

The
CURLYTOPS
IN A
SUMMER
CAMP

■
HOWARD R.
GARIS
■

The CURLYTOPS
in a SUMMER CAMP



∴ HOWARD R. GARIS ∴

CUPPLES
& LEON
CO

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

Title: The Curlytops in a Summer Camp

Date of first publication: 1927

Author: Howard R. Garis (1873-1962)

Date first posted: Mar. 31, 2019

Date last updated: Mar. 31, 2019

Faded Page eBook #20190412

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines, Jen Haines & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

THE CURLYTOPS
IN A SUMMER CAMP

OR

Animal Joe's Menagerie

BY

HOWARD R. GARIS

AUTHOR OF "THE CURLYTOPS AT CHERRY FARM,"
"THE CURLYTOPS IN THE WOODS," "THE CURLYTOPS
AT SUNSET BEACH," ETC.

NEW YORK
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

THE CURLYTOPS SERIES

By HOWARD R. GARIS

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated.

THE CURLYTOPS AT CHERRY FARM

Or, Vacation Days in the Country

THE CURLYTOPS ON STAR ISLAND

Or, Camping Out with Grandpa

THE CURLYTOPS SNOWED IN

Or, Grand Fun with Skates and Sleds

THE CURLYTOPS AT UNCLE FRANK'S

RANCH

Or, Little Folks on Ponyback

THE CURLYTOPS AT SILVER LAKE

Or, On the Water with Uncle Ben

THE CURLYTOPS AND THEIR PETS

Or, Uncle Toby's Strange Collection

*THE CURLYTOPS AND THEIR
PLAYMATES*

Or, Jolly Times Through the Holidays

THE CURLYTOPS IN THE WOODS

Or, Fun at the Lumber Camp

THE CURLYTOPS AT SUNSET BEACH

Or, What Was Found in the Sand

THE CURLYTOPS TOURING AROUND

Or, The Missing Photograph Albums

THE CURLYTOPS IN A SUMMER CAMP

Or, Animal Joe's Menagerie

THE CURLYTOPS GROWING UP

Or, Winter Sports and Summer

Pleasures

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, New York

COPYRIGHT, 1927, BY
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

THE CURLYTOPS IN A SUMMER CAMP

Printed in U. S. A.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I TED'S QUEER RIDE	1
II THE BROKEN WINDOW	12
III DADDY'S FEATHER	23
IV TROUBLE'S TUMBLE	35
V TO THE SUMMER CAMP	49
VI JANET IS CAUGHT	57
VII THE SHOUTING BOY	69
VIII QUEER KNOCKS	77
IX TROUBLE'S FISH	87
X STORM BOUND	99
XI TED DISAPPEARS	107
XII JANET SEES SOMETHING	117
XIII A NIGHT ALARM	126
XIV IN SWIMMING	134
XV ON THE ISLAND	143
XVI A QUEER DOG	150
XVII TROUBLE'S TRICK	156
XVIII ANIMAL JOE	165
XIX THE BIG WIND	173
XX TED IS MISSING	184
XXI BROKEN CAGES	190
XXII TO THE RESCUE	200
XXIII AT THE WATERFALL	207
XXIV LOST IN THE WOODS	220
XXV THE LOG CABIN	230
XXVI CHICKO AND HIS CHUMS	238

THE CURLYTOPS IN A SUMMER CAMP

CHAPTER I

TED'S QUEER RIDE

“LOOK at Trouble, Teddy Martin! Just look at him!”

“Well, I’m looking,” answered a curly-haired boy to whom a girl, also with golden curls, had spoken. “What’s the matter with him, Janet?” and Ted turned to his sister.

“Why, he’s all muddy!”

“Yes, I guess he is!” and Ted smiled a little. “Anybody who makes pies in clam shells with sand and water gets muddy,” and now Ted fairly laughed.

“But you know mother told him to keep clean, ’cause maybe company might come this afternoon. And now Trouble’s all dirty. William Anthony Martin!” Janet called, in imitation of her mother, “you come right away from that mud!”

“No, Jan! I have to make one more pie!” William, or “Trouble,” as he was often called, answered. “I’m going to sell my pies and get money and then I’m going to the movies,” he went on, as he leaned over a little puddle of water to dip some up in a tin basin he had found.

“Oh! Oh!” suddenly screamed Janet.

“Look out!” shouted Ted. He, too, had seen the danger.

The two older children ran toward their small brother, whose hair was not quite so clustery as that of Ted and his sister. Their golden locks had gained for them the name of “Curlytops.”

“Oh, Trouble is going to fall in!” wailed Janet.

“He’s already fallen in!” said Ted, nearer the truth. “Wow, what a sight!” he went on, reaching his small brother too late to stop William from falling

into the puddle.

But Ted was in time to pull him out. Janet stumbled and fell, and by the time she had picked herself up, Trouble had been rescued.

Truly small William was a sad sight. He had leaned over too far in reaching to get more water to mix the last batch of his mud pies, and had toppled into the puddle. Luckily, he had put his hands out to save himself, and his face and head did not go into the pool. But his blouse and little knickerbockers were pretty well splashed.

“Now you have done it!” exclaimed Ted, as he lifted his brother up and set him down a safe distance from the puddle.

At once a cry of distress came from the small boy.

“What’s the matter—did I hurt you?” asked Ted kindly.

“No. But look what you did—you made me step in one of my nice pies!” and Trouble’s scowl was very black. When Ted lifted him back so suddenly the little boy’s foot had gone squarely on top of a clam shell filled with mud and water mingled in a brown paste.

“Oh, that’s too bad, Trouble,” said Ted, soothingly. “I’ll help you make another pie for that one—a great big one.”

“Will you?” asked Trouble, smiles now chasing away his scowl. “Come on! I know where we can get some red mud. I’d like a red mud pie.”

“Wait a minute!” exclaimed Janet, as she came hurrying up to the two boys. “Oh, what a sight you are, Trouble!” she gasped.

“Only the front of me is muddy,” said the little fellow.

“As if that wasn’t bad enough!” went on his sister. “Oh, what will mother say?” she sighed. “She told you to keep clean, Trouble; and she said for Ted and me to watch and see that you didn’t get dirty. And now look at you.”

“I am lookin’,” Trouble admitted, glancing down at his muddy shoes, at his muddy stockings, at his muddy knickers and at his muddy blouse. Then he looked at his muddy hands. He couldn’t look at his face, but that was also muddy, as Jan and Ted could see.

“I couldn’t help it—falling in,” went on the small boy, whose smile was fading again.

“Of course you couldn’t!” agreed Ted. “And I’ll help you—”

“You’re not going to make any more mud pies!” decided Janet firmly.

“You’re dirty enough as it is! Oh, what will mother say?”

“If we keep him out in the air long enough,” suggested Ted, “the wind will dry the mud and then it will brush off easily.”

“It won’t if you help him make any more pies,” Janet said.

“Then I won’t,” promised Ted. “You are pretty dirty, Trouble,” he went on. “But you’d be a lot worse if you had fallen all the way in that puddle.”

“I put out my hands and I fell on them,” the small boy said, holding out his palms to prove this. “But I want to make some more mud pies!” he continued, and now his chin was quivering, as were his lips, and tears came to his eyes.

“Now, don’t cry, Trouble!” said Janet softly.

“But you—you said you’d make me a big, red mud pie, Ted!” and William looked at his brother.

“I know I did, William, and—”

“No more mud pies!” Janet set her foot down so firmly and so suddenly that Trouble looked quickly at her to see if she had stamped on any of his damp pastry. But Janet was careful. “You can’t play in the mud any more, Trouble,” she insisted. “If company comes—”

“I don’t want any company!” interrupted William, again ready to cry. “I just want to help Ted make a big mud pie and—”

Ted and Janet knew what it meant to get William started to crying, and it seemed as if that were going to happen now. Then, suddenly, as Ted looked toward the garage not far from the house, he saw something which made him cry out joyfully:

“Oh, Trouble, do you want to see me have a funny ride?”

This gave the small boy something to think about. He pressed back the tears that were ready to fall and asked:

“What you mean?”

“Do you want to see me ride in a funny way?” went on Ted.

“Yes,” William replied. “And I want to ride with you.”

“I don’t believe it will be big enough for both of us,” stated Ted. “But it will be fun for you and Jan to watch me. You get him up to the top of the hill,” Ted went on to his sister in a low voice. “The wind blows hard there and it will soon dry that mud so we can brush it off his clothes.”

“What are you going to do?” Janet wanted to know.

“I’m going down there, and get that old automobile tire Patrick is putting outside the garage,” went on Ted. “Then I’ll curl up in it and roll downhill. You and Trouble can watch me.”

“Oh, Ted, you can’t do that!” objected Janet.

“Why not?” he flung back over his shoulder as he hastened to the garage.

But Ted did not stop for an answer, and Janet, thinking this would be a good chance to get her small brother away from the mud pies, said to him:

“Come on now, Trouble, we’ll go to the top of the hill and see Ted take a funny ride in the auto tire.”

“All right,” William cheerfully agreed. “And I’m going to ride, too. Then I’ll make some more pies.”

“No more mud pies!” Janet was very firm on this point. William thought it best to say nothing more about it, but followed his sister to the top of a small hill back of the Martin home—a hill that led down to one of the village streets. The splashes of mud and water on William’s clothing were slowly drying, as Ted had thought they would.

Meanwhile Teddy Martin had hurried down to his father’s garage where Patrick, the man of all work about the place, was leaning an old automobile tire, or shoe, against the side of the building.

“Is that the one you said I could have, Patrick?” the boy asked.

“That’s the one, my lad,” Patrick answered. “ ’Tis no use any more for the car, bein’ too worn. What are you goin’ to do with it?”

“Just roll it downhill,” Teddy answered.

“Well, be careful,” warned Patrick, as the boy began trundling the big, heavy hoop of rubber toward the top of the hill where Janet and William were.

“I will!” Teddy promised. But he had his own plans about that auto tire.

It was a beautiful day in late spring. Summer would soon arrive. It was Saturday morning and there was no school. What better time for fun?

Some days before, Mr. Martin had noticed that one of his auto tires was pretty well worn, and had told Patrick to get a new one. Teddy, hearing this, had begged for the old shoe, and it had been promised him.

“And now I’m going to ride downhill in it,” he said to himself, as he rolled it to the summit of the slope where his sister and brother awaited him.

“Now, Trouble,” said Ted, carrying out his promise, “you’re going to see me have a funny ride.”

“I want a ride, too!” the small boy insisted.

“Wait till I try it first,” was Ted’s answer. “Maybe it won’t work; but I think it will. I saw a boy in the movies do this.”

He had rolled the tire to the top of the grassy hill. He held it there a moment, looking down. Below were the streets of Cresco, a small town in one of our Eastern states.

“You hold it up straight, Jan, while I get in,” Ted directed.

“Theodore Martin!” exclaimed Janet, “you’re never going to roll downhill inside that auto tire!”

“Yes, I am,” he said. “It’ll be easy if you help. Come on!”

Janet had her doubts about it, but Ted was a year older, so he ought to know what he wanted. And Trouble, in view of what was going on, had forgotten all about the mud pies and no longer teased to mess in them. Also the wind was drying his clothes beautifully.

“You’ll be careful, won’t you?” begged Janet as she held the tire steady while Ted curled himself up inside.

“Sure, I’ll be careful,” he promised. “Anyhow, I can’t get hurt. The rubber shoe will take all the bumps, even if it goes over stones.”

Janet had seen the same movie picture that her brother spoke of, and the boy in that had successfully rolled downhill in an old auto tire. Teddy ought to be able to do it.

“Now, you’ll see me have a funny ride, Trouble,” went on Ted, as he kept himself from rolling down by bracing one foot on the grass. He was at this moment sitting upright inside the tire. But when it began to roll, of course, Ted would go head over heels in a series of somersaults. “Isn’t this nice, Trouble?” Ted asked.

“I want to ride next time!” Trouble said.

“Wait until you see how Teddy does it,” observed Janet, with an air of wisdom. She still had her doubts.

“All right!” called Ted.

