

Roy Lillian Elizabeth

Girl Scouts in the Adirondacks



Lillian Roy

Girl Scouts in the Adirondacks

«Public Domain»

Roy L.

Girl Scouts in the Adirondacks / L. Roy — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

CHAPTER ONE	5
CHAPTER TWO	13
CHAPTER THREE	19
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	24

Roy Lillian Elizabeth Girl Scouts in the Adirondacks

CHAPTER ONE THE FRIDAY JINX

"Are we ready to start, girls?" called Mrs. Vernon, the Captain of Dandelion Troop of Girl Scouts, as she glanced at her protégées seated in two large touring cars.

"Ready! Why, Verny, we've been waiting for you these ten minutes," retorted Juliet Lee, one of the original members of the troop.

"And we're just crazy to be off before that black cloud overhead adds to mother's fear lest I never come home again," added Ruth Bentley, another of the first four girl scouts of Elmertown.

"Well, then, it seems that all the baggage and outfit we need with us on the trip is safely stowed away, eh, Jim?" said Mrs. Vernon, looking at the driver of the other car.

"Everything that I found waiting to be packed when I drove up to the side door," replied the chauffeur.

"All right! Then we're off, folkses, but we'll send you word the moment we arrive at Old Forge in the Adirondacks," called Mrs. Vernon, to the crowd of relatives of the various girls, all gathered to watch the scouts drive away.

"Good-by! Good-by!" now shouted many girlish voices, and "Good-by! Good-by!" was shouted back as the two seven-passenger cars started on the long journey.

Mrs. Vernon led the way in her luxurious automobile, and as they turned the bend of the road, where the last of the group still watching on the Vernon lawn was lost to sight, she laughingly remarked:

"I never thought a crowd of girls could get ready for such a long outing in so short a time."

"It all depends on how badly the girls *want* to be ready, Captain," retorted Joan Allison, the fourth girl of the number who founded Dandelion Camp of Girl Scouts the summer before.

"Say, girls! I just felt a drop of rain from that inky cloud!" Betty Lee warned. She was Julie's sister, and they were two who had first suggested a scout organization.

Mrs. Vernon slowed down and turned to the scouts. "Shall we stop to put on the rain-curtains?"

"Mercy, no! It's only a sprinkle, and we're not sugar," exclaimed Joan, glancing at the sky.

The other girls followed her gaze, and Julie said: "See all the blue sky! Enough to make the proverbial 'night-cap'."

In case the reader has not yet met the four girls who had such a thrilling time while at camp the previous summer, it will be best to make their acquaintance now.

As stated before, Juliet and Elizabeth Lee were the two sisters who planned having a scout troop for girls in Elmertown. Joan Allison and Ruth Bentley, both schoolmates of the Lee girls, eagerly agreed to add their efforts to the others' and secure the interest of enough girls for them to be able to apply for a charter from the Girl Scout Headquarters in New York City.

Before they closed their camp on "Verny's Mountain" that summer, five other girls had been admitted to membership in the young Patrol, namely: Hester Wynant, fourteen; Anne Bailey, fourteen; Judith Blake, thirteen; her sister, Edith Blake, twelve; and Amy Ward, thirteen.

Then during the winter, other girls who had heard of the good times the scouts had had in camp that past summer became so insistent to mothers at home that permission to join the organization was granted them.

Having nine girls in their original Patrol, with Julie as Leader, and Joan for Corporal, the scouts now felt experienced enough to pass all the tests required to apply for a Troop Charter. The young scouts were an active group and when the Charter arrived from National Headquarters the same day the girls had planned to start for camp, there was great rejoicing.

True to his promise given the Girl Scouts the summer previous, Mr. Gilroy had sent word to Mrs. Vernon when the camp in the Adirondacks was ready for them. When the girls found that Mrs. Vernon planned to use her large touring car for half of the number in the Troop to go in, and Ruth Bentley's father had offered his car for the other half, thus saving them great expense for railroad tickets, and giving them the pleasure of autoing the whole long distance, the excitement rose and would not be calmed down again.

So it was not only a happy Troop that shouted good-by to relatives, but also a flushed, merry group of nine girls who could not keep silent for long.

Ruth was in the rear seat of her father's car, which Jim was driving, when she suddenly sat up and called out to the chauffeur:

"I'm sure one of our suitcases on the trunk-rack at the back must be loose, Jim. I hear it bump about every time you go over a rough place in the road."

"It can't be, Miss Ruth," returned Jim, trying to peer out and see the baggage; "I strapped 'em on good and tight before we left."

"Well, it happens to be my suitcase that's on top, and I'm sure I don't want to lose it," declared Ruth.

"Maybe we'd better stop and make sure about it; we can soon catch up with Verny again," suggested Judith.

So Jim sprang out to investigate. "The suitcases are all right, Miss Ruth, but somethin's wrong in the back all right."

At that Ruth jumped out and joined the man. "What is it?" asked she, anxiously.

"The sag in that spring 'pears to me to say it is about done for. We'll have to travel slow till we find a garage."

"For mercy's sake! Didn't you and Pa's chauffeur overhaul both the cars thoroughly when you knew we were going on this trip?"

"Your father sent this machine to the garage in Elmertown, 'cause he said they'd know how to do the job up better'n us," explained Jim.

"Then it serves Dad right if he has to pay for a new spring! The idea of trusting strangers with his car at this important time! But here we are with a wornout old spring on our hands!" cried Ruth, stamping her foot impatiently.

"Oh no, Ruth, not on our hands – but what is ten times worse – on the rear end of the car," laughed Hester.

"Well, we've got to go slow, I suppose, and stop somewhere to replace the old thing," grumbled Ruth, climbing back in the car.

"If 'Liza knew of this mischance, wouldn't she gloat over her 'Friday Bad Luck' prophecy?" laughed Ann.

Jim started again, but carefully avoided the ruts and bumps in the road until he came to a large garage. Fortunately for all, they found a new spring in stock and the men were soon at work replacing the bad one.

"Hurrah for us Jinx-breakers! This bit of luck in finding a new spring on hand more than offsets a Friday curse," gleefully cried Ruth.

"You young ladies sure are lucky, but it will take some time to do the work, an' you may as well take a walk and see our nice Jersey town," suggested the proprietor of the garage.

The scouts followed this sensible advice and stopped at a shop where they treated each other to soda, candy, and peanuts. There being nothing more thrilling to do, they sat down in the Park and ate the plebeian delicacy and talked.

"I love peanuts, don't you?" Anne asked of the girls.

"Yes, but they have to be enjoyed away from home, or folks will make fun of you," added Ruth.

"Not any more, Ruth. When a five-cent bag of peanuts, these days, only contains ten nuts that lifts them out of the cheap class," laughed Hester.

"And makes them a luxury, eh?" added Judith.

By the time the peanuts were gone, Jim signaled the girls and they hurried back to the garage. It took but a moment for them to jump in and urge Jim to hurry after Verny's car, somewhere in the lead.

Mile after mile of beautiful woodland, with now and then a small town, but with many flourishing farms along the way, were reeled off rapidly as the machine sped along as if on wings. Finally they reached a crossroad where the signboard warned them: "All travel limited to eight miles per hour."

