

**THE BOY SCOUTS'
BADGE OF
COURAGE**

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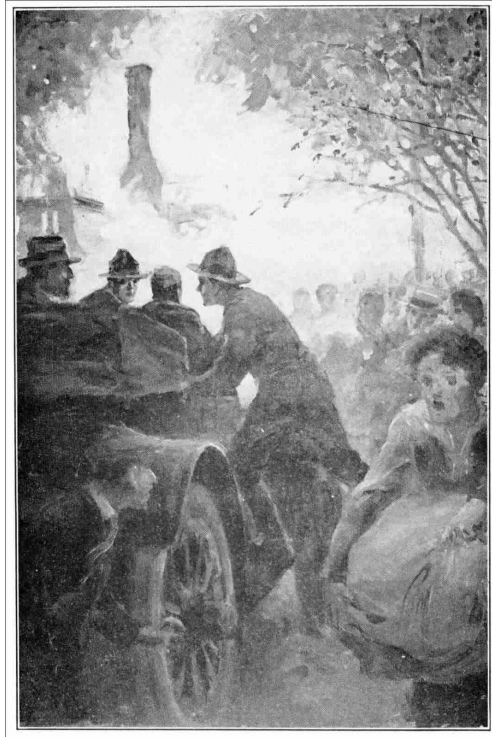
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THE BOY SCOUTS' BADGE OF COURAGE



“Careful how you step on that dynamite!” warned Rob.

Chapter I

Four Chums in Khaki

"We're nearly there, fellows!"

"Glad to know it, Sim. For one, I'm tired of this stuffy railroad car."

"That isn't all our trouble by a long shot, Andy Bowles. You must remember that two shavings of railway lunch-counter sandwiches don't go *very* far toward satisfying a growing boy's appetite."

"I thought we would soon hear that cry for help from Tubby. His mind seems to run along the eating groove most of the time. A *growing* boy, eh? If he keeps on expanding much more, he'll be as big as a hogshead, I reckon."

"Oh! well, one consolation is you'll all have to quit calling me Tubby, then. Say, we must be getting somewhere near that town of Wyoming,—how about it, Rob?"

There were four of them occupying seats that faced each other,—all wearing the well-known khaki suits that mark scouts pretty much the whole world over these modern days.

The very stout chap with the freckled, good-natured face was Tubby Hopkins. Sim Jeffords was of rather lean build, with a shrewd look in his keen eyes; Andy Bowles was the one whose cheeks every now and then expanded as though in imagination he might be practicing some new bugle call, for Andy had long

been recognized as the official “reveille” and “taps” manipulator of the troop; and last, but far from least, was Rob Blake, the determined leader of the Eagle Patrol, who sometimes acted also as assistant master to the Hampton Troop.

These four comrades, tried and true, came from Long Island, and they had been riding for some hours on a train heading up into the interior of New York State. Part of the Eagle Patrol had passed through rather remarkable adventures in various parts of our own country and abroad as well. Those who are making their acquaintance for the first time in these pages, and who would like to know more concerning their aims and ambitions, as well as some of the stirring things that came their way, are advised to secure recent volumes of this series, where they will find tales of many lively happenings well calculated to please them.

Lately, the boys of the Eagle Patrol had been concerned in the question of national preparedness, and in their role of scouts proved considerable help to Government officials who were wrestling with a number of serious problems.

The vacation season was wearing on after their return home from New Jersey, and things around Hampton had begun to assume their habitual mid-summer stagnation when Sim Jeffords broached an idea to the patrol leader that rather fascinated Rob.

It seemed that Sim had a Cousin Ralph who lived up in the State not far from the heart of the famous Adirondack region, where his father owned a large farm of hundreds of acres a few

miles from the bustling manufacturing town of—well, let us call it Wyoming, because for certain reasons it might not be wholly advisable to locate it positively.

This cousin appeared to have a “grouch,” as Sim called it, concerning the subject of Boy Scouts. He believed they were an overrated lot of boys who somehow managed to advertise themselves in the newspapers, but who, after all, could not begin to “hold a candle” to some outside fellows of practical experience.

Some of the correspondence between the cousins when shown to Rob amused him; and at the same time he could not help feeling just a little annoyed at the “jabs” which the said Ralph continued to give the movement.

More than once he had said he would like to know the Adirondack boy, because he believed he could manage to convert him and influence him to join a scout troop.

The more Rob heard about several activities on the part of Ralph Jeffords, the greater his interest grew. If the farm boy could show such surprising aptitude in Nature study and so wide a knowledge of the habits of wild animals as his interesting letters indicated, Rob felt sure he would make a most valuable addition to the ranks of the khaki-clad scouts.

Hence, when Sim came and read how his cousin had actually invited him to fetch several of his chums along up to the farm and see what a fellow who made no pretense to publicity could accomplish in several lines of outdoor work, Rob “fell” for the scheme instantly. This expedition was the result of his growing

desire to meet Ralph Jeffords on his own heath and convince him that scouts were not at all overrated, as he seemed to believe.