He drew in his foot and Janet gave the tire a little push. It began to go down the hill slowly, but with ever-increasing speed until at last it was rolling

along almost as fast as if it were on the auto from which it had been taken.

“Hi!” yelled Ted, half way down the hill. “This is great!”

The next minute something happened. The tire struck a big stone, bounced up in the air, and came down again. But when it came down Teddy was no longer inside it. The small boy had been bounced out. He fell on a thick clump of grass, not hurt much, but very much surprised.

The tire, however, rolled on, faster than before, and when Janet saw for what it was headed she cried:

“Oh, Teddy! Teddy! Stop it! Look where it’s going! Stop the tire! Oh, Teddy!”

CHAPTER II

THE BROKEN WINDOW

TEDDY MARTIN was a bit dazed and shaken up by being bounced so hard and so suddenly from inside the auto tire in which he was taking his strange ride. But, hearing his sister's shouts, he rolled over on the soft grass where he had fallen, sat up, and looked down the hill.

He, too, saw the still rolling auto tire. And Teddy also saw toward what it was headed.

"Stop it! Stop it! Run after that tire and stop it!" directed Jan, and, in her excitement, she began to race down the hill, forgetting all about William, his mud pies, and his soiled clothes.

"Wait! Wait for me!" wailed Trouble, but Janet paid no heed.

"Whew!" whistled Teddy as he got to his feet and raced after the bounding tire. "If it goes in there it will be terrible!"

But run as he did, and run as Janet was doing, there seemed little chance of catching the tire before it was too late.

At the foot of the hill, not far from the Martin home, was a street, and on the corner of this street was Dr. Mark Thomby's drug store, a little, old-fashioned place where the little, old-fashioned druggist sold old-fashioned remedies. Mrs. Martin traded there when she did not want to go to the newer and larger drug store in the center of the town.

"Teddy! Teddy!" yelled Janet. "That auto tire is going to bump right into Dr. Thomby's drug store!"

"Yes, I—I guess it is!" panted Teddy, who was doing his best to catch the runaway shoe. But it seemed a hopeless task.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Janet. "This is going to be terrible!"

But she did not stop running, not even when Trouble gave a wail and his sister, looking back, saw that the small boy had fallen down. But he had tumbled into soft grass, just like Ted. Ted, also, was running as hard as he could.

I will take just a moment, before the tire does what Janet thought it was going to do, to tell new readers something about the Curlytops.

The brother and sister were given their nickname because of their curling, golden heads of hair. Teddy and Janet Martin lived with their father and mother, not to forget small William, or “Trouble,” as he was so often called, in a large house on the edge of the town of Cresco. Mr. Martin kept a store, and Ted and Janet went to school when there was any. They were always glad when summer came, because then there was no school. They had many wonderful adventures in the summer.

In the first book of this series, entitled “The Curlytops at Cherry Farm,” some of these adventures are related. Other happenings were on Star Island, and once the Curlytops were snowed in. They went to Uncle Prank’s ranch and to Silver Lake, and after that some wonderful times followed with a number of pets.

The summer before this story opens, and after a vacation at Sunset Beach, the children had some strange adventures, which are related in the volume ahead of this one, entitled “The Curlytops Touring Around.”

Now it was almost summer again, and though there had been some talk about where the Curlytops were to go when the long vacation should come, nothing had been decided.

“But maybe if that auto tire smashes things up in Dr. Thomby’s drug store, daddy won’t take me on any vacation,” thought Ted, as he raced after the bounding shoe.

Faster and faster it rolled down the hill, now heading straight for the back door of the little, old-fashioned drug store. Faster and faster rolled the shoe.

“Can’t you stop it, Teddy?” called Janet, looking back to see William getting up, by which she knew he was not hurt.

“How can I stop it?” panted Ted. “It’s away ahead of me!”

“Then yell for Mr. Thomby to look out!” advised Janet.

That seemed good advice so Teddy began shouting:

“Look out! Look out! Hi, Dr. Thomby, look out! There’s an auto tire going to run into your store!”

By this time the shoe was almost at the rear of the shop.

Suddenly a little man appeared in the doorway. He gave one look up the hill, saw the oncoming tire, and then tried to shut his door. But he was too late.

Straight for the druggist the tire rolled. He had to jump up in the air to avoid being hit by it and the tire rolled right between his legs and into the shop.

“Oh!” gasped Janet.

“It’s lucky it didn’t hit him!” panted Ted.

The next instant there was a sound of crashing glass, a loud yell, and then, as Ted and Janet stopped for an instant, they saw the tire come rolling out of the front door and continue on down the street.

“I guess it didn’t do much damage,” said Teddy, as he started running again.

“It sounded as if it broke something,” remarked Janet, also keeping on down the hill.

“I want a ride! I want a ride!” wailed Trouble behind his brother and sister. “Wait for me! I want a ride!”

“I guess I won’t dare try to ride downhill in an auto shoe again!” thought Teddy.

He and Janet reached the bottom of the slope. As the tire had done, they went in the back door of the drug store. They saw the little old doctor and druggist sitting in the middle of the floor of his place, while all about him was a puddle of dark, sticky stuff. Dr. Thomby was sitting on the edge of the puddle, looking in a dazed way at a big bottle that was smashed to pieces all about him. The dark, sticky syrup had come from the broken jar.

“Oh, Dr. Thomby!” murmured Janet. “Are you hurt?”

“I’m awful sorry,” said Teddy. “You see it got away from me!”

“What was it?” asked Dr. Thomby.

“Didn’t you see it?” asked Janet.

“I saw what looked like a wild animal coming downhill straight for me,” said the druggist, trying to get up, but slipping in the syrupy stuff and suddenly sitting down again. “I jumped up in the air and it went between my legs, hit a table, knocked my jar of syrup off and then the beast—whatever it was—ran out the front door.”

“It wasn’t an animal,” said Teddy, wanting to laugh but not daring to.

“It was an auto tire,” Janet stated.

“A what?” exclaimed the druggist.

“An old auto shoe,” Teddy explained.

“An auto tire! An auto tire!” murmured the druggist. “I thought it was a wild beast! Oh, what a mess!” he sighed, looking at his floor.

“We’ll help you clean it up,” offered Janet. “Won’t we Teddy?”

“Why, of course!” he agreed. “But I guess—”

Then a loud shout of alarm caused him to run to the front door of the shop. Janet also hastened after him, just as Trouble came trotting into the back door. Trouble saw the druggist still sitting in the puddle of sticky stuff.

“Are you makin’ mud pies, too?” asked the little boy.

Before Dr. Thomby could answer there was a loud crash of breaking glass outside and he gasped:

“I guess that auto tire has gone through some show window! Oh, what a day this has been!”

Just as Janet and Ted reached the street in front of the drug store they, too, heard from around the corner the crash of glass.

“It’s broken a window—that tire!” gasped Teddy.

“Oh! Oh!” moaned his sister. “Now you’ll be arrested!”

Ted Martin was beginning to think that his prank of riding downhill in the auto tire was going to turn out to be serious. There was the broken jar of medicine in Dr. Thomby’s drug store, to say nothing of the spoiled clothing of the kind, old-fashioned gentleman who often gave the Curlytops and Trouble sticks of candy. Then there was the broken window down the street, the crash of glass still echoing in the ears of Ted and his sister.

“This is awful!” gasped Janet, as she looked down the street to where she could see a crowd of men gathered about a building that was being rebuilt into a store.

“It’s too bad!” agreed Ted. “I didn’t think that auto tire would go so fast.”

“It wasn’t exactly your fault,” went on his sister; “but I guess they’ll arrest you just the same.”

“You mean because the window got broken?” asked Ted.

“Yes. Are you going to run and hide?” Janet wanted to know, as Trouble came out of the front door of the drug store and stood between his brother and sister.

“What’s the matter?” Trouble asked.

Janet or Ted did not answer the little fellow, but Ted, looking at his sister, asked:

“Why should I run and hide?”

“So they won’t arrest you for breaking that window. I guess it was a big window, Ted, and cost a lot of money. You can get away if you run fast.”

“I’m not going to run!” and Ted raised his head, threw back his shoulders, and stood bravely there. “I’m going to let them arrest me!”

“You are?” cried Jan. “Well, maybe that’s the best way; and, anyhow, you didn’t mean to do it, and daddy will pay for the window and that will make it all right.”

“Yes, I guess so,” said Ted, with a little catch in his breath. He knew it would be a sad thing if his father had to pay out money for a large window broken by his boy’s careless play.

There was another tinkle of glass, as portions of the broken window fell to the ground. Some men and boys standing in front of it jumped hastily back as if to avoid being cut, and one of the men started to walk toward the Curlytops and Trouble.

“I guess he’s coming to arrest you!” and was a sob in Janet’s voice as she looked at Ted.

“You and Trouble run back home and tell mother,” advised Ted. “I’ll let them take me, but there’s no sense in them arresting you and Trouble. You didn’t do anything. Run home and tell mother, Jan!”

“I will, Teddy. Don’t you be afraid!”

“I won’t. It’s only a broken window, and I didn’t mean to do it. You tell mother that.”

“I will! Come along, Trouble!” Janet pulled on the hand of her small brother.

“No! No!” he cried. “I don’t want to go! I want to see the broken window and I want a ride in the auto tire. Ted said I could have a ride!”

“I didn’t know what was going to happen,” answered Teddy sadly. “You can’t ride in the auto tire, Trouble. Run along home with Jan.”

“Then let me see the broken window!” persisted the little chap.

“No! No!” begged Teddy. “Run along with Jan, that’s a good boy, and I’ll

bring you a lollypop. You can see the broken window later.”

“Can I?” and Trouble was willing to go now. “And will you bring me a lollypop?”

“I will if I have any money left,” Teddy answered in a low voice.

“What do you mean—money left?” asked Janet. “You have a lot of money in your bank.”

“But I’ll have to give it all to dad to help him pay for the broken window,” her brother went on. “When we fellows play ball and break a window we always chip in and pay for it.”

“Then I ought to chip in and help pay for this one,” said Janet. “ ’Cause I was with you when the auto tire ran away.”

“This is different,” stated Ted. “You aren’t in this. Now you and Trouble run home and I’ll let them arrest me. ’Tisn’t like a regular arrest,” Teddy explained, as he saw the shocked look on his sister’s face. “I haven’t really done anything bad.”

But Janet was worried as she hurried away with Trouble, who did not know what it was all about, and brave Teddy walked toward the man he thought was coming to arrest him.

CHAPTER III

DADDY'S FEATHER

TEDDY MARTIN gave one look back over his shoulder to make sure that Janet and Trouble were safely out of the way, and then, turning to the man, asked:

"Is the window much broken?"

"Broken? I should say it was!" and the man seemed very angry. "There's hardly a piece of it left as big as your hand. It was a careless thing to do!"

"I—I guess it was," faltered Teddy.

"That window will have to be paid for, too!" went on the man, still speaking crossly. It seemed to be his window, or at least it was in his new store that it was broken. "Yes, it's got to be paid for!" he went on.

"Oh, yes," agreed Teddy. "Will it cost much?"

"Cost much? I should say it would! That window glass cost twenty-five dollars!"

Teddy's heart sank lower and lower. This was worse than he had counted on. Twenty-five dollars! That was a lot of money. Sometimes, when he and the other boys had played ball too near a house, windows had been broken, but these panes of glass cost only about a dollar. Once, though, one had cost a dollar and a half. But Teddy and the other boys had made this sum up by "chipping in" among themselves.

Twenty-five dollars, however, was a different matter!

"Yes, it was a very careless piece of tom-foolery!" went on the man, who seemed crosser than ever.

"I'm sure I'm very sorry about it," faltered Teddy.

"You're no sorrier than I am!" snapped the man. "It will delay the opening of my new store until I can send and get another large pane of glass."

"I'll go with you now if you say so," said Teddy, trying to keep his voice from trembling. "Or you can take me down to my father's store and get the

money and then I'll save up all I can and pay him back. Do you want to arrest me now?"

"Arrest you?" exclaimed the man, with a puzzled look on his face. "I'm no policeman. And why should I want to arrest you, anyhow?"