"Slow down, Jim, or you'll land us in a county jail," called Ruth.

"Then Mrs. Vernon must be in jail – 'cause she ain't in sight along the road, and to get as far as this she *had* to speed," declared Jim.

"It's funny she wouldn't stop to find out what became of us, when we dropped so far behind," ventured Hester.

"They'll look us up at mealtime, never fear," laughed Anne. "We've got the hamper with us, you know."

The others laughed at this remark, but they had not gone much farther along the road before they spied the Vernon automobile waiting under a great oak tree. When the tardy car came up, both parties began to shout, some asking where the delinquents had been, and the unfortunates to demand why folks wouldn't look behind once in a while!

Finally Jim could make himself heard, and he explained about the spring and where they had to stop to replace the old one.

"Well, *we* stopped to discuss ways. We ought to decide the route we want to take before we reach Jersey City," said Mrs. Vernon.

"Which is the route you'd chose, Verny?" added Ruth.

"Well, we can save a lot of time by going along to Edgewater and cross on the Fort Lee boat. That takes us right to 130th Street and Broadway, New York. We avoid all crowds and city streets, but you will not see anything of the life and bustle of New York City."

"How much time will we save?" asked Julie.

"Because we've lost so much over that old spring," added Ruth.

Mrs. Vernon smiled. "From upper New York we can drive right onto the State Road that runs direct to Albany. By selecting that way we will save a great deal of time, because traffic in the city is so congested that every driver has to travel slow and fall in line back of endless cars. At every corner when the signal holds up the entire line one has to stop to permit crosstown traffic a chance."

"Then for goodness' sake, let's go through the country on this side of the Hudson, and cross where you said – Fort Lee Ferry," declared Julie.

Every one agreeing to this decision, the plan was carried out as outlined by the Captain. Once on Broadway, where it passes Van Cortlandt Park, the girls called to Mrs. Vernon.

"How about lunch – we're famished?"

"Oh, don't let's stop here for lunch. Let's go on till we find a nicer spot in the country," returned Joan.

"Maybe there won't be any better place," demurred Judith.

"Oh, yes, there is. After we leave Yonkers we will find lots of spots, Verny says," called Julie, from the first car.

"We need a shady place where a spring will give us water," said Betty.

"A spring failing to bubble up at the proper place, we may have to be satisfied with a pump at some farmhouse," retorted her sister.

The two cars sped swiftly along Broadway, through Yonkers, Hastings-on-Hudson, and Dobb's Ferry. At this last place the Captain pointed out the famous old Headquarters used by General Washington at the close of the Revolution.

"Girls, there doesn't seem to be any picnic grounds for us along this State Road," remarked Mrs. Vernon. "Suppose we take a bite as we travel along, and cook a regular dinner when we are out in the country somewhere?"

"We're willing, in fact, I am more than willing to eat," called Anne, the scout with the healthy appetite.

So they drove on while refreshments were passed around, and every one admired the river scenes of the ever-changing panorama of the Hudson.

Just beyond Peekskill the road ran under a culvert and a sharp turn on the other side made it impossible to see what was on the road ahead. The Captain made the turn very neatly and Jim was about to follow the leading car, when several shrill cries from the girls ahead caused him to put on the emergency brakes.

The passengers in the second car could just see what had caused the frightened shouts from their friends in the first car. A gaunt farm horse was standing on his hind legs pawing the air madly, while a rickety old spring wagon seesawed uncertainly on the edge of a deep ditch beside the road. But the driver of the horse was on the road, hanging on to the bridle while plying a stout hickory stick freely over the animal's back.

"Git down! Will yuh come to arth, yuh rascal?" shouted the irate woman who was garbed in a man's farm hat and a long duster.

"Do you need any assistance?" called Mrs. Vernon, anxiously.

"Not ef I kin git him to plant his feet on arth agin. He ain't got no spunk left to run away, 'cause he's ben out plowing all day, and it w'ar a shame to drive him to the store. But it hed to be, 'cuz the ole man tuk t'other hoss to go to a meetin'."

As the unusual character talked, she tugged at the bridle until she finally had the horse quieted down again. Then he allowed his long ears to droop lazily, his spine to sag in the middle, and his erstwhile springy legs to bend as if he felt too weary to stand up.

The woman with the weather-beaten face and toughened hands was a fluent speaker, even though she paid little attention to the latest style in dress for women. She leaned against the shaft of the wagon and plied her questions to the tourists as freely as she had plied the hickory stick to the horse.

"Be you-all out fer a lark?" asked she, eyeing the number of girls in both cars.

Jim thought to move his car gradually along the road so the scouts in his charge could join in the conversation with the woman. But the moment the horse saw the automobile crawling towards him, he jumped aside. The wagon-wheel turned suddenly and the unexpected happened; the woman who had been leaning heavily on the wheel was unceremoniously dropped to a sitting posture in the dusty road.

Several of the scouts had to smother with handkerchiefs, a keen desire to laugh, but the owner of the horse seemed to take the situation good-naturedly.

"Wal, ef that ain't jus' like Samson! He does the mos' onexpected tricks, so's that he keeps us guessin' what next."

Jim sprang out of the car when he saw the result of his innocent action with the engine, but the agile woman was up before he could reach her side. She brushed the dust from her long coat and chuckled aloud: "I allus said that animal oughter be called Delilah 'cuz *she* was so sly, but my ole man says 'Samson' was close enough to that critter, and this animal hez such long hair that it suits with the name."

"You've just had him clipped, I see," ventured Mrs. Vernon.

"Not clipped, Captain – but shorn of his locks like Samson," laughed Julie.

"Maybe that's why he feels so tired," added Joan, quickly.

Every one but the farmer's wife laughed. She seemed very serious over the conversation, and nodded her head affirmatively.

"Well, we have to drive on, madam, but we're sorry to have frightened Samson," said Mrs. Vernon, in order to make an end to the scene.

"Say, couldn't you tell us where there is a nice picnic place near here?" called Jim, as the first car started.

"Yeh – a few miles further on. You'll find a nice little brook in a grove of sugar-maples, with green grass on all sides."

Jim thanked the woman, and started his car. Mrs. Vernon was informed of the grove which was to be a stopping place for dinner, and all were eagerly on the lookout for the spot that would offer such an ideal resting place.

But it was the longest "few miles" any of the scouts had traveled, for the meter showed many, many miles before any grove was seen. There was no brook in it, but the grass was very green, and the maple grove, which crowded a knoll a short distance from the road, looked cool and inviting.

As usual, Julie was the first one out of the cars and over the fence. She started to cross the very green grass, but instantly sank into the water that was hidden under the green blades.

"Help! Oh, I'm drowning!" shouted she, struggling to pull her feet clear of the bog. But she would free one foot, and instantly the other would sink. Then she tried to drag that one out, but the first one would go down again. Both together she could not get out.

"Oh, oh! See the mess poor Julie's in!" called one of the girls.

Mrs. Vernon was gazing quickly around for some sort of help to get the scout out, but the girls stood about the place sympathizing with the furious scout.

"Is it like that all over there, Julie?" called Betty, anxiously.

"How do I know? Come over and find out for yourself!" snapped her sister.

