Come on,” he shouted to his men. “Move nearer and let ’em have it. Keep under cover all you can.”

It was getting light in the canyon now. They could see one of the bandits sliding down the rope into camp. Somebody fired, though the range was too far to make a hit. Then all the

men rose, and dashed forward a hundred yards, and crouched again behind any shelter they could find. Bobbie dashed after them, yelling, "Look out for quicksand in the brook bed!"

Just as he called, there were two spits of flame from the bandits' camp, and over his head an instant later Bobbie heard the whine of a bullet. He dropped like a lump of lead behind a rock, and lay there with a queer feeling in his stomach.

"It's like going into battle," he thought to himself. "I'm under fire!"

"Everybody fire once, to let 'em know there are a lot of us," he heard the sheriff shout, "and then hold your fire till we get nearer."

Ten rifles spoke, and the canyon roared with the echoes. There was no reply from the bandits.

"Holding their fire," Steve said, crawling up behind Bobbie. "This is going to be a hot place pretty soon, boy. Let's us find a bigger rock to get behind."

As the posse rushed forward, under cover of the cottonwoods, Bobbie and Steve dashed for a large rock fragment below the cliff house, and got behind it, just as the two spits of flame leaped out at the head wall. But the bandits

weren't firing at them. They saw the hat go off the head of one of the posse, and heard him give a yell of rage.

"Most got Tom, that time," said Steve.

The bandits were well hidden behind rocks from the posse below. Though now but three or four hundred yards short of their camp, none of the sheriff's party could see the men they were firing at. If they moved nearer, however, the bandits could pick them off. They lay behind rocks, and fired at the camp, and the bandits replied, the bullets kicking up dust around them. Another hat was shot off. Bobbie and Steve, peeping from behind their shelter, could see no way to end the battle without a charge, and a charge under the circumstances would end in certain loss of life.

But they had forgotten the men on the rim. There was a sudden crack from the top of the head wall, and then a second. An instant later one bandit gun spit upward into the air, two shots spit back and then all was silent. There came a long hush of expectation, and then a white rag on a stick fluttered up above the bandits' camp, and behind it rose one man, who

slowly raised his hands above his head in token of surrender.

Douglas and the sheriff sprang forward, and scrambled up the débris slope to the head wall, followed by the rest. On to the upraised wrists snapped a pair of handcuffs. And two of the deputies stooped and lifted the limp form of the other bandit. Bobbie, who was approaching, saw this, and saw the blood, and turned away. Steve went on.

But only to come back.

“Dead?” Bobbie asked.

“Naw,” said Steve. “He’s only stunned. Too tough to kill, that bird! Scratched his forehead. I got to go back for horses.”

The sheriff and Douglas were now approaching Bobbie.

“Show us the bonds,” they cried triumphantly.

Bobbie led the way to the ancient steps, peeled off his shoes and stockings, and began scrambling barefoot up the seam. But Douglas and the sheriff, after one attempt, remained below!

Bobbie found the old soap box, and dragged it out. But how could he get it down? If he

threw it, the bonds might be spoiled in the crash. He began hunting around in the bandits' cache of food, which had diminished to a few cans, and discovered a coil of old clothes line.

"Just what they brought it up for," he reflected, tying an end around the box, and lowering it over the edge.

As it reached the men below, Bobbie saw Douglas grab the box, and begin an eager inspection of its contents. He threw over the few remaining cans of food, thinking they might come in handy, put two or three pieces of broken cliff dweller pottery in his pocket for souvenirs, and began the descent. Nobody was watching him. Douglas and the sheriff were still too absorbed with the box. He put on his shoes, and came around to them. The inspector looked up. His face was grimed with sweat, he had several days' growth of beard, he was dirty and bleary-eyed from lack of sleep, and his wrist was bleeding where a bullet had grazed it,—but he wore a grin from ear to ear.

"Bobbie," he cried, "they're all here! And we got the men who took 'em, too! Shake, boy, shake!"

He put out his dirty, bloody hand. Bobbie put out his dirty hand. Over the box of bonds, under the cliff where perhaps a thousand years ago the peaceful Indians had built the house, these two shook hands.

And Bobbie will never forget the thrill he got out of it.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SCOUTS GO CIVILIZED AGAIN

THE wounded robber was brought out on a horse to the main canyon. Bobbie hurried ahead to the gully below, to see if Number One and his party were coming down. They were. From above, they had seen all that took place, after their shots had found the bandits and proved to them that resistance was hopeless because they couldn't hide from those on the rim. The party was descending very slowly. Bobbie noted that the two men had thrown away their rifles. It took them nearly an hour to get down.

"Gee, they were scared pink!" the Duke whispered to Bobbie. "Didn't know how to use the doubled rope, and they left two perfectly dandy guns behind. Number One wouldn't let me try to bring one of 'em down, either."