"Why, for breaking your window," answered Teddy.

"Breaking my window? How did you break my window?" and the man, more surprised than ever, looked at Teddy.

"With that auto tire," explained the small boy. "Patrick let me take it, and I took it to the top of the hill and I was showing Janet and Trouble how I could ride down in it. Only I bounced out and the tire went into Dr. Thomby's drug store and upset a jar of cough syrup, I guess, and then it ran out of the front door and broke your window. I'm awfully sorry!"

Teddy was so out of breath with this long speech, and his legs felt so weak from running and his heart was beating so fast because of all that had happened, that he sat down on the curb and looked up at the man. Then the man smiled, and did not seem half as cross as before, as he leaned against a lamp-post and said:

"Well, my boy, I like your nerve. You're a brave little chap. But I don't know what in the world you're talking about. Who is Trouble? I'm having trouble enough, goodness knows, but I don't know anybody of that name."

"He's my little brother William," Teddy explained.

"Oh, I see!"

"And Janet's my sister."

"Well, that's news to me."

"And Patrick works for us and he gave me an old shoe off my father's auto and I rolled downhill in it—I mean in the old shoe and—"

"Oh, was that your auto tire that rolled down the street?" the man wanted to know.

"Yes. It was my tire that broke your window," Teddy explained.

"What's that? Your tire broke my window? Nonsense! Nothing of the sort!" and at these words a sense of joy filled Teddy's heart. "My show window was broken by a couple of the workmen skylarking with a long piece of wood," explained the man. "One of them poked it right through the glass. Your auto tire came bouncing along just at that moment, but it didn't have anything more to do with the breaking of the window than the man in the

moon.”

“It didn’t?” eagerly cried Teddy, with shining eyes.

“Not a bit! No! I wondered where that auto shoe came from, and I thought some boys must have been playing with it, for it’s no good on a car any more, being too worn. But it didn’t break my glass.”

“Oh, I’m glad of that!” Teddy exclaimed.

“So am I,” said the man, with a smile. “No, it was two of my workmen who broke my window by skylarking, and they will pay for it. But it’s queer it happened just as your tire came rolling along and made you think the rubber shoe bounced up and did it. I’m glad, for your sake, it didn’t.”

“So’m I,” Teddy murmured.

“Well, you run along home and tell your father I said you are a brave little chap. Munson is my name, Jake Munson. I’m going to start a sporting goods store in the building where the window just got broken. Come in and see me when I get it fixed up. What’s your name?”

“Curlytop Martin,” Teddy answered.

“Curly—Oh, I see! On account of your hair!” and Mr. Munson laughed.

“My sister’s hair is like mine,” Teddy went on. “But Trouble’s is—”

“Is his name really Trouble?” interrupted Mr. Munson.

“No, it’s William; but we all call him Trouble,” and Teddy was smiling now.

“I see. Well, Curlytop Martin, I know your father slightly, and he knows me. So you run along home and tell him you didn’t break any windows with your auto tire.”

“It broke something else, though,” and Teddy’s voice was sorrowful as he recalled it.

“What did it break?” Mr. Munson wanted to know.

“Dr. Thomby’s jar of cough medicine. At least, it looked like cough medicine,” and Teddy explained the happening in the drug store.

“Well, that’s too bad, of course,” agreed Mr. Munson, when he heard about it. “I guess your tire did that all right, though it didn’t smash my window. But I know Doc Thomby, and as I’m on my way to go and order a new pane of glass I’ll just stop in and see him to say a good word for you.”

“Oh, will you?” exclaimed Teddy eagerly. “I’ll pay for his broken jar, of course, or my father will, and for the spilled medicine and maybe I’ll have to get him a new suit of clothes.”

“A new suit of clothes!” cried Mr. Munson. “What in the world for?”

“Because he sat down in the cough syrup,” answered Teddy.

“Ha! Ha! Sat down in the cough syrup, did he? Ha! Ha!”

“And when he saw the auto tire coming in his back door he jumped up and the tire ran right between his legs,” went on the boy.

“It did? Ha! Ha! I wish I’d been there to see it!” chuckled Mr. Munson, who seemed to have gotten all over being cross about the broken window. “Ha! Ha! That’s a pretty good joke on Doc Thomby! Ho! Ho!”

Teddy couldn’t quite see the joke himself, but he smiled because Mr. Munson was laughing.

“Come along with me,” went on the sporting goods dealer. “I guess I can fix this up for you with Doc Thomby. He’s a good friend of mine. So he sat in his own cough medicine? Ha! Ha! Well, maybe it’ll do as much good on the outside as it would have done inside. Come along!”

“Shall I get my auto tire?” asked Teddy, for he could see where it leaned against one side of the building around which was gathered a crowd looking at the broken window.

“You can get it if you like,” agreed Mr. Munson. “But maybe you’d better let it alone. If it did all you tell me, spilled you, upset Doc Thomby, and caused you such a scare, maybe it’s better where it is.”

“I guess so,” Teddy assented. “I can get another, anyhow. And I’d better hurry and tell Janet I’m not arrested.”

“Yes, I guess so,” said Mr. Munson, with a smile.

He and Teddy walked back to the drug store. By this time the gentle old doctor had gotten up from the puddle of syrup and was beginning to mop it off the floor. He looked up as Teddy and Mr. Munson entered.

“Hello, Doc!” greeted the sporting goods dealer. “Heard you tried to ride an auto tire just now! Ha! Ha!”

“Auto tire!” sniffed the druggist. “So that’s really what it was! I thought it was a wildcat bursting in on me.”

“It was my tire,” put in Teddy gently. “And I’m awfully sorry—”

“Now you leave this to me,” said Mr. Munson, with a smile. Then he talked to Dr. Thomby in a low voice, now and then breaking into a chuckle. Teddy heard his name mentioned once or twice and caught the words about “arrest” and “broken window,” and then Dr. Thomby himself laughed.

“Sure, that will be all right!” Teddy heard the druggist say, and then Mr. Munson went on:

“It’s all right, Curlytop. You won’t have to pay for any broken jar or spilled medicine or a new suit of clothes.”

“Won’t my father, either?”

“No, not at all—of course not!” broke in Dr. Thomby. “It was an accident. You couldn’t help it and you didn’t mean to do it. It wasn’t cough syrup, anyhow. It was just some brown sugar syrup I was going to mix into cough medicine, and it didn’t cost much. The jar was of little value, and this suit is an old one.”

He glanced down at his trousers from which he had sponged most of the sticky stuff.

“So just run along home and forget about it,” he told Teddy. “I’ll forgive you. But don’t try to ride downhill in auto tires again.”

“I won’t,” promised the small boy. And then, with eager thanks to the druggist and Mr. Munson, Teddy ran as fast he could toward his own house.

When within sight of the gate he saw his father and mother, followed by Janet and William, coming toward him. There was a queer look on his mother’s face, and on his father’s as well, and Janet seemed to have been crying.

“Well, Teddy,” remarked his father with a smile, as he greeted his son, “I see they let you out of jail.”

“They didn’t arrest me at all!” Ted burst out joyfully. “Oh, Jan, it wasn’t the auto tire that broke the window. It was two men skylarking and—”

“What’s skylarking?” asked Trouble. “Can I have some?”

But no one paid any attention to him.

“So you didn’t break any window, after all, son?” Mr. Martin asked.

“No, Daddy. And I’m glad I didn’t, because it was a big one. My tire only bumped up alongside the building just as the men broke the window with the stick of wood.”

“It sounded just like the tire did it,” murmured Janet.

“I sure thought it did,” said her brother.

“But what about Dr. Thomby?” asked Mrs. Martin. “Janet says the tire ran through his shop and upset a jar of cough medicine.”

“It was just brown sugar syrup,” Teddy explained. “Mr. Munson—it was his window that got broken—went with me and he and Dr. Thomby laughed and everything is all right. I don’t have to pay anything.”

“And won’t you be arrested?” Janet wanted to know.

“No; it’s all right now!” chuckled Teddy.

“Oh, I’m so glad!”

“So’m I!” he murmured.

“Well, everything seems to be coming out well,” said Mr. Martin, with a smile. “I had just got home,” he went on, “when Janet came running in with this doleful tale about Teddy going to be arrested, and so I hurried out to see about it.”

“It was very surprising,” said Mrs. Martin, “and I wondered—”

She was interrupted by Teddy who, pointing at his father’s head, began laughing heartily.

“Look! Look!” exclaimed the boy. “Look at the feather in daddy’s hair! Oh, how funny it is!”

“Feather in my hair?” said Mr. Martin, putting his hand up to his head. And there, sure enough, was a long red, green and blue feather.

“I never noticed that before!” exclaimed Mrs. Martin.

“It’s just like the kind Indians wear!” went on Teddy, while Trouble and Janet joined in the laughter. “How’d you get that feather, Daddy?” Teddy asked.

Mr. Martin looked at it, turned it slowly over, and said:

“There’s quite a story connected with that feather. Come back to the house and I’ll tell you about it.”

Very much wondering, the Curlytops and William followed their father and mother up the front path.

What, they were asking themselves, could be the story of the red, blue and green feather sticking in Mr. Martin’s hair?

CHAPTER IV

TROUBLE'S TUMBLE

GOING back to the house with his family, Daddy Martin could not help laughing every now and then. Janet and Teddy heard him. So did his wife and Trouble. But Trouble was interested in something other than his father's laughter and the colored feather.

"When am I going to have a ride in that auto tire, Teddy?" asked the little fellow presently.

"I guess never," was the answer.

"Oh—never?" gasped Trouble.

"I should say not!" exclaimed his mother. "Haven't we had enough trouble over that auto tire? Don't you think you'd better not play with it again, Teddy?"

"I'm not going to," he answered. "Anyhow, I won't roll in it downhill again. And, anyway, I haven't got that tire."

"Where is it?" Trouble wanted to know, in wonder.

"Mr. Munson said I'd better leave it back there at the building where the window was broken," Teddy answered. "So I did."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Mr. Martin aloud.

"Are you laughing at what Teddy did?" Janet wanted to know.

"I'm laughing when I think about how this feather got in my hair!" chuckled Mr. Martin.

"Oh, then it's a funny story about that feather, is it?" asked Teddy.

"Rather funny—yes," admitted his father.

"I think we need a laugh after the fright we had over the thought of Teddy being arrested," and Mrs. Martin smiled as though she knew no such thing as her boy's being taken by a policeman ever would come to pass. And it wouldn't, either, not just about a broken window, anyhow.

“Yes, it’s a funny story,” went on the father of the Curlytops, and Trouble laughed, though he really didn’t know why, except that everybody seemed so happy now.

“Did you ever hear of Animal Joe Tacker?” asked Mr. Martin when they were all seated on the shady side porch of the Curlytops’ home. The children’s father sat in an easy chair and twirled the feather between his fingers. Nora Jones, the maid, brought out a pitcher of lemonade and glasses and crackers on a tray, at the sight of which the three children set up joyous murmurs.

“That will cool us off after our excitement,” said Mr. Martin, with a smile, and as his father sipped his lemonade, Teddy, who was too anxious to hear the story to begin on his drink, asked:

“Who is Animal Joe?”

“He’s a curious old man,” Mr. Martin answered. “He has been around Cresco before, though I guess you children were too small to remember him.”

“What kind of an animal is he?” asked William, taking a long breath after a long sip of lemonade. “Is he a bear? Maybe a polar bear.”

“As if a man could be a bear!” scoffed Janet.

“He could be—make believe!” declared Trouble.

“Of course he could,” admitted his father. “But Joe Tacker isn’t an animal at all. It just happens that he sells animals for pets. He has a covered wagon and he goes about the country selling birds, dogs, cats, monkeys, and parrots—small pets, you know.”

“I wish I had a monkey,” murmured Trouble.

“I’d like a parrot so it could talk to me,” was Janet’s wish.

“Well, this is the best I can offer you,” said her father, with a smile, and he held out the gay feather.

“Oh, did that come on a parrot?” asked the little girl.

“It would be more correct to say that it came *off* a parrot!” chuckled Mr. Martin. “That’s how it got in my hair—off a parrot.”