The girls laughed at the retort, but Betty added: "I only wanted to know if it was safe for me to come over and help you out."

Julie straightened up and glared at her soft-hearted sister. "You sound just like our Sunday school teacher when she reads: 'Come over into Macedonia and help.'"

Again the audience of girls laughed appreciatively, but Julie was too busy keeping her feet "treading water" to pay any attention to their enjoyment. Meantime, Jim had removed some rails from the fence and was bringing them to the scout's aid.

"Now, Miss Julie, when I shove these over, you manage to work an arm over each one, and sort of lift yourself out that way. I'll shove others over for you to step on next, and in that way you can get out and across to us," advised Jim, working as he spoke.

Finally Julie was rescued from the mire, and then the Captain said: "Every one walk along that elevated bank, over there, to reach the grove, as this entire area may be a boggy spring."

But the grass under the trees in the grove was found to be hard and dry, and they soon began to prepare luncheon. While Mrs. Vernon unpacked the hamper, the scouts were detailed on various duties: some to build a fire, some to hunt spring water, some to set table on the grass. But Julie was excused from all these tasks, as she had more than enough work to do in cleaning the mud from her boots and stockings.

When luncheon was almost ready, Judith and Amy, who had been sent to find the spring and bring back drinking water, reported: "We couldn't find any spring."

Julie looked up and jeered: "You are fine scouts! Couldn't find a spring when all you have to do is to find the source of all that water where I went down!"

"Water! That looked like mud," retorted Judith.

"We'll go for the water," volunteered Joan, catching hold of Betty's sleeve to take her along.

So they started, and as Julie had said, the spring that fed the boggy spot was not far back in the grove. The water gurgled down from a cleft in a huge rock, and on either side of the small pool wood violets dipped their fragrant petals into the sparkling mirror.

Betty sat down upon a flat rock beside the pool to enjoy the scene. But practical Joan filled the pail with cold water and then laughed at poetical Betty.

"Would you prefer to sit here and dream, Betty – or go back with me and eat ham sandwiches?"

"Oh, I forgot where I was," laughed Betty, rising reluctantly to help carry the pail of water.

"That's what I thought," tittered Joan, "but the rest of the girls prefer something more solid than dreams."

During the luncheon the Captain said: "Wouldn't it be splendid if each one of us kept a diary of what happens during this summer's camp? Then we can rewrite the facts when we go home and make a good story of it. Perhaps a real publisher will buy it from us and thus give us a fund for next year's outing – if we have one."

"Oh, that is great!" exclaimed several voices with girlish enthusiasm.

"Well then, when we camp to-night, we'll jot down the episodes of the day's trip – not forgetting to dwell at length on 'Samson,' and Julie's side-plays," remarked the Captain, smilingly.

"Has any one thought of a stopping place for the night?" asked Jim.

"Not definitely, Jim; but I hope to cross the river at Poughkeepsie and drive along the west shore as far as possible. Then we can pitch camp at any good place we find," replied the Captain.

They had not gone much farther before Ruth called: "It looks as if the rear tire on Verny's car was flat!"

The Captain slowed up, and every one tried to see the tire. "That's what it is, all right, Captain!" ejaculated Jim, impatiently.

"Dear me! That means another delay!" sighed several girls.

The car had to be jacked up and Jim went to work to mend the puncture in the tube, then pumped and pumped until the tire was properly inflated once more.

As the tourists climbed into their respective seats in the automobiles, Joan said: "Well, Captain, this wasn't such a bad day after all – in spite of being a Friday."

"I'm thankful for it, too," sighed Betty, fervently.

The cars made good time after that and passed over the ferry at Poughkeepsie, to travel northward on the road that ran along the west shore. They pitched camp in some woods and soon had a fire started to heat the canned soup they had brought. When all else was ready, the Captain banged upon a tin pan to call the scouts to dine.

"Um! That tomato soup smells good!" exclaimed Joan, sniffing audibly, as she saw the contents of the pan that stood over the fire.

"Will you serve it, Jo – you are nearest the pan?" said Mrs. Vernon, passing the basket that held the tin cups.

"Here! Everybody hold up a mug to fill, while I come around with the pan!" ordered Joan, taking hold of the pan-handle that had been over the fire a long time.

"Oo-ouch!" cried the girl, whipping her hand up and down as she danced wildly about.

"You didn't spill the soup, I hope!" exclaimed Anne, with deep concern.

"What difference would that make – a little cheap soup? But my hand – oh, it's got a trail blazed clean across the palm!" wailed Joan, showing her red-skinned hand to sympathizing friends.

"Poor old scout! We have to learn all kinds of blazing, I suppose," murmured Julie.

"And the soup *is* all safe – Jo never dropped the pan!" declared Anne, with gratification in her tones.

"Here, Miss Jo," said Jim, who had gone for a bottle kept in the kit. "Pour this olive oil all over the hand and the smart will soon stop."

He hurried to give the bottle to Joan but his toe caught in a bramble and tripped him. The bottle flew from his hand and struck the root where Joan sat. The glass shattered and the oil ran out the grass at the scout's feet.

"Well, well! it must be the Friday Jinx that still pursues us," remarked Jim, gazing regretfully at the glistening oil that formed beads on the blades of grass.

The girls laughed merrily, but Mrs. Vernon seemed serious. She was about to speak, when Amy asked Joan to pass the crackers. She picked up the box that was nearest her, and turned to hand them to her next neighbor, when her foot slipped on the oily grass and she sat down suddenly upon the stump. The box fell in Hester's lap, but Joan clapped a hand over her mouth and smothered a howl.

"Goodness me! What's the matter now, Jo!" cried Ruth, seeing the girl's convulsed face.

Joan shook her head helplessly, but her eyes were filled with tears. Every one wondered what could have happened, and when the scout could speak she said thickly: "Oh, that oil! I slipped and bit the end of my tongue clear off – I'm sure of it!"

"Stick it out and let's see," demanded Ruth.

"That's what comes of having too much of a good thing!" declared Julie, teasingly.

Every one but the Captain laughed, and she said seriously: "Do you know, girls, that I've had an idea about all this talk over Friday being a 'bad luck' day. Of course it is perfectly absurd to intelligent people, but there are enough superstitious folk left in the world who actually think Friday has some power to bring ill luck with it.

"Now I believe that it is the *fear* and general belief in the superstition that carries any weight with it. If we, as good intelligent scouts, will try to break this silly fear for others, we shall have to begin with ourselves, by not referring to the superstition with the sense of its having *any* power to act."

The girls listened seriously, as they always did when their Captain started one of her "sermonettes" as Julie called them; and when she had concluded, Joan said: "In other words, you want us to starve the poor wraith still more by withdrawing any thoughts from the matter whatever?"

"Exactly! You've worded it better than I could have done myself," responded the Captain, emphatically.

When supper was over and everything about camp had been prepared for the night, Joan suggested taking a stroll down the picturesque country road.

The gloaming was so inviting that the scouts decided to saunter down the woodsy road. They continued along the inviting footpath for more than a mile before they noticed a heavy fog settling upon everything.

"Better turn and go back, girls. This fog is obscuring everything along the way," suggested Mrs. Vernon.

"B-r-r-r! Isn't it damp!" shivered Joan.

