

**The Rambler Club's  
Motor Car**

**BY W. CRISPIN SHEPPARD**

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## The Rambler Club's motor car



**A CHORUS OF GOOD-BYES**

# Introduction

THE various adventures which have befallen Bob Somers and his fellow members of the club which the boys formed at Kingswood, Wisconsin, are related in "The Rambler Club Afloat," "The Rambler Club's Winter Camp," "The Rambler Club in the Mountains," "The Rambler Club on Circle T Ranch," "The Rambler Club among the Lumberjacks," "The Rambler Club's Gold Mine," "The Rambler Club's Aeroplane" and "The Rambler Club's House-Boat."

Bob Somers, Dave Brandon and Tom Clifton, three members of the club, have reached Chicago, homeward bound after a trip up the Hudson. The characters of the boys are widely different. Bob Somers is strong and athletic, while stout Dave Brandon, inclined to take his ease on all possible occasions, can be remarkably active when circumstances demand. Tom Clifton, a trifle self-conscious, and sometimes allowing his enthusiasm to carry him away, is really not so vain as many think.

Dave Brandon, poet and historian of the club, who is chronicling the various incidents and adventures that befall them, feels that their present motor car trip will add but little to his book. A series of unlooked-for events, however, quite reverse this idea.

In the next book, "The Rambler Club's Ball Nine," is told the story of certain incidents at the Kingswood high school. Several of the best players have graduated, and in their attempts to

reorganize the team the Ramblers find themselves involved in a stormy and exciting struggle.

W. CRISPIN SHEPPARD.

# **The Rambler Club's Motor Car**

# CHAPTER I

## OFF TO WISCONSIN

ON the steps of a house on Michigan Avenue, Chicago, not far from Thirtieth Street, Victor Collins stood gazing up and down the wide thoroughfare. There was an expression in his eyes which seemed to indicate an earnest and expectant state of mind.

The steps belonged to a fine mansion with handsome columns on either side of the entrance and an ornate balcony above. Everything suggested that the neighborhood was the home of wealth and aristocracy. Even the lad on the steps fitted perfectly into the picture. His rather small, slight figure was dressed in a natty brown suit, while a cap—a very large checkered cap—rested jauntily on his neatly brushed hair. Victor Collins' features were well proportioned, although the curves were rather too dainty, perhaps, to suit the idea of some critical lads.

Victor was becoming impatient. Impatience was one of his principal characteristics. Waiting is tedious. So Victor tilted his cap far back, the process revealing two frowning lines on his forehead which, considering his age, should never have existed.

Fortunately for the lad's peace of mind, however, the vigorous honk, honk of a motor car, rising above all other sounds in the street, suddenly caused his gaze to become centered upon the approaching machine.



“Well, thank goodness, here they are at last!” he exclaimed, joyfully.

Running down the steps he reached the curb just as a big touring car swung up alongside and came to a stop.

“All ready, Victor?” called the chauffeur, a broad-shouldered, healthy-looking lad, leaping to the ground.

There was no answer, because at the same instant three other boys, with much noise and laughter, began climbing out.

The youngest was very tall and thin, and this was accentuated by the stoutness of a broadly smiling lad who stood close beside him. The fourth member of the group, a slender, sandy-haired boy, appeared to be about sixteen. His broad forehead and delicately chiseled features suggested fine intellect.

The first three, Bob Somers, Tom Clifton and Dave Brandon, were members of the Rambler Club, who, having made a house-boat trip up the Hudson, had reached Chicago en route to Wisconsin. Charlie Blake, their companion, a classmate, often referred to as the “grind,” on account of his studious habits, was on a visit to his friend, Victor Collins.

It naturally followed that the Ramblers, happening to be in Chicago at the same time, received an invitation to visit the Collins mansion. And it also followed that, as the Ramblers were going to have the use of a seven passenger touring car, Victor Collins was more than pleased to meet them.

Mr. Somers, Bob’s father, having motored to Chicago on business, returned by train, leaving the car at a garage, so that

the boys might use it for the remainder of the journey to Kingswood, Wisconsin, their home.

When Victor Collins learned of this intention he instantly announced a determination to go with the crowd as far as Kenosha.

“You see,” he explained to Bob Somers, “my Uncle Ralph lives there; and he owns the dandiest motor yacht your eyes ever looked upon. He’s invited me to take a trip to Milwaukee. Talk about sport!”

So the morning had come when Victor’s anticipations were about to be realized.

“You’re all as brown as a bunch of street cleaners,” he remarked, after salutations had been exchanged. “I don’t believe that sun-tinting will ever wear off, either. Hello, Hannibal, hello!”

He turned and faced the house.

A very dignified colored man, wearing an immaculately clean apron, had opened the door and was standing with a large suit case in his hand.

“Bring it down and chuck it into the car,” commanded Victor.

“An awful lot of stuff for a short trip,” remarked Tom. “You ought to throw out half.”

“Fade away,” retorted Victor. “There’s another one coming.”

“Mercy!” snickered Tom. “Why don’t you bring a department store along?”

Hannibal made short work of depositing the heavy suit cases in the tonneau. Then, grinning broadly, he drew forth a letter and handed it to Charlie Blake.

"It am just come, suh," he explained.

"The handwriting spells Kirk Talbot's name as loud as those checks on Victor's cap, fellows," cried Blake.

"Kirk Talbot?" queried Tom, interestedly. "We met Kirk often on one of our trips. Remember, Bob?"

Bob did, and smiled.

"I'm sorry that he and Nat Wingate won't be back in the school this term," he remarked. "By the way, Dave, we'll have to hustle to catch up with our studies."

"Don't mention it, Bob. Just think of how the doors of that school are yawning for us even now."

"They'll have to yawn a mighty big, wide yawn for you," said Victor.