“Oh, Daddy! Did it, really? Tell us about it,” begged Teddy, and the boy grinned broadly.

“That’s what I’m trying to do, my dears,” and Mr. Martin smiled. “This is how it happened. As I said, Animal Joe, which is the name every one calls him, came to town to-day with his wagonload of pets. He was driving past my

store just when I was getting ready to come home. Just then, in some manner, the back door of his wagon flew open and out popped several dogs and cats, two monkeys, and two parrots.”

“Oh, I’d like to have seen them!” exclaimed Janet.

“I guess there was a lot of fun, wasn’t there?” asked Ted.

“It was fun for those who looked on,” said Mr. Martin; “but not so funny for poor Animal Joe. His pets scattered, the dogs running one way, the cats another, the monkeys a third, and the parrots—where do you suppose they went?”

“I guess they flew off to the woods,” said Trouble.

“No,” went on his father, while the others joined in the laugh at the answer of small William, “the parrots flew right into my store. There they scurried about, squawking and flapping and making all sorts of queer noises.”

“Didn’t they talk?” asked Janet. “Parrots always talk.”

“I think they were too frightened to talk,” her father said. “Or, if they did, they must have spoken a jungle language which I didn’t understand. Anyhow, the gay birds fluttered about my store until I managed to catch them by climbing up on the high shelves. They fluttered when I took them down, and, I suppose, in that way the feather came out of the tail of one and caught in my hair. I never knew it was there until just now.”

“Oh, how funny!” laughed Janet. “And you’ve gone about all day with that feather in your hair, have you, Daddy?”

“Not all day, Jan. This happened only a little while ago. Well, as I say, I caught the two parrots for Animal Joe, and other people, in other stores or along the streets, helped catch the dogs, cats and monkeys, so in the end he had all his animals back. Then I put on my hat and hurried home, and the feather must have been there in my hair all the while.”

“And when daddy got home,” went on Mrs. Martin, “there was Janet with her tale about Teddy going to allow himself to be arrested,” and she patted her son’s head. “So we hurried out to rescue him, and that’s how it happened that I didn’t notice the feather.”

“What about Animal Joe?” asked Teddy impatiently.

“Oh, after his pets were collected he made sure the doors of his wagon were locked and then drove off,” Mr. Martin said. “He went back home, I guess.”

“Is he like Uncle Toby and his pets?” asked Janet, referring to their father’s uncle who lived in Pocono. The children at one time had taken care of Uncle Toby’s pets for him while he was away.

“No,” answered Jan’s father. “Uncle Toby’s animals were pets, and Animal Joe sells his monkeys and parrots and other things to any one who wants to buy.”

“Where does Animal Joe live?” Janet wanted to know.

“Somewhere up around Lake Rimon,” Mr. Martin answered. “Near the town of Tuckville, I believe.”

“Tuckville!” cried Teddy, suddenly sitting up straight.

“Tuckville!” exclaimed Janet, opening wide her eyes. “Why, that’s where you said maybe we would go camping this summer, Daddy! Tuckville on Lake Rimon! Don’t you remember?”

“So I did!” agreed Mr. Martin. “I didn’t give it a thought before, there was so much excitement. But it comes to me with certainty now—Tuckville is where Animal Joe went with his pets, and it’s there your mother and I talked about renting a bungalow in a summer camp.”

“Are we going there?” eagerly asked Teddy.

“And may I have a monkey?” William wanted to know.

“Oh, please let’s go to Tuckville, where we can have fun with Animal Joe!” pleaded Janet.

Mr. Martin looked at his wife and his wife looked at him. Both of them smiled and then looked at the children.

“I suppose we may as well tell them,” said Mrs. Martin.

“Oh, is it a secret?” cried Janet.

“Not much of one, for we’re going to tell you,” said her father. “Yes, we have about decided to go to a summer camp on Lake Rimon. Though it’s queer I never thought of Animal Joe as being up there,” he added.

But the Curlytops and William only heard the words about going to camp that summer on Lake Rimon, and they jumped up and ran around the room joyfully shouting.

“Dear, dear, children! Less noise, please!” begged their mother, her hands over her ears.

“It sounds like the time Animal Joe’s pets got loose!” laughed Mr. Martin.

“Oh, what fun we’ll have!” sang Janet.

“I’m going swimming and boating!” exclaimed Teddy.

“I’m going fishing!” added Trouble.

“You must never go near the lake alone!” his mother warned him, while Janet said:

“Maybe I can get Mr. Joe to give me a kitten.”

“His name is Mr. Tacker—not Mr. Joe,” corrected Teddy. “But maybe he’ll give me a dog, though I’d rather have a monkey.”

“We don’t want a lot of animals if we go to a summer camp,” objected Mrs. Martin.

“We’ll get only just those you want us to have, Mother,” said Janet sweetly. It was no time to insist on strange pets when the matter of going to camp was hardly settled. “When shall we leave?” she asked.

“Oh, in a few weeks—as soon as school closes,” her mother answered. “There’s a lot to do before we can go.”

“Oh, what fun well have!” ejaculated Teddy, who had forgotten all about the automobile tire by this time.

In the days that followed the Curlytops were so excited about going to camp they hardly studied their lessons. But it was close to the end of the school term, and both children had done very well, so they passed, and Trouble was promoted to the next class in the kindergarten, which made him quite proud.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Martin, with the help of Nora, was getting things in readiness to close the town house and open the bungalow Mr. Martin had engaged for the summer at Lake Rimon.

Finally came the day before the morning on which the start was to be made. Teddy and Janet went downtown on an errand for their mother, and on the way saw the place where Teddy thought the auto tire had smashed the window.

A new pane of glass had been put in and the sporting goods store had been opened about a week. Mr. Munson saw Teddy passing and called to him.

“Here’s something for you,” said the dealer. “You’re a brave little chap and I liked the way you were going to let me arrest you, though there wasn’t any need of it. I hear you are going camping. Take this with you,” and he gave Teddy a fishing pole and outfit.

“Oh!” exclaimed the boy. “I don’t think I ought to take it!”

“Yes, you must! It’s an odd one. I’ll never miss it and I told your father I was going to give it to you. Take it—everything is all right,” and Teddy’s eyes shone with pleasure as he fingered the smooth pole.

“I’ll send you some of the fish I catch,” he promised as he walked proudly along beside Janet.

Then came the finish of the packing, when several trunks had to be filled and locked, ready for the expressman who would call in the morning.

“What about this trunk in the upper hall?” asked Mr. Martin when Janet and Ted were going to bed that night, though they were sure they would never sleep, so anxious were they for the next day to come. “Here is an empty trunk,” he said to his wife.

“I know,” answered Mrs. Martin. “I’m leaving it there in case we should need it for extra things at the last minute. I don’t believe we shall use it, though.”

“Well, be careful you don’t stumble over it and fall downstairs if you come out in the hall during the night,” her husband warned her. “What’s Trouble crying about?” he asked, for he could hear the little fellow sobbing.

“Oh, the poor little chap wants to take everything he owns in the way of toys,” answered Mrs. Martin. “His train of cars, his rocking horse, his express wagon, and his drum. He’s heart-broken—or thinks he is—because I am letting him take only a few of his things. Now go to sleep, my dear,” she said, going to William. “You can take some of your toys, but not all of them. We should need two trunks to hold them. Go to sleep, my dear,” and she began to sing to him softly.

“But I—I—I want—I want my rock-rock-rocking horse!” sobbed Trouble.

“No, dear! It’s too big,” murmured his mother. “There wouldn’t be room. Besides, you would have no place to rock on your wooden horse around the lake. Go to sleep like a good boy. Don’t wake Teddy and Janet.”

Ted wanted to call from his room that he was not asleep, but he thought it would not be wise. So he and Janet listened to their mother trying to quiet Trouble. Finally the little fellow’s sobs grew lower and less frequent and at last he was quiet and asleep.

Gradually the whole house settled into the silence of the night, though there would be plenty to do the next day when the Curlytops were to start for

the summer camp.

Though Teddy and Janet thought they would never fall asleep, at last their tired eyes closed and they were slumbering, to dream of Animal Joe flying about the lake in a boat pulled by parrots, monkeys, and dogs.

Perhaps it was this dream that awakened Teddy with such suddenness. At least it was something, for, all at once, the boy sat up in his bed with a jerk that woke him completely.

Out in the hall he heard a strange, bumping noise. This was followed by a voice murmuring:

“I’ll take you with me! Lots of room in this trunk. It’s got nothing in it at all. I’ll take you with me!”

“That’s Trouble!” guessed Ted at once.

He was just getting out of bed when there came a series of loud bumps and thumps as if something were tumbling downstairs. At the same time Trouble began to cry.

“What’s that?” cried Mrs. Martin from her room. “What has happened?”

“I—I guess Trouble has tumbled downstairs!” shouted Teddy, as he ran out of his room into the dimly lighted hall while the thumping sounds continued and William kept up his yelling.

CHAPTER V

TO THE SUMMER CAMP

MRS. MARTIN was followed out of her room by her husband, who was so sleepy he hardly understood what had happened. And Teddy was no sooner in the hall than Janet came out of her room.

“What’s the matter?” she asked.

“Trouble has tumbled downstairs!” answered Teddy.

“Oh, my goodness!” gasped Mrs. Martin when she heard this said for the second time. “Even at night poor Trouble—”

“Nothing has happened to William. There he stands now!” interrupted the little boy’s father.

He pointed to Trouble near the head of the stairs, but there was something strange about the little boy; so much so that, after one look at him, his mother exclaimed:

“Hush! Don’t awaken him! He’s walking in his sleep!”

“In his sleep?” echoed Teddy. “Why, he’s got his eyes wide open!”

And so William had. But it was very plain that he did not know what he was doing, for there was a queer look on his face and he seemed to be walking near the head of the stairs in a sort of daze.

“That’s the way persons always do who walk in their sleep,” said Mrs. Martin in a low voice. “We mustn’t awaken him suddenly or he might give a jump and tumble downstairs. He is very near the top now. Get him, Dick!” she whispered to her husband.

“But somebody fell downstairs!” insisted Teddy in a low voice. He did not want to awaken his brother too suddenly.

Janet leaned over the banister railing just as Mr. Martin turned higher the low-burning electric light in the hall. And by the brighter gleam the little girl saw, at the bottom of the stairs, that which caused her to exclaim:

“It was Trouble’s rocking horse that fell down! Look!”

They all looked over and saw the toy, one leg broken, resting partly on the floor of the hall and partly on the last step of the stairs.

“So that’s what made the racket!” murmured Teddy. “I’m glad it wasn’t Trouble!”

“So am I,” agreed his mother. By this time Mr. Martin had reached the side of the sleep-walking little fellow, so there was no danger of his toppling down.

“Hey! What’s the matter?” exclaimed Trouble, as he felt himself being lifted in his father’s arms. “Why you got me out here?” he asked. “I want to go to bed. We’re going to summer camp to-morrow!”

“Don’t you know what happened, my dear?” asked his mother, pushing the hair back out of his eyes as she leaned over and kissed him. “Don’t you know what you did?”

“I—I just went to bed,” Trouble answered, rubbing his eyes. “And I—I guess I cried,” he added, as remembrance returned to him. “I cried about—about my rocking horse, I did!”

He was almost ready to sob again as he recalled the fact that he was going to be kept from taking that toy with him when Janet suddenly exclaimed:

“Look where your horse is now!”

She pointed to the foot of the stairs. Trouble looked down, and when he saw the broken leg his lips quivered and he would have set up a loud howling had not his mother laughed gayly as she said:

“Just think of it, Trouble! You got out of bed, you walked in your sleep, and I think you pushed your rocking horse out into the hall to put him in the empty trunk. And your horse fell downstairs!”

“He broke his leg, too,” murmured Trouble. “Oh, my nice horse has broken his leg!” He was again ready to cry when Teddy said:

“Never mind. I’ll play doctor to-morrow and make a new leg for him, and then he’ll go faster than ever!”

“Will he?” asked the little boy.

“And I’ll make a pair of red reins for you,” offered Janet, for she wanted to do her share in making her little brother forget about his woes.