"Yes, and it will be worse before we get home," added Judith.

They retraced their steps, but the fog came thicker and heavier all the time, and before they had gone more than half the way back, it was necessary for the scouts to go single file in order to keep in the footpath that ran along the top of a high grassy bank beside the narrow road.

"It would be so much simpler to hike along the road, Verny," suggested Hester.

"But there are so many machines traveling back and forth, and we'd have to scramble up this wet slippery bank to get out of the way every time one rushed past," explained Julie.

Julie was in front, heading the line. Being Scout Leader of the Troop, she naturally led in most things. Suddenly she stopped short and warned those back of her:

"Look out for this big boulder right in the pathway – have to detour towards the fence!"

"Boulder! Why, there wasn't any boulder here on our way over," argued Ruth.

"The fog's in Julie's eyes," laughed Joan.

"Maybe we didn't notice a rock before," ventured Amy.

"Maybe we are on the wrong road," said Anne.

"We're right, all right, but I see a boulder in the way. If you don't believe me, come here and sprain your toe kicking it!"

A few of the scouts crowded in front to peer through the puzzling fog to see the questionable boulder, but it unexpectedly got upon its clumsy feet and started for the girls. In the fog it loomed up as big as an elephant.

"Murder! Fire! Help! Help!!" came in confused screams from the scouts in front, as they turned precipitously to flee from this unknown danger. The confusion, as they fell back upon the scouts behind, while the great "boulder" still advanced slowly, was awful!

But the soft earth of the bank had been washed out from under the top layer of roots and grass, and when so many stamping, crowding girls brought their weight upon the crumbling ground, it caved in with them. Jumping, screaming, tumbling scouts now went headlong down the slide of five feet into the roadway.

The Captain and Betty had been far enough in the rear to escape this general stampede, but they, too, saw the dark object trying to skirt the newly broken-down embankment, and they slid quickly down the wet weedy bank to get away from this ghostlike creature that crept towards them.

While brave scouts were getting up from the little ditch where they had rolled, a plaintive call from the "boulder" above identified the creature as belonging to the bovine kingdom. A second "Moo-oo," as the cow passed slowly down the bank to the road, where she hoped to find some one to lead her home, created a wild laugh from every one.

CHAPTER TWO

ANOTHER DAY OF TROUBLES

Early in the morning the scouts heard Jim rattling the pans while he essayed to cook breakfast. They were soon up and dressed, and being ready for another day's adventuring, they offered their services to the cook.

"Last night after you-all went for that hike, I mooned around some myself. I saw a little farmhouse over that hill, and I think a couple of girls might try to get some milk for breakfast," suggested Jim, pointing over the brow of a slight grade.

"All right, Hester and I will go for it, Verny!" exclaimed Amy.

"Very well, girls; the rest of us will do what we can to help Jim. Breakfast will be all ready by the time you return, so don't dawdle on the way, will you?" replied the Captain.

"Take the big thermos bottle that will keep the milk cold all day, and bring the breakfast milk in this pail," suggested Julie, handing the girls both articles as she spoke.

Hester and Amy disappeared over the brow of the hill where Jim said the farm was located, but breakfast was ready and waiting a long time before a sight of the girls was had again.

Hester carried the pail very carefully, and Amy held the bottle, so it was evident that they had milk, but why should they seem to laugh so merrily over something, as they drew near the scouts?

"What do you think happened to us?" called Amy.

"You'll never guess – we got chased by a bull!" added Hester.

"Oh, never!" cried the scouts who had been waiting anxiously.

"Yes, sir! We heard a cow and knew there must be a farm," began Amy excitedly, but her companion interrupted her and said: "That wasn't a cow we heard, but the bellow of this bull!"

"Do tell us all about how you escaped," chorused the eager voices of many girls.

Every one was anxious to wait on the heroines, and after they had been served everything at one time, they began to munch and talk.

"Well, first we left here and thrashed through those bushes back there," said Hester, nodding her head towards the alder bushes, "to reach the place where we heard the cow – as we thought."

Here Hester choked over the egg, and Amy quickly took up the story: "And we were halfway across a pasture lot when Hester, who was first, yelled wildly and waved her arms. I looked up, 'cause I was watching where I walked, the lot was pawed up into such hummocks, and saw Hester racing for the low boughs of an apple-tree. Then I heard a thumping, and saw a big bull charging across the meadow, making straight for us!"

Amy gasped and needed a drink of water, then Hester continued the tale: "Oh, girls, it was thrilling! I managed to scramble up in the apple-tree, and turned to see what had become of Amy. There she was, sprinting like a Marathoner for the barbed-wire fence that enclosed the lot. She back-trailed over to it, and up over it she went, just like a swallow flies, but look at her stockings and skirt!"

Every one looked at Amy's apparel and sympathized with her, yet every scout wished she had had such an exciting time.

"Now they can win a badge for story-telling, can't they, Verny?" said Betty, glad for her two pals.

"And another one for mending," laughed Julie, vindictively.

"Poor Julie's awful sore about that mud," murmured Amy, winking an eye at the others.

Every one laughed, but the Captain said: "Go on and finish the yarn."

"Well, I left Hester in the tree – safety first, you know – with the bull standing under it, waiting for her, while I skirted the lot and reached the house. When I told the old lady how we happened to be in such a fix, she threw her gingham apron over her head and sat down on the doorstep to laugh.

"I was beginning to feel offended, when she glanced up. She understood, and said: 'Deary, that ole bull has to be helped to his stall every night after a day in the pastoor. He oughter been butchered years an' years ago, but you see he saved me from a wicked tramp one day, an' father sayed Bill had earned his life-pension fer that. So Bill's safe from the slaughter-house, but he sure is a nuisance these days. Why, this mad run of his'n will keep him wheezin' fer a hull week. Now come with me an' I'll show you how he's payin' the price fer actin' like a three-year-old!'"

"I followed the old lady to the fence, and there, sure enough! Bill was sprawled out under the tree, puffing for breath, but poor Hester sat in the branches wailing because she dared not come down while the bull was making such a snorting noise!"

The scouts laughed heartily at the graphic picture of Hester crying up in the tree, but the girl retorted, "Well, isn't 'Discretion the better part of valor'?"

"Of course it is! We'd have done the same thing," agreed Mrs. Vernon, still laughing at Amy's story. Then she suggested breaking camp.

After cleaning away all signs of camping, the scouts climbed into the cars which were soon speeding along. They were keen, now, for something new that they could write in their diaries, and many interesting things were seen and dilated upon as they rode past.

As the autos neared Schenectady, one of the scouts began singing; in a few moments all the girls were singing with her. But a hound ran out of the gate of a farmhouse and barked at the oncoming singers. Then the distracted dog sat down and lifted his snout high in the air. His dismal prolonged howl of protest at such singing effectually ended the song, and Julie called to the animal, "Wise doggy – to be able to tell singing from *singing*!"

The weather was all that could be desired, and the two cars were in fine shape for the run. After they left Amsterdam, where the large carpet-mills would have offered interesting entertainment had not the scouts a greater ambition in view, that of reaching camp – they voted to stop for no sightseeing along the way. So they kept along the road to Fonda. Here they left the railroad turnpike and went northward to Johnstown.