"Go ahead, Charlie, read that letter out loud," cried Tom.

Blake was soon smiling broadly.

"Kirk has a few interesting knocks to hand out, Bob," he chuckled. "Just listen:

"DEAR CHARLIE:—

"Your last effusion is lying on my desk. So you are actually going to meet Bob Somers and his chums! Say, don't those

chaps manage to have the finest time ever, with their aeroplanes, house-boats, automobiles and a dash of cowboy life in between!

“And you are going to motor back to Kingswood with them! That’s great.

“But I’ve got a bit of news which ought to make Bob Somers sit up and take notice. Nat Wingate and I have formed a football team. Yes, it’s true. There’s a lot of good material going to waste here in town. And the high school team has had its own way so long it’s time somebody took them down a peg. And though we really hate to do it those chaps are in for the worst drubbing of their career, and we’re even talking about a ball nine next spring.”

“Are we going to stay here all day?” grumbled Victor.

“Just a few moments, Vic,” laughed Charlie, resuming:

“Now that Nat Wingate has gone those high school chaps are like an army without a general.”

“Huh!” remarked Tom, frowning slightly.

“Now, Charlie, here’s what Nat and I think. Bob Somers and his Rambler crowd may be pretty good at bowling over grizzlies, collecting panther skins, or busting bronchos, but when it comes to either football or baseball——”

“Well, I like that!” broke in Tom indignantly.

“Prepare yourself for the worst,” laughed Charlie. “Listen to this:

“I guess they are simply out of the running?”

“Did you ever, Bob Somers!” cried Tom. “The nerve of him!”

“Oh, don’t worry. I guess the high school eleven can take care of any crowd he brings,” said Bob.

“There are some pretty good baseball players, though, in Kingswood,” said Tom. “I guess it’s up to us to take hold next spring and put a little ginger into our crowd.”

“You haven’t quite the shape for a ball player, Clifton,” remarked Victor, with a critical stare.

“Humph!” sniffed Tom.

“For goodness’ sake, finish that letter, Blake,” continued Victor, with a grin.

“I hear that the Kingswood High has a chance to get an athletic field,” read Charlie. “Mr. Rupert Barry owns a large plot of ground which ought to make a dandy ball park. But, so far, it is only a rumor, and maybe a silly one, at that. You would think so if you saw some of the playing the K. H. S. has done recently.

“Tell Bob Somers what I said. Good-bye and good luck.

“Your old chum,  
“KIRK.”

“A nice long letter,” drawled Dave.

“Is that all you have to say about it?” demanded Tom.

“Well, Tom,” said Dave, slowly, “your suggestion needs consideration.”

“You haven’t quite the shape for a ball player either, Brandon,” said Victor.

“Goodness—Dave’s turn now!” snickered Tom. “What kind of a figure must a ball tosser have, anyway?”

“Somers is about right,” answered Victor, calmly. “But a chap that is either all bones or all fat won’t do.”

“We’ll show you some day,” snapped Tom, hotly.

Baseball was a rather sore subject with Charlie Blake. He had tried it the season before, but lack of confidence in himself speedily caused him to drop out of the game.

Some of the boys who were not of a very considerate nature concluded that Charlie had a yellow streak, and, at this point, Bob Somers earned Blake’s everlasting gratitude by sticking manfully to him.

“Say,” remarked the latter, rather dolefully, “I’m sorry I didn’t make good on the nine last year. I certainly tried hard enough.”

“Maybe you didn’t have the right kind of a figure,” said Tom, with tremendous sarcasm.

“A nice thing to waste all this time,” grunted Victor. “We ought to be burning up some of those country roads.”

“That’s right,” laughed Bob Somers. “Pile in, fellows.”

His eyes sparkled as they ran over the graceful lines of the big touring machine. It was finished in a deep, rich red, relieved by touches of darker color. Polished lamps, steering gear and levers, in places, shot back the rays of the early morning sun.

It was something to feel that they were actually in possession of such a magnificent car—theirs to command, theirs to take them where they willed, and theirs to defy distance, time, and railroads.

Mrs. Collins was looking out of a second story window.

An instant later, Victor, from his place on the rear cushion, shouted:

“Good-bye, mother!”

“Have you all those warm wraps and the umbrella I told you to take?” she called.

“Yes, mother!”

“And that bottle of beef tea, and your raincoat?”

“Yes, mother!”

“And will you be sure to use the cough medicine in case you catch cold?”

“Yes, mother!”

“Well, do be careful, Victor. And don’t fail to send a card home this afternoon.”

Victor promised, his face glowing with anticipation.

“We are going to have a ripping time, mother!” he shouted.  
“Hooray! Let her whizz, Somers!”



## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST LAP

THE crisp staccato notes of the motor suddenly drowned the sound of his voice. From the exhaust poured a bluish haze of gasoline vapor. The car apparently became vibrant with life and energy. Then, as the rapid-fire roar quickly lessened to a low musical drone, Bob Somers threw in the clutch.

In the midst of a chorus of good-byes, the motor car began to glide smoothly away, and, upon looking back, the boys saw the lady at the window waving her handkerchief.

“Oh, isn’t this just stunning!” cried Victor. “Hit it up, Somers.”

Row after row of residences seemed to be drawn swiftly toward them and sent slipping behind. At each street crossing Bob slowed up, allowing the boys momentary views of Lake Michigan, only a short distance away.

The few vehicles and pedestrians about appeared as mere crawling things whenever the high-powered car leaped forward in obedience to the summons of its master’s hand.

Victor Collins experienced a delightful sense of ease and comfort as he watched the passing show with all the zest and interest that novelty often brings.

“Go it, Somers, go it!” he urged. “Whoop it up like sixty!”

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