“Will you?” he asked, now smiling.

“Truly,” said Janet, and she meant it. Only when to-morrow came they were all so busy that even Trouble forgot about his injured rocking horse.

“And did I really walk in my sleep?” Trouble asked his mother, hardly able to believe it.

“That’s what you must have done,” answered Mr. Martin, as he carried the little fellow back to bed.

“Wasn’t that funny!” laughed the little lad. “I never walked in my sleep before, did I?”

“And I hope you won’t again, especially when we get to our summer camp,” said his mother. “Now go to sleep and forget about everything,” and this William did.

Mr. Martin removed the broken rocking horse from the bottom of the stairs and the house was soon quiet again.

“He must have been thinking so much about his toys,” said Mrs. Martin to her husband, when they were once more in their room, “that he dreamed about them, got out of bed and pushed his horse into the hall. He knew the empty trunk was there, and he must have thought it would be just right for his horse. My, what a racket it made!”

“It surely did!” chuckled Mr. Martin. “It’s lucky it wasn’t Trouble himself.”

The next morning there was so much to do to get ready to go to Tuckville that Trouble never thought about what had happened in the night. He never even remembered about his rocking horse, not seeing it, and Mrs. Martin warned Teddy and Janet not to mention it, an order they carefully obeyed.

As Ted was going to take his new fishing pole that Mr. Munson had given him, and as Janet was to have with her in the summer camp some of her playthings, Mrs. Martin decided to allow Trouble to take a few of his toys. This so delighted the little fellow that he did not tease for his drum, a swing, and several larger toys that it would have been very hard to pack.

The Curlytops and their brother, with their father and mother and Nora, the maid and cook, were to go to Lake Rimon in Mr. Martin’s auto. Later on Patrick would perhaps come up if there was enough work for him to do.

“Is daddy going to stay in camp with us all summer?” asked Janet, when they were about ready to start.

“I’ll stay as long as I can,” her father promised. “I may have to run back to Cresco two or three times during the summer to attend to business in the store, but I’ll come back to camp as soon again as I can, for I like it in the woods.”

“I’ll catch a lot of fish for you,” promised Teddy.

“And maybe I can shoot a bear with my pop-gun,” added William, for he had been allowed to bring that with him.

“Be careful you don’t shoot any automobile tires!” laughed Janet, as she hugged him.

It was an all-day’s ride in the auto from Cresco to Lake Rimmon, on the shore of which Mr. Martin had hired a bungalow.

At last all was in readiness. The trunks had been sent on ahead, the packed valises had been put in the auto, together with a basket of lunch. The children took their places, Teddy on the front seat with his father, Janet and William in the back with their mother and Nora.

“All aboard!” called Mr. Martin.

“All aboard!” answered Teddy, while William joined in the shouts.

Then off they started for the summer camp where they were to have delightful times and strange adventures. Out through Cresco Mr. Martin drove his auto, nodding and bowing to friends whom he passed.

All of a sudden, just as the party was leaving the town behind and heading out on a country road, there arose a cry behind them.

“Wait! Hold on! Wait a minute!” a voice shouted, and an auto horn tooted loudly.

“Oh, somebody is chasing us!” exclaimed Janet, looking back. “I guess something has happened! Wait a minute!”

“What has happened?” asked her father, putting on the brakes and driving the car over to one side of the road. “We didn’t hit a dog or anything like that, did we?”

“I don’t know,” answered Janet. “But there’s a lot of people in that auto behind us and they’re calling to us to stop!”

By this time Mr. Martin had stopped his car and, turning, he saw several hands waving to him, while a voice shouted:

“Hold on! Wait a minute!”

“I wonder what could have happened?” murmured Mrs. Martin.

CHAPTER VI

JANET IS CAUGHT

BEHIND the Martin family party the other car came on rapidly.

“I wonder what they want of us?” said Mr. Martin, as he prepared to get out of his car. “I don’t see anything wrong,” he added, looking hastily over his machine. He knew that things often happen to autos that other travelers see and give warning about. But everything appeared to be all right.

Then, when the other car came close enough, Janet exclaimed:

“Why, it’s Lola Taylor!”

“And her brother Tom!” added Teddy.

“Yes, there are Mr. and Mrs. Taylor,” added Mrs. Martin, smiling at her friends, who lived a few streets away in Cresco.

“They got a—a lulu auto,” came from Trouble.

“A what?” demanded Janet.

“A lulu auto,” answered her small brother. “Tom said so.”

“Oh!” and Janet smiled.

“Is that a new make, Jan?” went on Trouble.

“No,” answered the girl. “When Tom said ‘lulu’ he simply meant a nice car—one that runs well.”

“Huh! I thought it was the name,” grumbled Trouble. “I like to know the names of all the cars,” he added. “I know about ’leven or fifteen already,” and he started to name them to himself.

“What’s the matter?” asked Mr. Martin of Mr. Taylor, as he nodded to his friend.

“Nothing’s the matter,” answered Mr. Taylor, with a laugh. “We just wanted you to wait for us, that’s all. We’re going to the same place you are, it seems.”

“To a summer camp at Lake Rimon?” asked Mrs. Martin.

“Yes,” answered Mrs. Taylor. “We never heard until a little while ago that you were going there, and the children said they hoped they’d see your boy and girl.”

“And we did, too!” chuckled Tom. “I yelled. Did you hear me?”

“We certainly did,” answered Mr. Martin, with a smile. “So that’s what it’s about, is it? You are going to camp near us!”

“It seems I’ve hired the bungalow next to yours,” stated Mr. Taylor. “It’s queer we never mentioned to each other what our summer plans were, but I guess we have both been too busy.”

“Why, this is going to be lovely!” said Mrs. Martin, who was very fond of Mrs. Taylor.

“The children will have company now,” remarked Mrs. Taylor. “But I have to stop in the next town to get a cook.”

“A cook!” exclaimed Mrs. Martin.

“Yes, I have engaged a new one, and we’re to pick her up in Midvale. So if you don’t mind, we’ll run on and get her and then we can travel together out to Lake Rimón.”

“A good idea!” said Mr. Martin, and after the children exchanged good-byes, and Ted and Janet had said again how glad they were that their playmates would be in the summer camp with them, Mr. Taylor speeded up his car, passed the other auto, and they were soon traveling on in this order, planning to journey on together after passing through Midvale.

“Isn’t it dandy that Tom Taylor is going to camp near us?” said Teddy to his mother as the car rolled along.

“Yes, for now you will have some one to go fishing with you,” Mrs. Martin answered.

“And I can play with Lola,” added Janet.

“Indeed you can, dear,” agreed her mother. “It is queer,” she went on to her husband, “that we didn’t know anything about the Taylor family going to have a bungalow near us until this minute, and then only by accident.”

“Yes, it is queer,” agreed Mr. Martin. “But we have all been so busy of late getting ready, and letting Ted practice with auto tires,” he went on, with a sly smile at his son, “that we haven’t had much time for visiting and telling news.”

“I’m not going to ride any more auto tires,” Teddy said, with a laugh. “Once is enough!”

“I didn’t get any ride,” remarked Trouble, who did not forget that he had been promised one. “And I won’t have anybody to play with when we get to the woods,” he added. “Ted will have Tom and Janet will have Lola, but I won’t have anybody.”

“You can play with me!” said Janet, reaching over to give him a sisterly hug.

“And when Tom and I go fishing we’ll take you—once in a while,” and Teddy put in the last as a means of checking William should the small boy want to go too often.

“Oh, will you?” cried Trouble. “Then I’ll have some fun, too,” and now he was happy again.

When Midvale was reached the Martins met the Taylors, but Mrs. Taylor said they would have to wait half an hour while the cook she was taking along packed her things.

“So you folks just travel along,” Mr. Taylor said to the father of the Curlytops. “We’ll catch up to you. Where are you going to have lunch?”

At this word Janet and Teddy became all attention, and even small William listened for the answer.

“We thought of having a picnic lunch in the first patch of woods we came to around noon,” Mrs. Martin answered.

“Oh, won’t that be fun!” murmured Janet to her older brother.

“Packs of fun!” he agreed.

“We’ll do the same,” went on Mrs. Taylor. “There’s a nice piece of woods just beyond Sparta. We’ve often eaten there.”

“I know the place,” Mr. Martin said. “We’ll expect you there about noon and we’ll have a picnic together.”

This pleased the Curlytops very much, and as their auto rolled along Ted and Janet talked of what they would do when they got to the camp on Lake Rimon.

A short distance outside of Midvale the party passed through a section of gardens, and on one patch Mrs. Martin saw a man gathering heads of crisp, green lettuce.

“Oh, some of that would be lovely for lunch,” she called to her husband. “Do stop and ask the farmer if he’ll sell us a head.”

“I guess he’ll be glad to,” said Mr. Martin. “Most gardeners are glad to sell things.”

He stopped the car alongside the road, near an old hitching post with an iron chain dangling from it, though because autos are so much more used now than horses, even by small farmers, the hitching post did not seem to be of much account.

“Will you sell me a head of lettuce?” Mrs. Martin called to the gardener, who had walked slowly over to the fence when he saw the car stop. He was followed by a small boy about William’s age, who toddled after his father.

“Sell you all the lettuce you want,” was the pleasant answer. “I have a big crop of it this season.”

“I might take two heads,” Mrs. Martin said to her husband. “I can give one to Mrs. Taylor when we have lunch in the woods. She is as fond of something green as I am.”

“Good idea,” remarked Mr. Martin, reaching for some money. “We’ll take two heads,” he told the gardener.

While the latter was pulling the green salad from the brown earth the children looked about them. It was a pleasant country scene and reminded them of the beautiful place where they were going—Lake Rimon.

“There you are,” the farmer said as he brought the heads of lettuce to the car, enclosed in a brown paper bag. “Hope you enjoy it.”

“I’m sure we shall,” Mrs. Martin answered. Then, as her husband was about to start the machine again, she said: “Be careful your little boy doesn’t get under the wheels.”

“Yes’m, I will,” was the reply. “He’s all right. Come here, Frank,” he called, and the Curlytops saw the little farmer toddle over and stand beside the larger one, who was his father.

“Well, here we go!” called Mr. Martin as he pressed on the gas pedal, but though the auto made a great deal of noise it did not move on.

“That’s funny!” exclaimed the father of the Curlytops. “We seem to be stuck!”

“Maybe you haven’t put it in gear,” suggested Teddy, who knew something of cars though he was too small to run one.

“It’s in gear all right,” Mr. Martin answered. “But we seem to be held fast,” and he fairly made the auto roar, but it did not go ahead.

Teddy, looking over the side, exclaimed:

“Oh, Daddy! One back wheel is going around like anything, but the other isn’t. It’s caught on the post.”

“Caught on the post?”

“Yes, on the hitching post.”

Mr. Martin at once shut off the power, and as he was getting out of the car the gardener came running back toward the party calling:

“I see what your trouble is. That youngster of mine chained you fast! Frank, what did you do a thing like that for?”

Without stopping for an answer, the lettuce-seller jumped the fence, and he and Mr. Martin reached the post at the same time. Then it was seen why the auto could not go. The old chain on the post was wound several times, and very tightly, around the post and the rim and tire of one back wheel. There was no slack at all, for if there had been the auto could have gotten a start and then could easily have broken the chain.

“But it was just as if it was riveted fast,” the farmer said, as he unwound the chain. “What did you do that for, Frank?” he again asked the little fellow, who seemed as fond of mischief as was small William Martin.

“I want auto to stay—not go ’way,” was the answer given, with a smile. “I ’ikes autos.”

“Ha! Ha!” laughed Mr. Martin. “I guess he didn’t like to see your customers go away,” and he looked at the gardener.

“That seems to be it,” was the answer. “But don’t you ever do that again, Frank!”

“No, Daddy, I won’t do it any more to-day,” was the promise.

“Or ever again,” the farmer added, and Mrs. Martin said:

“He might get under the wheels and be hurt.”

“Oh, he’s very careful about cars,” the father said. “He must have sneaked up and wound that chain around your wheel when I was getting the lettuce. Then he got away before you started. Little tyke!”