At this place Mrs. Vernon made an error in judgment. She should have gone westerly, through Rockwood, Lascelville, Oppenheim, and so on to Delgeville. But she took the northward road, which looked better and was more traveled. Not until she came to Gloversville did she realize the mistake. Then she stopped and questioned a policeman how to reach her destination. And he explained about the country road she must follow due west in order to reach Rockwood, where the state roads would be picked up again.

This advice was followed, and they traveled over the bad road until a crossroad was reached. There was no mention made of this spot on the road-map, and there was no signpost to direct a lost tourist. So the Captain said, "We'll take the right-hand turn, it looks best."

Further on, the road descended and ran close to a river. "Dear me, I hope we didn't take the wrong turn, anyway!" cried Mrs. Vernon. "That officer never told me about a crossroad."

"And it's going to pour, too. Just look at that black cloud," said Joan.

"It hasn't thundered yet," Hester said, trying to be cheerful.

At the same moment a flash satisfied every one that a shower was imminent, and Jim failed to relieve their fears when he said, "We don't want to get caught on this low land when it rains. The road is lower than the river and will soon be flooded over."

That spurred on the Captain, and she made the car fairly fly, in order to reach higher ground before the shower came. But the storm won out.

"I felt a drop of rain!" called Julie.

"So did I – two drops more!" seconded Ruth.

"We'd better stop to button down the rain-curtains, Captain," advised Jim.

"Maybe we can reach high ground soon, Jim!" called back Mrs. Vernon, still speeding along the marshy road.

A loud peal of thunder and inky clouds warned her, however, that this would be no trifling shower, so she stopped reluctantly for the curtains to be fastened down over the sides of the cars. The girls got out while the rain-curtains were sought in the box under the seat, and Jim removed numerous items before he reached them in the bottom.

"Gee! everything under the sun was piled in here!" growled he. And by the time he did get the covers out, the rain was falling hard.

While Jim and Mrs. Vernon secured the curtains on the buttons, the scouts transferred the pyramid of camping necessities back into the boxes under the seats. Then when all were snugly sheltered from the rain, the Captain proceeded to start her car. It failed to respond, however. She tried again, with no success. Then she turned and called to Jim.

"Something must be wrong, Jim!"

"Mebbe it's 'cause the wheels is sunk so deep in that soft mud," said he. "It's 'most up to the hubs."

"No – something is wrong with the engine," returned she.

"I'll slip on my oilskin and see," said Jim, finally.

"Oh, Jim! Don't slip on it – just *put* it on," giggled Julie, the irrepressible.

"Humph!" was all the reply she got at the stale joke.

"Jim, I'll help you," now offered Betty, willingly.

"You gals just sit still, will you?" growled Jim impatiently, as he jumped out into the muddy road.

The wind came tearing down the valley that lay between the mountains, driving shreds of storm-clouds before it. Gusts of rain dashed against Jim's face as he peered and poked about the stubborn engine, but still the obstinate machine refused to budge.

"I can't see a darn thing that's the matter with it!" shouted he, trying to make himself heard above the whistling of the wind.

"Better get back in your car until the worst is over," called back Mrs. Vernon.

So they all waited patiently for the rain to cease, but the storm grew worse, while the clouds seemed to fairly empty themselves right over the stalled cars. Suddenly Jim gave a frightened cry:

"Great Scott, Captain! The river's overflowin' her banks, and this road's gettin' under water!"

"Then we've just *got* to get out of this fix somehow!" wailed Mrs. Vernon, gazing helplessly around for aid.

"I'll try to work my car close up to the other and see if I can't push you ahead," suggested Jim, starting his engine as he spoke. But this idea failed to render the assistance they looked for.

"I think you need a good hard impact to send you out of that mud. The wheels are stuck," called Julie, who had been considering the plight.

"But how can we *get* an impact? Jim can't crush in the radiator on his car, you know! And the fender won't do it," said Ruth.

"Let a few of us get some of those stout rails from that fence and shove them under the back of the machine. The rest of the girls can tie a rope to the front and pull. Then when we give a signal, Jim can push with his machine, while Verny throws hers into high – something ought to happen with all that!" suggested Julie.

Anything seemed better than sitting helplessly while seeing the water slowly rising in the roadway. So the plan proposed by Julie was put into operation. Two long rails were shoved, one under each side of the back of the car, with two scouts ready to apply all their youthful muscle up on each rail. Four scouts stood in front holding to a rope, ready to pull. The Captain sat at the wheel ready to speed, and Jim waited in his car behind, ready to drive on.

"Now, when I yell 'go,' every one strain your muscles fit to crack. It's the only way we'll get out of this," ordered Julie.

"Tell us when you're going to say 'go!'" begged Ruth.

"I'll shout 'One, two, three – go' – then *go*!"

Julie braced herself, took a deep breath, and cried, "All ready – one, two, three – go!"

Four in front pulled with might and main. Mrs. Vernon's engine chugged ready to break. Jim almost pushed the radiator in, and the four scouts pushing on the rails – well, "they were not."

Jim was heard roaring unrestrainedly, while four girls in front were standing and staring as if at an apparition. All the time, the rain fell in a deluge, but Mrs. Vernon jumped out into the mud to see what had happened at the rear. Then she, too, gasped.

Both the rails were completely worm-eaten, but how should girls have known that? They were placed under the car at a dangerous angle for their future use in the fence, and when the good strong muscles of four scouts brought their weight upon the rails to lift the car somewhat, the timber quickly split up and precipitated the four boosters, face downward, in the mud.

"Oh, dear me! This is the last straw!" moaned Mrs. Vernon.

"No – the last rails!" sputtered Julie, trying to laugh.

"Girls – hold your faces up to the rain and it will wash the mud from your eyes!" yelled Judith, who waited on the running board for further developments.

She had hardly spoken when a swift shaft of blinding light and a deafening crack of thunder sent a panic into every one. They were stunned for a moment, and then such a howl as went up from nine lusty throats!

"We're struck!" yelled some.

"Oh, we're killed!" added others, but it took only a second after they had caught their breaths to pile, willy-nilly, into the cars, where they huddled until the fright had subsided.

Shortly after the lightning had struck a large tree further up the road, the rain suddenly stopped and the sun shone out as hot and bright as ever.

"My! I feel like Pollyanna would," sighed Julie. "'I'm glad, *glad*, glad' we weren't standing under that tree!"

"We can only die once," responded Ruth, sighing as she gazed down at the flooded road.

"Ruth thinks she'd rather die quickly, than by slow degrees in being choked in this mud," laughed Julie, catching Ruth's thought.

Every one laughed and that made them feel more cheerful. Then just back of them came the sound of horses' hoofs and a kindly voice called out, "Well, well, this is some plight you-all are in, eh?"

They turned and beheld a nice old man sitting astride one plow-horse and leading a second.

"Reckon you didn't know this was one of the worst roads in the county when it rains."

Mrs. Vernon explained how it came about that they were there, and the old man said, "Fortunately, I cut across that field in order to reach home. I was late and, as this is meeting night, I have to leave home earlier than usual. Now I can help you pull out, 'cause my team is pretty powerful."

He hitched his horses to the front of the stalled car, and it was soon pulled up on higher ground where Jim could crawl under and see what was wrong with the works.