With this short but necessary digression, we can go back again to the four boys whose lively talk will doubtless explain many other things connected with their enterprise.

“Well,” Rob Blake observed in answer to Tubby’s question, “according to this railroad folder which I got hold of before leaving New York City, we are right now at a little way-station called Jupiter, and I figure that Wyoming lies just seven miles further along the line. At the rate we are going we should be there in ten or twelve minutes.”

“It ought to be a paying trip for us, I should say,” observed Andy, thoughtfully. “First of all there’s that stump-blowing business by the use of dynamite, which I’ve always wanted to see done. Ralph says they have cleared many acres in that way; and, besides, his father, being an advanced scientific farmer, is meaning to make use of dynamite to break up the soil. They say pulverizing it many feet down has resulted in wonderful crops of grain and garden sass.”

“For my part,” added Sim, “and I think I speak for Rob, I’m interested in what my cousin has been doing with his fur farm. You know, his father fenced in a hundred acres of his wildest land, and for a year or two now Ralph has been experimenting in raising black foxes for the market. He hasn’t told me a great deal about it, but what little I know has excited me a heap.”

"Then he's actually succeeded in raising litters of pups, has he?" asked Tubby.

"I understand he has succeeded more than fairly well," answered Sim, proudly, for it was his own cousin of whom they were speaking, bearing the family name of Jeffords, too, which counted for a lot with a boy. "Lately he's branched out some, and I believe he's not only started a skunk farm in a fenced-in corner of his 'preserves,' but is going to try raising mink and otter, something that has really never been done before."

"My stars! but that cousin of yours is ambitious!" gasped Tubby, though, not much given to energetic movements himself, could at least admire any one who showed a disposition that way. "The only thing I ever thought I'd like to raise in that fashion was frogs, because frogs, you know, have dandy shanks that taste just like spring chicken. I never could get enough of 'em when we camped out."

"Oh! maybe you will up at my cousin's place," said Sim, indifferently, "for he used to have a pond just *swarming* with husky bull-frogs as big as your hat. You'll have a jolly old time knocking 'em over and fixing 'em for all of us, Tubby."

"I agree to handle the job, and would like nothing better," snapped the stout boy, his face one broad grin of expectancy, as though an ambition he had cherished for many a moon was in a fair way of being realized at last; they could also see Tubby work his jaws as though his mouth fairly watered at the anticipation of the feasts in store.

A short time afterward the train was drawing close to Wyoming. Clouds of smoke told that there was considerable manufacturing done; and when finally they found themselves going into the station, Rob made up his mind that the mountain town was a pretty lively place. He wondered how it ever came that it had never had a scout troop started; and began to suspect there must be something of the feeling Ralph Jeffords had voiced impregnating the entire community.

To himself Rob was saying that it certainly looked as though these benighted people needed some sort of practical demonstration of the value to any community an efficient scout troop was always bound to be. He secretly hoped that before he and his comrades of the Eagle Patrol left that region an opportunity might arise whereby they could give these folks an object lesson calculated to bear fruit an hundred fold.

Nevertheless, little did Rob Blake suspect just then what a wonderful chance to prove their worth was destined to be offered to himself and three chums; but in good time all that will be set before the reader.

“There’s Ralph!” suddenly ejaculated Sim, as with their luggage in hand they prepared to leave the car platform, for the train had now stopped at the station.

A sturdily built young chap, whom Rob instantly liked at first sight, advanced toward them. If Ralph was a farmer’s son, he did not look very countrified; but, then, the fact of his father being well-to-do had enabled the boy to attend high school, and secure all the advantages that go with an education.

Sim grasped him by the hand, though immediately wincing under the pressure Ralph unconsciously put into his warm welcoming grip. In turn Sim introduced each of his three chums, who were also given a sample of country cordiality, Tubby rubbing his fat hand for several minutes afterwards.

“I’ve got the old one-horse shay handy here to carry you all up in, and your duffle ditto,” laughed Ralph, pointing to a rambling car that looked capable of holding half a dozen passengers, and a quantity of stuff besides. “She isn’t to be wholly relied on for stability, because she rocks like a ship in a storm; but that engine is all right, for I look after it myself.”

So Rob understood that besides his many other good qualities Ralph Jeffords must be something of a mechanic, which added to his interest in the tall country lad. He made up his mind on the spot that he was going to like Ralph; and more than ever determined he would win him around to have a much higher opinion of scouts in general, and those of the Eagle Patrol in particular, before he left Wyoming for Long Island again.

They had managed to stow away their suitcases and overcoats, as well as what fishing tackle they had thought to fetch along in hopes of having some sport while up there in the mountains, when something came to pass that for the moment made them forget all their various plans.

Tubby was just settling down in a corner of the rear seat, and trying to get his feet clear of the traps that littered the bottom, when he suddenly threw out one of his hands and pointed excitedly, as he cried shrilly:

“Oh! look, boys, look there at that horse acting crazy! One of the cinders from the engine must have fallen on his back and burned him. There, he’s broke loose and is coming this way like a house afire! Somebody get hold of the reins and stop him!”