“Oh, children will be mischievous!” said Mrs. Martin, with a smile. “I have three of my own,” and she nodded at Teddy and Janet, though she looked longest at Trouble, who was waving his hand to Frank.

“Well, I guess we can move along now,” said Mr. Martin, and when he

again turned on the gas the car gave no trouble. Waving farewells to the farmer, the party was soon rolling down the road. By noon they reached Sparta, a small country town half way to Tuckville on Lake Rimón.

Stopping in the village only long enough for Mrs. Martin to buy some crackers and a few other articles for lunch and supper that night, the Curlytops and the others rode on until they reached the patch of woods spoken of by Mrs. Taylor.

“What a lovely spot for a summer picnic!” exclaimed Mrs. Martin, as her husband drove the car to an open place beneath the trees.

“We’re here first,” he said, looking about. “I suppose the Taylors will be along soon.”

“We’ll find a good place to set the table,” announced Janet.

“And I’ll go and look for a place to fish,” added Teddy. “Maybe I can catch some trout and we can fry them for our dinner.”

“I have my doubts about that, but you can try,” announced Mr. Martin.

“Don’t go too far away!” the children’s mother called, as Trouble toddled after his brother and sister.

While Mr. Martin and his wife got out the basket of food and walked slowly about the woods, enjoying the balmy air, the Curlytops and Trouble were racing here and there, hardly knowing what they wanted to do, they felt so jolly and happy.

“I see a brook! I guess I can fish there!” called Teddy. “I’ll go back and get my pole.”

“Let’s see what’s in this tree first,” suggested Janet, pointing to one partly rotted and with a big hole on one side. “Maybe it’s full of nuts, Ted,” she suggested eagerly. “If there are more than the squirrels who put them there want we can take some.”

“I want some nuts!” called Trouble.

“I’ll see if there are any,” offered Janet.

Before Teddy could warn her not to put her hand inside the dark hollow of the tree, even if he had thought to do so, his sister had thrust her arm away in.

The next moment a frightened look came over her face and she cried:

“I’m caught, Ted! Something inside the tree has hold of me! I’m caught! Call mother! Call daddy! I’m caught fast!”

CHAPTER VII

THE SHOUTING BOY

JANET MARTIN was standing first on one foot and then on the other in front of the old hollow tree, into which she had thrust her right hand and arm. She could not pull herself away, and for a moment or two Ted did not know whether she was pretending or it was all real.

But after listening to his sister's voice for a moment, he began to think she must be in earnest.

"I can't get loose! I can't get loose!" Janet wailed.

Teddy was some little distance from her, having started to get his fishing pole when he caught sight of the woodland brook. But now, as he turned back toward Janet, he called:

"Pull your arm out! Pull hard!"

"I am pulling!" Janet screamed. "But I'm stuck! I can't get loose!"

She was now so plainly alarmed and so evidently on the verge of tears that Teddy knew he must do his best to help her. He shouted to William:

"Go call mother and daddy, Trouble! Tell them to come quick! Janet is hurt!"

"No, I'm not exactly hurt," the little girl admitted, and with the admission, growing less excited. "But I guess my hand is in a trap!"

"Oh, maybe a hunter set a trap in the hollow tree to catch a squirrel or a fox!" agreed Teddy. "And he caught you instead! Does it hurt, Jan?"

By this time Teddy was at his sister's side and Trouble was hurrying off through the woods to summon his father and mother, who were opening the lunch basket some little distance away.

"No, it doesn't hurt at all," Janet answered. "But it feels funny to be caught this way!"

Her brother stood close beside her and was about to thrust his hand into the opening in the old tree when Janet caught hold of him with her left hand and

exclaimed:

“Don’t!”

“Why not?” he asked.

“Because you might be caught, too! Then we’d both be stuck.”

“I guess I could get loose, all right, because I know the trap’s there and can be careful,” Teddy answered. “I want to feel and see just what it is that’s caught you. If it is a trap maybe I can open it.”

“You’d better not!” warned Janet.

In spite of what his sister said, Teddy acted on his first impulse and thrust his hand into the opening. He was careful about doing it, however, and did not move as quickly as Janet had done when she hoped to find a store of nuts.

“I feel it! I know what it is!” Teddy cried.

Just then Mr. and Mrs. Martin, who had been summoned by Trouble, came running up. They saw the Curlytops with their arms half way in the hole of the hollow tree.

“What’s the matter?” Mrs. Martin asked. “Are you hurt, children?”

“I’m just stuck—that’s all,” Janet answered.

“How did it happen?” her father wanted to know.

Before Janet could answer, Teddy gave a yank and a pull, and out of the tree came his hand and arm and also those of his sister. And on Janet’s hand was clamped a round, black spiral spring, such as you may often see on a bed.

“This spring was down inside the tree hollow,” Teddy explained, as he helped Janet get it off her hand. “Maybe some boy put it there to catch a squirrel.”

“Well, I’m glad it didn’t,” remarked Janet, rubbing her fingers that had been pinched slightly by the coils of the wire. “It caught me, though.”

That is just what had happened. The spring, which was shaped like an ice-cream cone, was down inside the hollow with the wide opening up. The point was embedded in a lot of soft punk, or rotten wood, at the bottom of the hollow. When Janet thrust her fist in, hoping to grab some nuts, she had jammed it down hard into the cone of the spiral. The spring spread out and then clamped together, holding the little girl’s hand fast as in a trap.

“I knew what it was soon as I took hold of it,” explained Ted. “I knew it was a bed spring, and I could tell that Jan’s hand was inside it. I took hold of

the outside, because I couldn't get caught when she had her hand already in it, and then I pulled it loose."

"Well, it's lucky nothing worse happened," Mrs. Martin said, as she looked at Janet's hand to make sure the wire had not cut it. "You might have had a hard time if you were alone when you were caught," she added.

"Oh, I would have been scared stiff!" Janet said, with a little laugh.

"It must have been a boy's prank," was Mr. Martin's opinion, as he tossed the spring over into the bushes.

"Maybe the squirrels wanted a soft spring bed," suggested Trouble, and the others laughed at his odd idea.

"Well, you'd better get ready for lunch now," suggested Mrs. Martin. "I think the Taylors are coming. Yes, there they are!"

The excitement over Janet's being caught and the story she and Ted had to tell Lola and Tom, took from Teddy all thought of fishing. Besides, his father said they would not have time, since they wanted to eat lunch and travel on so as to arrive at Lake Rimon before dark.

Accordingly, after the Taylor brother and sister had gone to the hollow tree to view the queer trap that had caught Janet, the lunch was spread on a smooth, grassy place beneath a big oak and then, as Ted said afterward, "everybody had a good time."

Mrs. Taylor's new cook, with Nora, the Martin maid, served the picnic meal, and after a short rest on the part of the grown folks, while the children raced about and played, they were ready to start again.

The two auto parties were now together and would remain so until the end of the journey. Mr. Martin went ahead, as he knew the roads a little better than did Mr. Taylor, the Curlytops' father having traveled over them before.

They rolled on along pleasant country highways, through villages and towns and sometimes along a stretch of road through dense, dark forests. The children called back and forth from one car to the other, since they kept close together.

Just after Mr. Martin's car had passed a lonely farmhouse, a series of sharp toots came from the horn of the other car.

"Something's the matter!" exclaimed Mrs. Martin quickly, as her husband put on the brakes.

But when they looked back they saw the Taylor car turning into the lane

that led to the farmhouse, and Mr. Taylor called:

“My engine is getting hot. I’ve got to stop and put some water in the radiator.”

“Not a bad idea,” commented Mr. Martin. “I’ll do the same.”

He began backing his machine until it was opposite the lane into which Mr. Taylor had turned. By this time the other car had come to a stop near the farmhouse, and Tom’s father was getting out to go in and ask if he could have some water.

Tom and Lola also got out, as did Ted and Janet with their father. Mrs. Martin told William he had better remain in the machine with her, and she bribed him to do so by giving him some animal crackers to play with and eat.

“Doesn’t seem to be anybody at home,” remarked Mr. Taylor, as he started toward the back door.

“It does look a bit lonesome and deserted,” agreed Mr. Martin. “I guess they wouldn’t mind, though, if we helped ourselves to some water. There’s the well,” and he nodded toward an old-fashioned one with a stone curb and a long sweep dangling over it.

“I think it would be all right, and I certainly need water,” agreed Mr. Taylor, whose radiator was steaming.

“We’ll draw some,” suggested the father of the Curlytops and started for the old well. Just then they all heard a boy’s voice shouting:

“Help! Help! Help me out!”

“My goodness! What’s that?” gasped Mrs. Taylor.

“It sounded down in the well!” exclaimed Teddy.

“That’s just what it did!” agreed his father. “Somebody has fallen into the well!”

He started on a run toward it, followed by all the others, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Martin and Trouble jumping out of the autos and running with the rest.

The boy’s voice continued to shout:

“Help! Help! Help me out!”

CHAPTER VIII

QUEER KNOCKS

“MOTHER! MOTHER!” called Trouble, as he brought up the rear of the party, because his legs were too short to let him run fast. “Oh, Mother!”

“Yes, dear, what is it?” asked Mrs. Martin, turning to look at William. At first she thought he might have fallen down, and she was sorry she had hastened on so fast ahead of him. But a look showed her he was all right, doing his best to keep up with Teddy and Janet.

“I know who’s hollering in the well, Mother!” went on Trouble.

“Who dear?” she asked, but she was thinking so much about what might happen if they did not get the boy out of the well that she really paid little attention to Trouble.

“It’s one of those parrots that put a feather in daddy’s hair. That’s who’s hollering in the well,” declared William.

At another time Mrs. Martin might have laughed at this odd idea on the part of her little boy. But now it was too serious, so she hurried on. But William, talking to himself, said:

“It’s parrots in the well. Parrots can talk and holler. Animal Joe—he’s got parrots and monkeys. I wish I had a monkey! Animal Joe lives up where we’re going and maybe he’ll give me a monkey. I would like a monkey or a parrot, only monkeys can’t talk!”

But no one paid much attention to what William was saying, for the boy in the well kept shouting:

“I can’t get out! I can’t get out! Help! Help!”

As Mr. Martin, followed by the Curlytops and the others, drew closer to the curb, there was no doubt but that it was a boy down in the well.

“It’s likely to be a deep well, too!” exclaimed Mr. Taylor. “All these old-fashioned ones are. I hope we can get him out.”

“Maybe we can lower the bucket on the sweep down to him,” suggested Janet’s father.

Very likely every one has seen pictures of these old wells, if he has not actually seen the well itself. Around the top of a hole in the ground, at the bottom of which hole water seeps in, there is built a round wall of stones or bricks, called the well-curb. A little distance away a tall post is set up, and on top of this, on a hinge, rests another pole, called a sweep. On one end of the sweep are usually some stones, or perhaps the big end of the stick is heavy enough to make a counterbalance weight to help raise the bucket of water.

On the end of the sweep, nearest the well, is a rope and on the end of this rope is the bucket. By tilting the sweep the bucket is let down into the well and by tilting the sweep the other way the bucket is raised.

Reaching the well, Mr. Martin and Mr. Taylor peered down into the dim depths.

“Can you see him?” called Mrs. Taylor.

“Is he all right or is he under water?” Ted’s mother wanted to know.

“We can see him and he’s all right,” answered Mr. Martin, and then he began to laugh, so his wife, as well as the Curlytops, knew that nothing serious had happened.

“The well is dry and it’s filled with rubbish almost to the top,” went on Mr. Taylor. “We’ll soon have this boy out.”

He pulled the sweep over toward him, lowered the old bucket down over the edge of the stone curb and into the depths, and then he and Mr. Martin began raising it. By the time Ted, Janet, and the two mothers reached the well, to say nothing of Trouble, the boy was safely hauled out, not wet a drop and not harmed in the least. He was a lad about as old as Teddy.

“Did you fall into that old well?” asked Mr. Martin as he helped the boy out of the bucket. The lad had one foot in it and was holding to the rope with both hands.

“No, I went in on purpose,” was the answer. “But after I was in, the sweep bobbed up and I couldn’t reach it, so I couldn’t pull myself out, and I yelled for somebody. I’m glad you came along, because all my folks are away.”