"We are most grateful to you, sir, for your timely help," said Mrs. Vernon. "How much do we owe you for this great service?"

"I'm glad I could help, madam. I am the parson of the district, hereabouts, and I try to do good by the wayside as I walk this life-road."

"Then, if you will not accept a gift for yourself, you cannot refuse it for your flock. We will give to any needy one in your parish," said Mrs. Vernon, handing him a folded bill.

Being sent along the right road with the minister's directions and blessing, the cars soon reached Rockwood, and from there, followed the usual route to Delgeville. The highway now ended, and a pretty country road took its place as far as Salisbury, where a turnpike road began and continued as far as Middleville. From the latter town onward, the roads were indifferent or bad as far as Gravesville.

There were many interesting experiences for the scouts to write up in their books later on, such as running into a balky herd of cows and being threatened for damages by the farmer; holding their

breaths when Mrs. Vernon ran over a lot of broken glass sprinkled across the road – but the tires held and no damage was done; stopping to bargain for a string of fish that a little freckled-face boy had for sale; and last, but not least, just before reaching Gravesville, being warned by a girl of twelve of a masquerading constable, further up the road, who arrested more speeding drivers than any other constable in the county.

When asked why she showed the scouts this partiality, the girl said: "Because I'm going to be a scout myself, as soon as that new Manual gets here. I wrote fer it t'other day, and I've got five schoolgirls ready to start with me. Maw says she will ask the teacher to be our Captain."

Thereupon followed a good scout talk by Mrs. Vernon, the country girl listening with all her wits alert.

"How'd you know we were scouts?" asked Julie, curiously.

"By that pennant flyin' in front, of course!" retorted the girl.

As the scouts drove away, Mrs. Vernon said, "She'll make a first-class scout, because she uses her eyes and other faculties."

After leaving the town of Gravesville, the scouts took a short cut to Prospect, but the roads were steep and rough, and it was all the engines could do to mount the grades. Then the opposite down slopes were so steep and sudden that it was necessary to put on all brakes and shut off the engines.

One of these down grades had a sharp turn at the bottom, with a purling stream running under a rustic bridge immediately at the base of the mountain. On the other side of the bridge, the road rose abruptly up the side of another mountain. The descent was made nicely and the Captain's car crossed the bridge, but Jim's car stopped unexpectedly just as it reached the bridge at the foot of the mountain.

"Another case of push!" laughed Julie.

"All out!" ordered Jim.

"What now?" called Mrs. Vernon, as she also stopped her car to ask what was wrong.

"If only your car was behind, you could shove us across the bridge, but there isn't enough room in this trap to do anything."

"Every one will have to help, Jim; the girls can push and pull the car back to the grade, while you work the engine. Maybe it will start that way," suggested Mrs. Vernon, waving her passengers out to help the stranded car.

After half an hour's work, Jim suddenly called, "My! what a lot of cotton-heads we are! Here, Captain, just back up and give us a tow across the bridge – that's all!" At this simple remedy every one laughed.

The steep climb of the mountain was accomplished without trouble, and there the road wound back and forth like a serpent's trail. Rocks, weighing tons, overhung with lovely vines, jutted out from the sides of the cut-out road that edged the cliff. Again, mossy dells where maidenhair fern waved fragile fronds at the girls, nestled under giant groups of pines. The chorus of wild birds mingled with the subdued music of falling water, to the keen appreciation of the tourists who delighted in this impressive scene as only scouts can.

The cars continued slowly through this peaceful place, but Jim's engine suddenly stopped short again. He frowned and got out to examine it.

"Gee, Captain! the tank needs gas and no place at hand to buy the feed. What shall I do?"

"We didn't cross that other bridge until we came to it," giggled Julie, quickly.

"I suppose I've got to tow you along until we find gas, somewhere," said Mrs. Vernon. So the second car was harnessed to the leader and they started again.

In this manner they traveled until they came to a small settlement that boasted an "Emporium" where all the "latest styles and goods were sold." On the front porch of this store, in a low rocking-chair, sat the owner, a lady of doubtful years. She jumped up spryly when the cars stopped at the steps, and smiled invitingly.

"Do you sell gasoline?" asked Mrs. Vernon, politely.

"I guess I kin oblige you," replied the lady, going indoors.

Jim jumped out and began to unscrew the plug on the tank.

"Now who'd a thought we could get gas in this little shop?" declared Ruth, surprised.

"You never can tell! I s'pose she wants to make all she can in every way," added Hester.

Meantime the lady returned to the door and called out, "Won't you please step this way?"

Jim thought she had to fill a measure from some barrel in the back, so he went in. But the lady was searching diligently along a shelf of bottles until she saw the one she wanted.

"Here they be – I knew I had 'em somewhere. One's ten cents, and the other's a twenty-five cent bottle. But you have to take keer of fire, you know."

Jim scratched his head, as he said, "I'll take a five-gallon can, please, ma'am."

For a second, the old lady was amazed, but she rose to the occasion and showed herself a true business woman, "Oh, I'm sorry, I'm just out of that size to-day, but can't you come back to-morrow – I'll have it then?"

Jim laughed. "I need it for the tank. The car won't go on nor come back, unless I get some gas for it."

"Oh! I thought you wanted some to clean gloves, or shoes. That's the only kind I keep on hand."

"Maybe you can tell us where we can get a gallon or so," said Jim, trying hard to keep a straight face.

"If you kin wait until Jed gits back I kin send him to Prospeck Junction for a gallin. He can't carry five gallins, I fear."

Jim started out and the shopkeeper followed as she spoke. So Mrs. Vernon asked, "Where is Prospect Junction?"

"Jus' over yander, a bit of ways. It's quite a gay resort, I've hear'd Jed say, where they sells gas to riders what come through. But I hain't never gone there, 'cause I don't mingle with society. I am a church member and 'tends to my business." The lady tossed her head with a self-righteous air as she said the last words.

Jim said: "I'm sorry that four-ounce bottle wouldn't do, Missus." And the scouts bowed as they left her standing on the "stoop."

CHAPTER THREE

IN THE MOUNTAINS AT LAST

The scouts finally reached Old Forge, where they had been due a full day sooner. Mr. Gilroy was worried at their non-appearance and had telephoned to their homes to learn that they had left on time. Then he followed them along their route and at some places he heard they had stopped and gone again, and at others that they had not yet arrived. But the moment the girls saw him and heard his complaint, they laughed at his concern.

"Nice way to treat your adopted father – laugh at him, because he worried over his girls!" said he in pretended grievance.

"But what could possibly happen when we had Jim and Verny at the wheels?" asked Ruth.

"That's just it! With the Captain leading, I was sure you would be jailed for speeding, and would need me to bail you out," teased he.

"We needed baling out when we got in the river-flood, but not in jail!" laughed Julie.

"If we had dreamed you had a 'phone way up here, we would have called you to help us, that time," added Joan.

Then the story of the mud and flood had to be told, while Mr. Gilroy sat on the side-door of the car and directed the Captain which road to take to reach his bungalow.

"Did our outfits get here all right, Mr. Gilroy?" asked Ruth.

"Yes, and they have been down at your camp several days now," replied their host.