Chapter II

“First Aid” Arouses Ralph’s Curiosity

It chanced that Ralph was the only one not already in the car, for he had stepped around to give the crank a toss, and turn over the engine for making a start.

As a rule Rob Blake was very quick in his movements, but by the time he had succeeded in getting his feet free from the various impediments not yet properly stowed away, and jumped to the ground, the lively country boy had actually sprung forward, seized the horse’s bridle, and by throwing his whole weight on the lines dragged him to a standstill.

It was splendidly done, and Rob felt that had Ralph only been a wearer of the khaki he would, because of that act, have been a candidate for a medal such as is given to scouts for saving human life.

The boy who was in the vehicle had unfortunately stood up the better to pull at the reins, as he shrieked to the runaway animal to stop; when the sudden halt came he therefore lost his footing, and took a severe header, landing on one shoulder, with his arm under him.

Rob shivered as he heard the crash, for he felt certain the poor chap would suffer some serious injury. Since Ralph seemed capable of mastering the excited horse, Rob turned toward the writhing boy on the ground.

“Give Ralph a hand, Andy!” he called out energetically, accustomed to handling sudden emergencies, and never for an instant losing his head. “You come with me, Sim. This boy has been badly hurt, I’m afraid.”

The little fellow was groaning terribly as they reached his side, and trying unsuccessfully to move himself.

“Oh! it’s broken! it’s broken! What will daddy say?” he kept moaning.

Sim saw that his face was ashen white, showing that he must be suffering great anguish. Rob immediately but gently turned him over. His right arm sagged in a suspicious manner and told the story.

“Is it as bad as that, Rob?” asked Sim, in genuine pity for the poor fellow.

Already the patrol leader was hastily examining, but it did not take him long to understand what had happened.



The patrol leader was hastily examining the little fellow's arm.

"Yes, he's fractured both bones in the lower arm; but in a fairly decent place between the elbow and wrist. Some one must run for a doctor in a hurry."

"I'll go," said Ralph who had by now joined them, leaving Andy to fasten the still quivering horse to a hitching post; "because I know just where to find Doc Slimmons. Besides, I can get there quicker by using the car."

He jumped over and quickly had the engine humming like mad. Meanwhile, Tubby had managed to land, and when the car shot away Ralph was the only occupant.

Luckily enough, he actually met the doctor in his own little touring car, so that he was back again before five minutes had passed. By that time quite a crowd had gathered. Sim and Andy and Tubby were employed in forcing the people to keep back, and this they did all the better because they had long been accustomed to handling excited crowds consumed either by a morbid curiosity, or by fear as in the case of a panic.

Doctor Slimmons asked a few questions. He seemed to be impressed with the fact that Rob had known just how to act.

“You say that his left shoulder was also out of place, and that you pulled the bone into the socket again, my boy? Good for you. That was the wisest thing to be done under the circumstances. I believe now that if there was no doctor within reach you would have known just how to go about handling this broken arm. You see, I happen to be acquainted with some of the doings of you scouts, because I served as scout master to a troop in Albany before coming up here to take a practice.”

“We have done such things before, Doctor,” said Rob, modestly, “and with a fair measure of success. This poor boy is suffering terribly, and I hope you get him home soon.”

“Would you like to use my car for the job, Doctor?” asked Ralph, who had listened to what was said with a question in his eyes, though he knew that was no time to ask what was in his mind.

“No, if you will assist me in getting him in my car, I can manage very well; thank you just the same, Ralph. So you stopped the runaway horse, did you; well, it was just what I would have expected from you. Let me say it would give me a great deal of satisfaction personally if khaki suits were more commonly seen on the streets of Wyoming, where there seems to be a queer feeling against the movement. There, lift gently, boys; now hold him until I can get in and fix him comfortably. I’ve given him something to keep him from fainting, and to deaden the pain as well. Before a great while I’ll have the arm set in plaster. Thank you all for your assistance,” and with that he started off, not with a rush, but in a way calculated to save his young patient as much shock as possible.

“Well, that was a sudden affair, all told,” remarked Tubby, who had been greatly exercised because of the white face of the injured boy, since he could understand what agony of mind and body the victim must be suffering. “Shall we leave the horse and vehicle here, Ralph?”

“Oh! sure,” the other replied; “the boy’s father will come and claim his property. I only hope he doesn’t blame the kid, because it really wasn’t his fault. I reckon a red-hot cinder must have fallen on his back, and stuck there. What was that I heard the Doctor say about you setting the cub’s left arm that had been dislocated—was that a fact?”

“Oh! yes, but that was a simple job,” remarked Rob, smiling at the decided interest the other seemed to show in the incident.

“We’ve got a heap more important things to our credit than that, let me tell you, Ralph,” Sim hastened to boast, when he

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