“What did you go into the well for?” asked Mr. Martin. “Didn’t you know it was dangerous?”

“ ’Tisn’t as dangerous as if it had water in it,” said the boy. “And I didn’t think the sweep would bob away from me. I just went in to see how deep it was.”

“Well, you found out, didn’t you?” asked Mr. Taylor, with a smile. “I shouldn’t think your folks would like to have you go in there.”

“I—I guess they wouldn’t if they knew it,” admitted the boy. “They told me to keep out, but I thought I’d go in while they were away.”

“You might have had to stay in that dry well a long time, at least until your folks returned, if we hadn’t come along,” gently chided Mrs. Martin. “You won’t do it again, will you?”

“No’m,” answered the lad, who seemed a bit ashamed of the trouble he had caused.

“But if this well is dry, I don’t see where we are going to get water for our car radiators,” remarked Mr. Taylor.

The boy, hearing this, exclaimed:

“There’s a pump on the other side of the house. We use that. There hasn’t been any water in the old well for years and years. It’s almost filled to the top with rubbish. But I was too far down to reach the edge of the curb and pull myself up. I’ll help you get some water.”

He did this gladly enough, perhaps to pay for having been pulled out of the well. Both car radiators were filled, and then, when the boy had seen the children looking longingly at some early apples on a tree near the old well, he gave them a small basket filled with the fruit, nor would he take the money Mr. Martin offered.

“We have lots of apples,” said the “well boy,” as Janet and Ted always spoke of him after that.

Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Taylor thought it would be a good thing to wait until the boy’s parents returned from town, where they had gone shopping, he said, leaving him alone in the farmhouse.

“For he might take a notion to go into the well again,” said Mrs. Martin in a low voice to her husband.

“Oh, I think not,” was the reply. “He has had his lesson. He just didn’t know what to do with himself, left alone as he was, and he’s probably been wanting to get into that dry well for a long time. But I guess he is just frightened enough now to keep away from it.”

So, warning the lad not to try any more such dangerous tricks, the two families went on their way again, the children eagerly talking over what had happened.

“I thought it was one of Animal Joe’s parrots hollering in the well,” said Trouble to Ted and Janet, when they were traveling onward again.

“Oh, that’s so! Animal Joe is up around here somewhere, isn’t he?” said Ted to his father.

“Somewhere,” was the answer.

“I wonder if we’ll see him,” remarked Janet. “I’d love to see some of his monkeys.”

“I rather hear a parrot talk,” declared Trouble. “I guess a parrot could holler like a boy in a well, couldn’t it, Mother?”

“I guess so,” replied Mrs. Martin, with a laugh.

Toward the middle of the afternoon the travelers stopped in a small town to let the children buy ice-cream cones, for the day was warm and the journey had taken longer than had been expected.

“Shall we be there before dark?” Janet asked, as she saw the shadows beginning to lengthen across the highway.

“I hope so,” her father answered.

“It will be too late to go fishing, I guess,” sighed Ted.

“Have you got a fish pole, too?” asked Tom Taylor as the children were getting into the autos again after “stretching their legs,” at the ice-cream store.

“A dandy!” Ted exclaimed. “Mr. Munson gave it to me for not breaking his window with the auto tire.”

“That’s a funny way to get a fish pole!” chuckled Tom, who knew the story.

Then the autos separated for the last part of the run to Lake Rimon, and though part of the trip was uphill, the last part was down, so the cars made such good time that the village of Tuckville was reached before dark.

“I don’t see any animals!” complained Trouble, when told that this was near Animal Joe’s home.

“Oh, they’re out in the woods,” his father told the small chap.

“And that’s where our bungalow is, isn’t it?” asked Janet.

“Yes, right in the middle of the woods, not far from the lake, and not far from the waterfall,” her father answered.

“Oh, is there a waterfall?” asked Ted eagerly.

“A very beautiful one,” replied Mrs. Martin. “But I want you children to promise not to go too near it nor to let Trouble go too near. I don’t want you tumbling over the fall.”

“We’ll be careful,” promised Ted and Janet.

Having passed through the quaint little country town, Mr. Martin, followed a short distance in the rear by Mr. Taylor, guided the car into the beautiful forest surrounding Lake Rimón.

“Where’s our bungalow?” asked Janet when the car was rolling along a woodland road.

“There!” and her father pointed.

The Curlytops saw a pretty house, set back a short distance from the shore of the lake. A little way from it was another bungalow.

“That’s where the Taylors are to live,” said Mr. Martin, as he stopped the car near the place he had hired for the summer.

With joyous shouts, Ted, Janet and Trouble climbed out and ran toward the cottage. Then Ted, who was in the lead, stopped suddenly as he pointed to the open front door and exclaimed:

“There’s somebody in our house!”

“Somebody in it? No!” said his mother, hurrying forward.

“The door’s open!” murmured Janet.

“And I hear some queer knocks,” went on Ted.

Then, amid the silence of the forest, from within the bungalow there came several strange tapping, knocking sounds and the noise of scurrying feet.

“Somebody’s in there all right!” said Mr. Martin, in a low voice.

CHAPTER IX

TROUBLE'S FISH

MRS. MARTIN stepped over to stand beside her husband. The Curlytops and Trouble were near their father and mother. More of the bumping, knocking sounds came from the bungalow, which was now shrouded in twilight, for it was darker in the woods than out on the open road.

"There certainly is some one in there!" said Mr. Martin again.

"I'll get my pop-gun!" offered Trouble.

"Do you think this is the right bungalow?" asked Mrs. Martin.

"Oh, yes, of course," her husband replied. "It's the one I hired. But I don't see why the door should be open and—"

Just then the other auto, containing the Taylor family, drove up the road.

"What's the matter?" called Mr. Taylor, for he could see, as he halted his car, that something was wrong.

"There seems to be some one in our cottage," explained Mrs. Martin. "The door's open and there are sounds like—"

"Hark, please!" suddenly interrupted Janet. "There they go again!"

She pointed to the bungalow from the open door of which echoed once more those strange, bumping sounds.

"It's like somebody coming downstairs," said Trouble.

"That's exactly it," agreed his mother. "I've been trying to think what it was, and William has named it. Somebody is in our bungalow, Dick," she went on to her husband, "and they're trying to get out by coming down the stairs."

"I'll soon see who it is," declared Mr. Martin, going toward the front porch.

"Oh, don't!" begged his wife, reaching out to hold him by one arm, while the Curlytops wondered what was going to happen.

"Why not?" asked Mr. Martin.

“It might be—it might be—” said his wife, hardly knowing what to say.

“It’s probably some one who got into our place by mistake,” interrupted the father of the Curlytops, with a laugh. Nora, the Martin cook, and Mary, the new girl engaged by the Taylor family, looked at each other strangely. They did not exactly like coming to strange bungalows in the woods if queer noises like this were going to be heard.

“I’ll go and see who it is,” went on Mr. Martin. “It’s either some one in here by mistake or else the woman I hired to clean the place has just finished and is coming out. Anyhow, there is nothing to be frightened about.”

“I’m not frightened!” announced Ted.

“I’m not, either!” his sister made haste to say.

“I like it!” declared Trouble, with a laugh. “Maybe it’s one of Animal Joe’s monkeys!”

They all laughed at this, but, as it happened, small William was nearer right than any of them. Mr. Martin went up on the porch, followed by Mr. Taylor. Then came the Curlytops, while Tom and Lola, not to be left behind, walked slowly toward the house.

“It’s getting so dark I can hardly see,” Mr. Martin said.

“I have a flashlight,” announced his neighbor, and soon the little pocket torch was glowing. The beam was reflected into the big front living room of the Martin bungalow and then the father of the Curlytops and the children themselves gave a shout of laughter and surprise as Mr. Martin said:

“It’s only some squirrels!”

“Squirrels!” gasped Mrs. Martin.

“Two squirrels!” said Teddy.

“And they’re pulling two shoes downstairs! That’s what made the bumpity-bump noises!” continued Janet, with a laugh.

“Squirrels pulling shoes downstairs! I never heard of such a thing!” remarked Mrs. Taylor.

“There they go!” cried her son, Tom.

“Two, big, gray squirrels!” added his sister Lola.

The bushy-tailed creatures, having scurried out of the front door and across the porch, were soon lost to sight in the forest, over which night was fast settling down.

“Well, that solved the mystery!” exclaimed Mr. Martin, as he entered the bungalow and switched on the electric light. For though the summer home of the Curlytops was in the woods, there were many modern improvements, such as running water and electric lights.

“Here are the shoes the squirrels were dragging down!” said Ted, as he ran over and picked up one off a stair near the bottom.

“And here’s the other,” cried his sister.

“But why in the world would squirrels be dragging shoes down stairs?” asked Mrs. Martin. “It sounds like a fairy story. And whose shoes are they, anyhow?”

“Probably an old pair left here by the people who rented the bungalow last season,” her husband said.

“They have nuts inside them! The shoes have nuts in!” exclaimed Teddy, thrusting one hand inside the leather. “That’s what the squirrels were after!”

So it proved, for the other shoe also had some nuts in the toes.

“I see how it happened,” said Mr. Martin when they were all inside the bungalow. “Some time last fall, when the squirrels were storing away their winter supply of nuts, a pair of the fuzzy chaps put some nuts inside these old shoes, which were probably stuck away in the corner of a closet. Then, when spring came, a few of the nuts remained.

“Then the people who own this bungalow had it cleaned after I rented it, and the squirrels didn’t like so many people around, disturbing them. They must have made up their minds to move their nut storehouse, by which I mean the shoes, so they started to drag them out. It would be quicker than carrying one nut at a time.”

“Wasn’t that cute of them!” exclaimed Janet. “Oh, I just love squirrels!”

“I don’t!” said Mrs. Taylor. “They’re too much like rats. They can do a lot of damage. I hope they’ll keep out of our bungalow.”

“I don’t believe they’ll come around when they find the bungalows are being lived in,” Mr. Martin said. “Well, that’s over,” he went on, as Ted and Janet emptied about two dozen hickory nuts and chestnuts out of the old shoes. Some of the nuts had been partly gnawed and eaten.

“I’ll put them outside so the squirrels can get them in the night,” Teddy offered, going with the nuts toward the front door.

“Put them on the ground, off the porch,” his mother called to him. “If you

don't, the squirrels will rattle them around after we're in bed and wake us up."

"All right," answered the Curlytop boy, and he scattered the nuts on the ground.

"Well, we'd better go over and see if we have had any shoe-thumping visitors in our bungalow," said Mr. Taylor to his wife, and when Ted and Janet had looked around the place where they were to live while in the summer camp, they ran over with Tom and Lola to inspect the other cottage.

There was nothing out of the way there, and no sign of squirrels, somewhat to the disappointment of the Curlytops' playmates. But Ted remarked that perhaps the two "shoe squirrels," as they came to be called, would come around in the morning.

"But there's no explanation yet of the open front door," said Mrs. Martin to her husband after the children had gone over to see Lola and Tom. "Squirrels certainly did not open that!"

"True," was the answer of the Curlytops' father. "But I think we'll find that the front door does not latch easily, and that the people from whom we rented the bungalow were here this afternoon to see that everything was in order and that they were not careful to see that the door was closed and latched, therefore it blew wide open when a little breeze sprang up." This explanation afterwards proved to be correct.

It was too dark for the children to have much fun that night, though they did go down to the shore of the lake, after promising not to venture too near and not to get into the boats, of which there were two, one for each bungalow.

Meanwhile Mr. Martin and Mr. Taylor, with their wives and the two maids, were getting things in order and preparing the evening meal, which would be rather a late supper.

It was decided that since the Martin bungalow was the larger, the two families would eat there the first night. Later on Mrs. Taylor would get her own place to rights.

The meal was a jolly one, though toward the end Trouble fell asleep in his chair and had to be carried up to bed. Nor were Janet and Ted much behind him in the matter of "getting tickets to Slumberland," as Teddy called it. Tom and Lola were also nodding, and they soon went to their bungalow with their father and mother.