"How far is our camp from your bungalow, Mr. Gilroy?" asked Betty.

"Not very far – just a nice walk. Your camp is right on the shore of one lake, while my bungalow is on the shore of First Lake, one of the Fulton Chain, you know."

The scouts then learned that Mr. Gilroy's estate extended from First Lake, where his bungalow was built, across country to Little Moose Lake where their camp was to be. This was a distance of about three-quarters of a mile between the two places.

"We'll stop at the bungalow first and give you a good square meal after all your experiences; then we'll go on over to camp. When your baggage is all out of the cars, Jim and I will drive back to my garage where the machines can stand."

"Oh, Jim is going back home with Dad's car, to-morrow," said Ruth.

"And Verny is going to keep hers here for the summer," added Julie.

The cold luncheon had been waiting a long time, and when the scouts finally arrived they did justice to the viands. Then, every one being eager to see the new camp-site, they started for the Lake. Here everything was in order to receive the tenants. Three fine tents, fully equipped with every possible comfort for the campers, were waiting for the girls, and a smaller tent for the Captain.

"Oh, how wonderful! Why, this won't be like roughing it," declared several of the girls as they inspected their camp.

"Everything is ready but the fancy touches. You girls will have to add them as your experiences pile up," said Mr. Gilroy.

"What do you mean?" asked Julie.

"Oh, collections of butterflies, flower-prints, willow-work, and birchbark articles – all these are fancy touches."

It was late in the afternoon when the scouts arrived at the bungalow, and it was twilight before they had their baggage all unpacked and in their individual tents. Then when the cars were emptied and it was time to drive them back to the garage, Mr. Gilroy said:

"As this is your first night, and everything is strange, you'd better come back to the house for a light supper. Get your beds all ready to turn into, and then let everything else go until morning."

Mrs. Vernon approved of this plan, so they finished their tasks and jumped in the cars to drive back to the bungalow for the evening. Darkness crept into the woods and everything was silent as they reached the house.

While Jim followed the host to the garage with the cars, the scouts sat on the verandah and enjoyed the quiet of the woods. The stars now began to peep out of the deep blue that could be seen here and there through the trees, and the Captain reminded the girls:

"Now that we are here for the summer, you must resume your study of the stars. You dropped that, you know, when schoolwork took so much of your time."

"Most of us know all the stars by heart, Verny," said Betty.

"The names of them, yes, but how many of you can find them as they are placed in the sky?" returned Mrs. Vernon.

"I can show you where the Pole Star is. Look there!" replied Joan, running out on the grass to find the bright point of light.

"And I can find Great Bear and The Pointers," added Ruth, joining her friend on the grass.

The other scouts now jumped up from the verandah and ran to join the first two, so the Captain followed, also.

"I know Alcor, Mizor, and the Square of Pegasus," said Amy.

"That panlike group of stars is known as Andromeda," added Julie, not to be outdone by her chums. "And those three little stars are called The Kids. Off to the left of Perseus – oh, I forgot to say that Perseus is a group of stars at the end of the pan-handle, – well, to the left of them are the bright stars known as Capella."

"Bravo! you scouts are going to be marvelous astronomers some day," came the approving voice of Mr. Gilroy, as he joined them.

"I was just telling the girls they would have to take up the study of the heavens again," mentioned Mrs. Vernon.

"And we were showing off to let the Captain hear how much we know," laughed Julie.

"Who can find The Lady in the Chair or The Guards?" asked Mr. Gilroy of the scouts.

The girls eagerly sought for and described these groups, then their host asked for the Seven Sisters and Demon's Eye. When they had answered these, Ruth said:

"If the trees were not so thick I could show you Orion, Taurus, and lots more, like the Lion, the Sickle, Canis Major, etc."

"Hoh! Some of those – and the Clown, the Ox-Driver, the Southern Cross, and the Northern Cross – can't be seen at this time of year, Ruth," said Julie.

Ruth frowned at the correction, but Mr. Gilroy quickly calmed the troubled waters with praise for the girls.

"You scouts certainly know the stars better than the boys of Grey Fox Troop. I should like to have the two Troops have a match game about the stars, some time."

"Who are the Grey Fox boys, Mr. Gilroy?" asked Julie.

"Do you remember I told you, last summer, of some Boy Scouts who camped in my woods every year? Well, four of those boys are here now. The rest of the Troop are coming up in August, but these four have all summer to camp in. I'm going to introduce you, soon."

"Verny, why can't we see all the stars all the year?" now asked Ruth.

"Because the earth turns on its axis, you know, so that certain planets are out of sight for us, and are seen on the other side of the globe. Then when the earth turns fully around we see them again."

"And the Pole Star is reckoned to be the center of the star-sky for all the others to move about it. The Pole Star is always in the same fixed place, so we can always locate it. But not so with the other stars," added Mr. Gilroy.

"I wish some one would tell us a story about the stars," Hester now said.

"Who will tell one?" asked Mrs. Vernon.

"I know that Mizor and Alcor were used by the Turks in past days as a test for eyesight. Soldiers who could not sight those two stars were disqualified for fighting. But in these times I don't believe a little thing like bad eyes will hold up a Turk from fighting!" said Julie, comically.

Then Joan added: "The Pole Star and Ursa Major, or The Great Bear as it is also called, form a shape like a wagon; so in olden times it was called King Charles' Wain. Each star in this constellation is known by a Greek letter. The two stars 'a' and 'b' are called the 'Pointers' because they point to the Pole Star."

"Oh, I didn't mean lesson stuff, like this," complained Hester. "I meant a real live legend!"

"You tell one, Verny," begged Betty, sweetly.

"Mr. Gilroy is better able to do it. Besides he is the host and is supposed to entertain us," returned Mrs. Vernon, glancing at Mr. Gilroy, who was stretched out comfortably upon the short grass.

"Your host claims to be completely disabled for the time being, Captain. Pray proceed with the legend yourself," laughed Mr. Gilroy.

Then Mrs. Vernon said: "I never could see why Cassiopeia, or The Lady in the Chair, should be named that. To me, the stars look more like a tipped-over letter 'W' than a lady in a chair."

"Don't you know the story, Verny?" asked Julie, eagerly.

"You do, so why not tell us?" retorted the Captain.

"Oh, well, then, all right!" said Julie. So she began:

"Once there was an Ethiopian Queen, the wife of Cepheus, who was very proud of their only child, a daughter named Andromeda. They were always praising her and speaking of her beauty to every one, so that after a time folks who also had lovely daughters felt jealous of the princess.

"In the depths of the Inner Sea, which is now the Mediterranean, lived Old Nereus and a number of charming daughters. They heard of the Queen's bragging about Andromeda, and they made up their minds to stop it. So they got their father to help them.

"Then Nereus and the nymphs sent a flood of water over all the country of which Cepheus was king, and devastated the kingdom. This caused famine and pestilence, and in the wake of these awful plagues came a sea-monster in the form of a dragon. This fearful beast bellowed – "

At that moment a deep thrilling call from some creature close by in the forest-edge caused every one to jump, and they all huddled together. They turned and stared apprehensively at the darkness behind them, but Mr. Gilroy instantly whispered, "S-sh! Don't breathe, and you will see a sight worth watching for."

