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Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
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Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil  
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# **Boy Scouts in Mexico or on Guard with Uncle Sam**

G. Harvey (George Harvey) Ralphson

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**BOY SCOUTS IN MEXICO**

**Or On Guard with Uncle Sam**

**By:**

**Scout Master, G. Harvey Ralphson**



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## DEDICATION.

This book is dedicated to the Boys and Girls of America, in the fond hope that herein they will find pleasure, instruction and inspiration; that they may increase and grow in usefulness, self-reliance, patriotism and unselfishness, and ever become fonder and fonder of their country and its institutions, of Nature and her ways, is the cherished hope and wish of the author. G. Harvey Ralphson, Scout Master



**BOY SCOUTS IN MEXICO;  
OR, ON GUARD WITH UNCLE SAM.**

**CHAPTER I.**

**PLANNING A VACATION.**

"After all, it is what's in a fellow's head, and not what's in his pocket, that counts in the long run."

"That's true enough! At least it proved so in our case. That time in the South we had nothing worth mentioning in our pockets, and yet we had the time of our lives."

"I don't think you ever told us about that."

"That was the time we went broke at Nashville, Tennessee. We missed our checks, in some unaccountable way, yet we had our heads with us, and we rode the Cumberland and Ohio rivers down to the Mississippi at Cairo, in a houseboat of our own construction."

The speaker, George Fremont, a slender boy of seventeen, with spirited black eyes and a resolute face, sat back in his chair and laughed at the memory of that impecunious time, while the others gathered closer about him.

Fremont was ostensibly in the employ of James Cameron, the wealthy speculator, but was regarded by that worthy gentleman as an adopted son rather than merely as a worker in his office force. Seven years before, Mr. Cameron had become interested in the bright-faced newsboy, and had taken him into his own home, where he had since been treated as a member of the family.

"Went broke in the South, did you?" asked one of the group gathered before an open grate fire in the luxuriously furnished clubroom of the Black Bear Patrol, in the upper portion of a handsome up-

town residence, in the city of New York. "Go on and tell us about it! What's the matter with the Tennessee river, or the Rio Grande?"

"If you had no money, how did you get your houseboat?" asked another member of the group. "Houseboats don't grow on bushes down there, do they?"

"Oh, we had a little money," George Fremont replied, "but not enough to take us to Chicago in Pullman coaches. The joint purse was somewhere about \$10. We built the houseboat ourselves, of course."

"Must have been a strange experience, going broke like that!" one of the others said. "Hurry up and tell us about it! I believe it does a fellow good, once in a while, to get where he's got to hustle for himself or go hungry!" he added, glancing at the others for appreciation of the sentiment.

"I suppose it does seem funny for some other fellow to be broke in a desolate land," said another voice, "but it isn't so funny right there on the spot. Little Old New York looked a long way off when we were in Nashville!"

The speaker, a boy of sixteen, short, and heavily built, left a window from which he had been looking out on a wild March night and joined the group before the fire. This was Frank Shaw, familiarly known to his friends of the Black Bear Patrol, Boy Scouts of America, as "Fatty" Shaw. He was the only son of a wealthy newspaper owner of the big city, and in training to succeed his father in the editorial chair.

"So, 'Fatty' was there!" exclaimed one of the group. "How did you ever get him into a houseboat? Must have been a big one!"

"Yes, Frank was there," Fremont replied, with a friendly glance at young Shaw. "His father sent him along to report the expedition."

"I haven't seen any book about it!" broke in another.

"Frank wrote four postal cards and nine letters," laughed Fremont. "The cards were descriptive of the scenery, and the letters asked for more money."

"Why can't we get up a trip down the Rio Grande this spring?" was asked. "The soldiers are on the border, and it would be sporty. We can stand guard with Uncle Sam."

"I want to know how Fremont got his houseboat," said one of the lads. "Perhaps we can get one in the same way. It would be fun to build a boat. Anyhow, I'm for the Rio Grande trip this spring. It would be glorious."

"We might build the boat up in New Mexico," said the other, "and drop down to the Gulf. That is, I guess we could. The Rio Grande is shallow, and large boats run only a short distance up the river, but we might make it with a small one."

"Let Fremont tell how he built his boat and got his provisions."

"Well," Fremont began, "we were standing on the high bridge at Nashville, one day, when Frank Shaw brought out the brilliant thought. He was doing a thinking part just then, for there was a fine chance of our getting good and hungry before our checks got to us."

"Then he was thinking, all right!" a boy laughed.

"Frank explained," George continued, "that the Cumberland river had been placed in the scenery for the sole purpose of providing transportation for us to the Mississippi. Then he went on and told how we could build a flat-boat with a cabin on it and beat the railroads out of our fare to Cairo. So we counted our money, right there, on the bridge, and started for a lumber yard."

"It was a sporty notion, all right! Just you wait until we get a houseboat into the dirty waters of the Rio Grande!"