Without further ado, the entire outfit was

moved up to camp number one, water bags were filled, and the party pushed up the break for Escalante.

It wasn't till they were once more in the saddle that the two scouts realized the strain they had been under. They felt suddenly dog tired, and desperately sleepy, and half sick with the heat and lack of food. But there was nothing to do but push on, and on, and on, over the broiling rocks, to get to water for the night. They fell off their horses at dark by the first water hole they had reached on the trip in, and the party ate practically all of the remaining food. Breakfast the next morning consisted of a few canned beans and some cracker crumbs, with no coffee or tea or sugar, and on that they rode all day, and came into Escalante at twilight with their stomachs aching with emptiness, their heads dizzy with heat and weariness, and their muscles sore and stiff.

Number One had a shave the first thing, and emerged, as the Duke said, looking like a human being again, instead of short-stop on the House of David nine. They all washed, and threw their dirty, torn, begrimed clothes into a duffle

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bag, and put on some fresh garments. And then they ate! The crown of the feast was a lemon pie, and the Duke stooped over his plate and kissed his piece, before he ate it!

“Going civilized on us, Duke?” asked Number One.

“Yeah, you bet I am!” the Duke replied. “The bad lands are O. K., but oh, you lemon pie!”

“I noticed you made a bee line for your razor, Number One,” Bobbie laughed.

“Yes,” Mr. Parsons confessed. “I did. But of course I only went wild because you boys wanted to.”

“Yeah?” said the Duke, as well as he could with his mouth full. “Gee whiz, it was great, all right! But next time I go wild, it’s going to be where there’s a brook every mile, and plenty banana trees or something, and plenty fire wood. Gosh, up there on top I nearly froze!”

“Huh,” said Bobbie, “I had *two* nights of it, and Number One had three.”

“Well, well, here we are,” laughed Number One, “and thank goodness none of us has a

bullet hole in him. We're all here but the Duke's rope. That's too frayed ever to trust again ——"

"And our riding breeches—we can never wear them again without getting arrested," said the Duke.

"And my hatchet," said Bobbie. "That's back on the ledge below the cliff house."

"Somebody'll find it there some time, and dope out that the cliff dwellers knew how to make tools," laughed the Duke. "Look, here comes the inspector."

Douglas entered, to get his dinner at last. He had been busy on the wires, and had news. Other inspectors, at his tip sent out by Art, had closed in from the south and west on the Bad Lands, and found a confederate just moving up a canyon with horses, a day's foot march from Bandit Canyon, to bring the bandits down to a car, which had been hidden cleverly. They were just about to try a getaway over Lee's Ferry bridge when they were nabbed.

"Two days later, we wouldn't have seen 'em," said the inspector. "And without you folks, I wouldn't have caught 'em."

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That night the boys went to bed thinking they'd wake up sore and weary, for never had they felt so completely done in. But to their surprise they woke up feeling fine.

"Gosh," said the Duke, "I guess it's good for you to starve and freeze half to death. I feel like a million dollars!"

They got out Brigham, packed it, said good-bye to Art and Steve and Smith (the inspector and his prisoners had already departed), and started back over Escalante Mountain.

"Any more sights would be an anti-climax," Bobbie declared. "Let's beat it for Salt Lake."

"We'll have to, if you boys are going to get home on schedule," laughed Number One. "It's August now."

They drove all day, had dinner, and drove on by night, and reached Salt Lake before morning. After a few hours' sleep, during which they had ordered the car washed and polished, they took Brigham back to the dealer. It looked almost as good as new. They hadn't even had a puncture! He bought the car back, as he had agreed, without a murmur—indeed, he looked pretty happy about it. Then they secured some boxes

to express their dunnage in, and two hours later were comfortably sitting in a Pullman, headed for home.

Before night came on, they looked their last at the rocks and canyons and wild, tortured earth crust of the Rocky Mountains. The next morning they would wake up on the prairies.

“Good-bye, old rocks and bad lands!” exclaimed the Duke. “We’re going civilized again. And gosh how I wish we weren’t!”

“What a summer!” Bobbie added. “Oh, Number One, how can we ever repay you for it?”

Number One smiled. “Been hot enough?” he asked. “Both of you?”

“Hot, and cold, and everything. And bandits, and battles, and old lions, and canyons—oh, gee! What a world!”

“Well, if you liked it so much, that’s all the pay I want,” the man replied.

“Gee, Number One, you’re a prince,” said Bobbie, and looked out of the window again, to hide his emotion.

“That isn’t the half,” added the Duke, and he had to look out of the window, too.

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Number One smiled happily, at the backs of their heads, and noticed that their necks were burned a dark reddish brown, like an Indian's, by the sun.

THE END