The moon now sailed from back of the cloud that had obscured it for a time, and its cold white light etched everything it touched. Again the strange whistling call sounded directly back of the group, and a crashing and tearing of underbrush ended with the sudden spring of a fine buck, that landed him out on the grass not twenty feet from the scouts.

At the same moment, a plaintive call came from the direction of Silver Falls, which was up on the mountainside in front of the bungalow. The buck lifted his gigantic antlers in the moonlight, and his sensitive snout sniffed angrily as he sensed the invaders of his range; but another imperative call from his mate at the Falls compelled him to leave these usurpers; so he wheeled gracefully and, with an answering call to let his doe know he was coming, trotted down the trail until he reached the stream that came from Silver Falls, and there he disappeared in the forest.

"What a wonderful sight!" breathed Mrs. Vernon, when the buck was gone.

The girls listened to the dying echoes of those pounding hoofs, and sighed. Mr. Gilroy sat up and spoke eagerly, "That is the first buck I've ever seen near my bungalow. There are deer in the Adirondacks, but they seldom come near a habitation. It is said that they feed in the barnyards in winter, looking for stray grain, but I am not here in winter, you see."

"How I would have loved to have had a snapshot of him," said Julie, sighing.

"You've all got it in your memory – the best place to frame a picture for all time," replied Mrs. Vernon.

"You know, girls, there is an old hunter's saying, that goes: 'A deer to welcome you on your first night will bring luck to you all that year,'" said Mr. Gilroy, as he turned to lead the way into the bungalow.

"Wait, Mr. Gilroy; Julie never finished her story. She broke off just where the beast bellowed – then came the buck!" said Joan.

"The deer finished the story better than we ever could," laughed the Captain, as she followed Mr. Gilroy.

"But, at least, tell us what happened to those Nerieds?" asked Betty, who wished to see the wicked punished.

So Mrs. Vernon had to end the story, although it was condensed in the telling. But Betty persisted, "You haven't told us yet what the Nerieds did when they found the wonderful Prince Perseus saved and married to the Princess."

Every one laughed, but Julie replied, "Why, like most jealous people, the Nerieds had to move away from town when every one found out how it all had happened!"

The "bite" they had before leaving for camp would have been classed as a first-class supper in the city restaurants, and then, when good-nights were being said, the host gave Jim a laden basket to carry for the scouts.

"You'll be glad of this in the morning, for breakfast. If you need anything else, run over here and get it from my man who cooks," explained Mr. Gilroy.

But next morning, the contents of that basket were found to be more than enough for any one breakfast. The fruit, cereal, biscuits, and ham to broil, were highly appreciated by the hungry girls. This was soon gone, and then Mrs. Vernon said they must buckle down to genuine camp life.

"I'd rather sleep out under the trees, Verny, when the weather is so fine," suggested Julie.

"So would we," agreed the other scouts, and the Captain said, "Well, we might make willow beds for out-of-doors, and keep the cots as they are."

"How do we know we can find any willows around here?" asked Ruth.

"I saw some early this morning when I was snooping about. I got up at dawn and left you girls sleeping, while I investigated the premises. Girls, the place is simply perfect for *anything* we might choose to do this summer," declared the Captain, enthusiastically.

"Tell us where the reeds are, and we will get them," said Betty.

"They grow about a spring not far from here. We must follow a wild-animal trail along the lake to reach the spot."

So the scouts each took an axe and knife and followed the guide to the willow-brook where the reeds grew. Mrs. Vernon showed the girls how to select the wands, and then began to cut down her own. She took about six dozen reeds as thick as a lead-pencil, and many smaller ones; these were bundled together, and then she was ready to start back to camp. Finally the girls were ready, also, and they trailed back.

"Now girls, each one must cut notches about three-fourths of an inch from the butt-ends of the reeds. Then peel the sticks carefully – do not crack or break them while doing it." Mrs. Vernon did hers as she advised.

"Now come with me, and select your posts for the beds. I take four young birch saplings for the bed-frame," announced Mrs. Vernon, as she chopped down the required birches, "and stout birches about four inches thick for my bedposts."

Each scout cut hers and then went back to the camp-ground to begin work on the Indian beds.

"Every one measure the birch saplings and have two of them seven feet long, and two shorter ones three or four feet long," instructed Mrs. Vernon. "Lop off all the twigs, and place the two long ones for sides, and the two short ones for top and bottom of the bed-frame."

"Now, this done, watch me carefully, girls. This is the important part of making the bed," advised the Captain.

Mrs. Vernon took a ball of heavy twine and doubled a long strand so that it was half-length. This was twisted into one strand, and a loop tied in the middle. Many of these strands were stretched across the frame at equal distances apart, until the entire frame had a warp across it.

"Now I'll weave in the reeds," said the Captain, taking one of the thin willows and weaving it in and out of the cords. At the loop, the rod was thrust through it to hold it centrally in place, then the weaving process went on until the end of the frame was reached.

The weaving of each reed was done the same way until the whole frame was crossed with willows held firmly in the middle by the loops in the cords.

"Next thing, girls, I will cut the posts as I need them. I want them about three feet high. One end of each post must be sharpened so it will go down into the ground." This was done and the four stout birch posts were driven firmly into the ground where Mrs. Vernon wanted her willow bed to stand.

"And next, I tie a loop of heavy cord, or rope, about the top of each post, in which I can hang my willow-frame." This was also done, and the scouts helped place the woven mat in position.

"Well, isn't that simple, when you know how!" said Julie.

"Everything is, my dear," laughed Mrs. Vernon.

"Your bed is too wide for me. I don't want one four feet wide," said Ruth.

"You can make it as wide, or as narrow, as you like. I think three feet is wide enough for each girl," returned the Captain. "But the best of these beds is, that when one is invited to visit, one can roll up the mat easily and carry it along to sleep on. They are very light and not cumbersome to roll and carry."

All that day was given to weaving the beds, and the scouts not only enjoyed the novel employment, but had great fun in joking each other over the work. About four o'clock that afternoon a shrill whistle was heard from the trail that ran to the bungalow and soon thereafter Mr. Gilroy was seen coming down towards camp.

"Hullo, there! I waited all morning for visitors, but at last decided to come and see if my tenants had abandoned the premises!" explained he, as he went over to the weavers to watch them.

"Now you understand why we couldn't visit," said Joan.

"I came over to ask how many of you have been fishing? And what did you catch?" said he.

"No, we haven't fished yet. We planned to try it the very moment we are through with these beds," replied Joan.

"Then perhaps you have not been near the lake-cove since you went hunting for willows this morning," remarked Mr. Gilroy.

"The cove? I saw two boats there early this morning," said the Captain.

"And now there are two canoes there, also," added Mr. Gilroy.

"Oh, really! But how did you manage to get them there – by paddling in from the lake?" asked Mrs. Vernon.

"No, I had them brought from my boathouse this morning. While Jim was here, I made use of him by having him help Hiram carry two canoes over to the boat-wagon, and then drive down here. Not a soul nor a sound was seen or heard about the camp, so I surmised you had all gone on a lark. Then we launched the canoes and tied them to a stump to surprise you when you should go for the boats. We never dreamed you could keep away from temptation so long as this."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.