"When we got the lumber, we all turned to and built the boat. We didn't know much about boat-building, but we used what few brains we had and got the boards together in pretty good shape, considering. Boy Scouts can do almost anything now, since they're learning how to help themselves. There isn't a boy in the room who can't build a fire with sticks and cook a good meal on it. Also, we'll show, directly, that we can build a houseboat on the Rio Grande."

"If we are as slow at building the boat as we are in getting this story out of you, we won't get started toward the Gulf of Mexico until cold weather next fall."

"We bought two pine planks sixteen feet long," Fremont went on, with a smile at the impatience of the boys, "a foot wide, and two inches thick. We sloped the end so the boat would be scow-shaped, and bought matched flooring for the bottom. We put tar into all the seams, joints and grooves to keep the water out. Then we bought half-inch boards and built a cabin at the back end. That never leaked, either. The boat was sixteen feet long and six feet wide, and the bulliest craft that ever went anywhere. When we got to Cairo we sold it for \$6, and that helped some."

"Tell us about your eatings. We'll have to cook when we get down to the Rio Grande. Where did you get your cook stove?"

"We nailed a piece of sheet-iron on the prowboard," laughed Fremont, "and put the bottom section of an old-fashioned coal stove on that. The hole where the magazine used to fit in made a place for the frying pan, and the open doors in front, where the ashpan used to be, took in the wood we collected along the river. Cook! We could cook anything there."

"What about the sleepings?" was asked.

"That was easy. We bought an old bedtick and stuffed it with corn husks, then a pair of back-number bed-springs, which we put on the floor of the cabin. Sleep! We used to tie up nights and sleep from nine o'clock until sunrise.

"With the money we had left we bought bacon, eggs, corn-meal, flour, butter and coffee. There wasn't much of it, because we had little money left, but we thought we might get fish on the way down. We never got one. They wouldn't bite. Still, we had all we needed to eat, and found our checks at Cairo. It took us eight days to float to the Mississippi. We were told at Nashville that we would spill out on the rapids, that river pirates would rob us, and that the big boats would run us down or tip us over, but we never had any trouble at all. We'll know better than to listen to such talk when we set afloat on the Rio Grande this spring."

"It was better than walking," said Frank.

"Frank was frisky as a young colt all the way down," Fremont added. "There are little trading places all along the river banks, kept mostly by farmers. When you want to buy anything you ring a bell

left in view for that purpose, and the proprietor comes out of the field and waits on you. Frank wanted a record of being the prize bell-ringer, and once he got to the boat just a quarter of an inch ahead of a bulldog with red eyes and bowlegs.

"He holds the world's record for speed," Fremont continued, with a friendly glance at Frank. "The faster he runs the whiter he gets, through fear, and he left white streaks behind him all along the Cumberland river. Now, how many of you boys are ready for a trip down the Rio Grande, and, possibly, over into Mexico?"

Every boy in the room shouted approval of the plan, and Frank said he would go as war correspondent.

"It will be exciting, with the soldiers on the border," Frank said, "and I may make a hit as special news writer."

All was now excitement in the room, the story of the trip down to the Mississippi having stirred the lads' love of out-of-door adventure to the sizzling point. They capered about the handsome room in a most undignified manner, and counted the days that would elapse before they could be on their way.

The club-room was in the residence of Henry Bosworth, whose son, Jack, was one of the liveliest members of the Black Bear Patrol. The walls of the apartment were hung with guns, paddles, bows, arrows, foils, boxing-gloves, and such trophies as the members of the patrol had been able to bring from field and forest. Above the door was a red shield, nearly a yard in diameter, from the raised center of which a Black Bear pointed an inquisitive nose. The boys were all proud of their black bear badge, especially as no Boy Scout patrol was so well known in New York for the character and athletic standing of its members.

On this stormy March night—one long to be remembered by every member of the party—there were only five members of the Black Bear Patrol present. These were Harry Stevens, son of a manufacturer of automobiles; Glen Howard, son of a well-known board of trade man; Jack Bosworth, son of a leading attorney; George Fremont, adopted son of James Cameron; and Frank Shaw, son of a newspaper owner.

They had been planning a trip to the South all winter, and now, as has been said, the mention of the journey down the Cumberland and Ohio rivers to the Mississippi had so fired their enthusiasm for the great out-of-doors that they were ready to start at short notice. They took down maps and hunted up books descriptive of Mexico, and so busied themselves with the details of the proposed trip that it was after eleven when their minds came back to the common things of life.

"Well," Harry Stevens said, then, "I've got to go home, but I'll be here to-morrow night to talk it over. As Glen says, the Rio Grande del Norte is a funny kind of a stream, like all the waterways in that section of the country, bottom full of sand, and all that, but I presume we can float a houseboat on it."

"Of course we can," Glen put in. "It doesn't take much water to run a houseboat. If we get stuck, you can wire your father to send a motor car down after us."

"He would do it, all right," replied Harry. "We'll take an auto trip across the continent, some day. Good night, fellows."

"I must go right now," George Fremont said. "Mr. Cameron is at the office, working over the Tolford estate papers, and he asked me to call at the rooms and go home with him. He's always nervous when working over that case. The heirs are troublesome, and threatening, I guess."

Frank Shaw walked with George to the nearest corner, where the latter decided to wait for a taxicab. The night had cleared, but the wind off the Bay was still strong and cold.

"I've a notion to ride down to the office with you," Frank said, as they waited. "You could leave me at home on the way up."

"I wish you would," Fremont said. "Skyscrapers are uncanny after dark, and the elevator will not be running. Mr. Cameron will be glad to see you. Come on!"

Frank hesitated a minute, and then decided to go on home, so the boys shook hands and parted for the night. Many and many a time after that night they both had good cause to remember how different the immediate future of one of their number would have been

had Frank obeyed his first impulse and gone to the Cameron building with his friend.

When, at last, Fremont was whirled up to the front of the Cameron building he saw that there were lights in the Cameron suite. Believing that his benefactor would be there at his work, Fremont let himself in at the big door with a key and started up the long climb to the sixth floor.

The vacant corridors, as he passed them one by one, seemed to him to be strangely still. Even the people employed at night to clean the halls and offices were not in sight. The boy started suddenly half a dozen times on the way up, started involuntarily, as if some uncanny thing were spying out upon him from the shadows.

Then he came to the Cameron suite and thrust his key into the lock of the door. He had been told that he would find the door locked from the inside. Then, his premonition of approaching evil by no means cast aside, he pushed the door open and looked in upon a sight he was by no means prepared to see.



## CHAPTER II.

### A MEMBER OF THE WOLF PATROL.

When Fremont opened the door of the Cameron suite, facing the Great White Way, he saw that the room before him was dark and in disorder. The place was dimly illuminated from the high-lights on Broadway, and the noises of the street came stridently up, still, there seemed to the boy to be a shadowy and brooding hush over the place.

Remembering his subconscious impressions of some indefinable evil at hand, the boy shivered with a strange dread as he switched on the electrics, half afraid of what they might reveal. Why was the room so dark and silent? The lights had been burning when he looked up from below, and he had not met Mr. Cameron on his way up. Where was the man he had come to meet? What evil had befallen him?

At the left of the apartment, from which two others opened, to right and left, was a small safe, used privately by Mr. Cameron. Its usual place was against the wall, but it had been wheeled about so that it fronted the windows. The door was open, and, although no violence seemed to have been used, Fremont saw that the interior was in a mess, papers and books being scattered about in confusion.

At the right of the room, and near the doorway opening into the north room, stood a large flat-topped desk, most of the drawers of which were now open. One of the drawers lay on its side on the floor, and was empty. The articles on the desk's top gave evidence of rough handling. Papers appeared to be dripping from filecases, and a black pool of ink lay on the shining surface of the desk.

A swivel-chair which had stood in front of the desk was overturned, and its back now rested on the rug while its polished castors stuck up in the air. At first glance, there seemed to be no human being in the suite save the frightened boy.

With his mind filled with thoughts of robbery, George was about to rush out into the corridor and summon assistance, when a slight

sound coming from the north room attracted his attention. He hastened thither, and was soon bending over an office couch upon which lay a still figure.

There was no longer doubt in the mind of the boy as to what had taken place there. Mr. Cameron had been attacked and the suite ransacked. The boy recalled the fact that the rooms had been lighted from within when he stood on the pavement, and wondered if it would not be possible, by acting promptly, to capture the assassin, as he must still be in the building, possibly hiding in some of the dark corners.

First, however, it was necessary that the injured man should receive medical help. Fremont saw a wound on the head, probably dealt with some blunt instrument, and then moved toward the telephone in the outer room. As he did so the corridor door was opened and a boy of perhaps fifteen years looked in. When the intruder saw that Fremont was observing him, he advanced to the connecting doorway.

For quite a minute the boys, standing within a yard of each other, remained silent. Fremont would have spoken, but the accusing look on the face of the other stopped him. The intruder glanced keenly about the two rooms which lay under his gaze and finally rested on the figure on the leather office couch. Then, while Fremont watched him curiously, he went back to the corridor door and stood against it.

"You've got your nerve!" he said, then. "You're nervy, but you ain't got good sense, doin' a think like that with the shades up, the lights on, an' the door unlocked. What did you go an' do it for?"

The sinister meaning of the words took form in the mind of the boy instantly. For the first time he realized that he would be accused of the crime, and that circumstances would be against him. If Mr. Cameron should never recover sufficiently to give a true account of what had taken place, he would be arrested and locked up as the guilty one.

If his benefactor should die without regaining consciousness, he might even be sent to the electric chair, and always his name would be mentioned with horror. While these thoughts were passing