"I hope Trouble doesn't push any rocking horses downstairs to-night," remarked Mrs. Martin, with a weary sigh, as she and her husband were locking

up and getting ready for bed.

“If he does, I think I’ll be sleeping so soundly I shan’t hear him,” Mr. Martin said, with a laugh.

But nothing disturbed the Curlytops or any of the others in the summer camp. The night passed quietly and the children were up bright and early the next morning, ready for a day of fun.

“I’m going fishing!” announced Teddy when he had finished a few chores, or odd tasks, about the bungalow, which Tom also did for his mother. “I want to try my new pole.”

“I’ll come with you,” offered the Taylor lad.

“I’m going to catch a fish!” announced William. “I got a pole!” and he picked up a small tree branch.

“No, Trouble, you can’t come!” Teddy said very decidedly. “You’ll scare the fish!”

At this William looked hurt. His lips began to tremble, his chin to quiver and tears welled into his eyes.

“Oh can’t you take him with you?” begged Mrs. Martin. “We are going to try to get settled and put things to rights this morning, and Trouble will be all around, into everything and—”

“Can’t Janet look after him?” Ted wanted to know.

“Janet is going to help me and Lola is going to help her mother,” Mrs. Martin said.

Then Teddy decided to be unselfish and take his small brother with him, though he really did not want to.

“He’ll be sure to talk and scare the fish,” Ted whispered to his chum.

“We’ll put him down by himself away from us,” suggested Tom.

“Yes, we can do that,” Ted agreed. “Come on, Trouble!” he called, and, smiling in delight, the littlest member of the Martin family caught up his pole and followed the other boys.

“He hasn’t any hook or line,” Janet remarked.

“I’ll make him one with a string and a bent pin,” offered Ted.

So while the fishing party started off the women of the camp, including Janet and Lola, prepared to set matters to rights.

Above the camp, there was a small river running into Lake Rimon, a river which had, not far above where it flowed into the lake, a waterfall.

“We’ll first fish below the falls,” decided Ted.

“And if we don’t have any luck we’ll go up above them,” agreed his chum.

The boys found a quiet pool, well shaded by trees, and then the two boys made Trouble promise to be very quiet and to stay in the spot where they placed him, there to cast in his line until he had caught a fish. Trouble was so happy at being off on a trip like this with his older brother and Tom Taylor that he would have agreed to fish standing on his head if the boys had asked him to.

Ted tied a string on his small brother’s pole, fastened a bent pin on one end of the cord, and baited the pin with a wriggling worm.

“Of course he won’t catch any fish on that,” Ted said to Tom, after posting William some distance from them on the bank where the water was shallow.

“Of course he won’t,” agreed Tom. “But it will keep him quiet and away from us. We’re going to catch some real fish.”

“Sure!” exclaimed Ted.

The two older lads baited their hooks and cast in. They sat on the bank, listening to the ripple of the river, the distant roar of the waterfall and the hum of summer insects. It was very peaceful and quiet.

Ted was just going to ask Tom if he felt a nibble and Tom was about to remark that the fish were quite a while making up their minds to bite, when they heard the voice of Trouble shouting:

“I got a fish! I got a fish! Oh, I got a big fish! He’s going to pull me into the water! I got a fish!”

“Come on!” yelled Ted, dropping his pole and running back to where they had left the small boy.

CHAPTER X

STORM BOUND

“TROUBLE! Trouble! We’re coming!” yelled Ted, as his brother kept on shouting.

“Do you think he really has caught a fish?” asked Tom, as he plunged on through the weeds and bushes beside his chum.

“I don’t see how he could on a bent pin for a hook,” Teddy answered. “I made that for him so he wouldn’t stick it into his fingers. But you can’t catch a fish on a bent pin.”

“I’ve tried, but I never have,” stated Tom. “Still, you can’t tell.”

“I got a fish! I got a fish!” William continued to shout. “He’s a big one and he ’most pulls me into the water!”

“S’posing he falls in?” panted Tom. “Your mother will be mad if he does, won’t she?”

“It isn’t very deep where we let Trouble fish,” Ted said. “If he does fall in it won’t hurt him much.”

“Listen to him yell!” exclaimed Tom, for the small boy was, indeed, keeping up a great shouting.

By this time the two older lads had reached the spot where they had told Trouble to fish so he would not bother them. They saw him standing on the edge of the stream, holding to his pole with both hands. The string line extended down into the water. And by the manner in which the pole was bent and by the straightness of the line, it could be seen that Trouble had caught something.

“I got a terrible big fish!” he gasped, as the boys came running toward him. “I can’t pull it out, and when I tried it ’most pulled me in.”

Tom gave one look at the bent pole, which the little fellow was straining on, and said:

“I guess his hook caught in an old tin can or something down on the bottom of the river.”

“ ’Tis not! It’s a fish!” insisted Trouble.

Just then something on the other end of the line gave a pull and a yank, making the cord cut through the water.

“He’s got something!” cried Ted.

“Look out!” shouted Tom, for William took a step toward the edge of the bank and would have fallen in had not the Taylor lad caught hold of him. At the same time Tom grabbed the pole and began hauling on it. “He has got something, Ted!” Tom exclaimed. “It’s awfully heavy! I can’t get it out!”

“I’ll help,” Ted offered, and William was glad enough to let the older boys manage his catch.

The cord Ted had tied on the pole was stout, as was the rod itself. So it did not break when Ted and Tom both got hold of it and began hauling in William’s catch.

“I caught a big fish, didn’t I?” William asked, capering about in delight. “I beat everybody catching fish!”

“Look! Look!” suddenly cried Tom, pointing to the water, which was now being churned to bubbles as something on the end of Trouble’s line began swishing about. “That’s a queer fish!”

The snake-like head of some creature was pulled above the surface, and, as Trouble gasped in amazement at what was on his bent pin hook, Ted cried:

“It’s a big turtle! A mud turtle!”

“Sure enough!” echoed Tom. “No wonder it pulled! Haul him in, Ted!”

But this was easier said than done. Though Ted and Tom did manage to get the turtle on Trouble’s line half out of water, so they could see how large it was, suddenly the creature let go its hold of the pin, off which it had by this time eaten the worm, and back it dropped with a splash into the river.

“Oh, he’s gone!” murmured William.

“Never mind,” consoled his brother. “It wasn’t a fish, anyhow; and if we had got that turtle up on shore maybe it would have bitten us.”

“I wouldn’t like him to bite me,” said Trouble. “I guess I’m glad he got off. But I caught something, didn’t I?”

“You sure did!” agreed Tom.

“You beat us,” said Ted. “We haven’t even had a nibble.”

“But maybe we have some bites now. We’d better go back and look,” suggested Tom.

“Have I got to stay here?” asked Trouble a bit sadly, as his brother, after baiting his bent pin hook again, prepared to leave with Tom.

“You stay here, and maybe you’ll catch a real fish this time,” suggested Tom. “Then, after we get some, you can come with us.”

This satisfied the little chap, and he sat contentedly down again on the grassy bank, eagerly watching the cork which had been fastened on his line as a float.

“I didn’t think turtles would bite on a bent pin,” said Tom to his chum, as they went back to their fishing hole.

“This one must have been hungry,” remarked Ted, and then as he came within sight of his pole, which he had left on the ground, he broke into a run.

“What’s the matter?” called his chum.

“I think I have a bite!” was the answer.

Ted caught up his pole and found he had a good-sized fish on his hook, which he hauled up after a little struggle.

“This is a dandy place to fish!” exclaimed Tom. “I wonder if I got one!” His line was slack, but when he looked at the hook and found all the bait nibbled off, it gave him great hopes. “I’ll get one now!” he declared, as he baited and threw in again.

This time he was lucky, and in a short time he pulled out a bigger fish than Ted had caught. From then on the two boys had good luck, Ted catching three more fish and Tom two. As they were fish plenty large enough to take home to fry, the small anglers were quite delighted.

“I want to fish with you,” announced Trouble a little later, as he came through the bushes. “I can’t catch anything back there.”

“All right; but you have to be quiet!” stated Ted. “The fish are biting good here, and we don’t want you to scare ’em!”

Trouble promised to be good and quiet, and he was until Ted caught another fish—the largest of all—whereupon William set up such a shouting that if fish have any ears they must have heard him away down in the lake.

But Ted did not mind, he was so busy landing his prize. A moment later Tom had a bite, so perhaps the idea of noise scaring fish has not much truth in it.

Trouble was a bit sad because he had caught nothing but a turtle, which got away, so after a little while, when Ted had caught another fish, he let his small brother hold the rod, meanwhile standing near to watch him. To the small boy's delight, he soon had a nibble, then a bite, and with Ted's help, he really caught a fair-sized fish.

"I'm going to give my fish to mother!" said Trouble after it was taken out of the water and lay flapping on the grass. "She'll cook it for me." He insisted on carrying his fish home, whither the party started a little later.

At the bungalows the boys were received with exclamations of delight by Janet and Lola, who hardly thought their brothers would have any luck.

"And even Trouble caught a fish!" cried Janet, examining it with wonder as her little brother held it up.

"I got a turtle, too, but he fell off," William explained.

That night there was fried fish for supper in both summer bungalows, and Mr. Martin and Mr. Taylor said they would have to do some angling themselves, since the sport seemed to be so good.

The two men planned to get the camps in shipshape for their families and then go back to Cresco for a few days to attend to their business matters. After this they would come back to remain perhaps for a couple of weeks.

"You boys will have to be the men of the camp while Mr. Taylor and I are away," Mr. Martin said to Teddy that night before going to bed.

"We will," promised the Curlytop lad, feeling proud of the responsibility thus placed upon him.

The next morning, when Ted awakened in his room, he heard a drumming sound on the roof.

"Woodpeckers!" he cried, sitting up.

"It's rain," said Mr. Martin from the next room. "There's a big storm, and it's growing worse!"

"Oh, dear!" sighed Teddy. "Tom and I were going fishing again to-day. I guess we can't, now."

"I'm afraid not," remarked his mother.

"Rain isn't any fun!" grumbled Teddy, after breakfast was over. "I wish we could—"

Just then the telephone bell jingled.

“I wonder who that is,” murmured Janet, as her mother went to answer the call.

CHAPTER XI

TED DISAPPEARS

WHILE the rain drummed on the roof of the summer bungalow and while the drops splattered against the window glass, on one pane of which Trouble was pressing his nose quite flat, Mrs. Martin was talking into the telephone.

The Curlytops, both disappointed because of the storm, listened and heard their mother say:

“Oh, good morning, Mrs. Taylor. Or perhaps I should say a bad morning. Yes, isn’t it a terrible storm! Yes, we’re all right. What’s that? Are the children out? Certainly not! It’s terrible!” Then came a pause, during which Mrs. Taylor was speaking. At the end of a period of listening Mrs. Martin said:

“Why, yes, I guess that will be all right. It’s very good of you. I’ll send them right over. No, I guess that little distance in the rain won’t hurt them. It’s good of you to ask.”

“Does Mrs. Taylor want to borrow something, Mother?” asked Ted eagerly, when the telephone talk was over. “If she wants eggs I can take them over. Rain won’t hurt eggs!”

“I could help carry them!” offered Janet.

“So can I!” chimed in Trouble. “I could carry one egg and not let it drop, Mother!”

“Bless your funny little nose,” exclaimed Mrs. Martin, with a laugh, for William’s nose was quite flat from having been pressed against the window. “Mrs. Taylor doesn’t want to borrow any eggs.”

“What does she want to borrow then?” asked Teddy.

“You children!” his mother said, with a smile.

“Mrs. Taylor—wants to borrow us?” gasped Janet.

“Yes,” replied her mother. “Since it’s such a bad storm she says Tom and Lola can’t go out to play. Neither can you. It happens there is quite a large attic in the Taylor bungalow, and Mrs. Taylor asked if you three couldn’t come over there and play in it with Tom and his sister.”

“Oh, Mother! could we?” cried Janet.

“It would be great!” exclaimed Ted.

“We couldn’t fish over there, could we?” Trouble wanted to know.

“Fish? Of course not!” laughed Teddy. “But it’s wet enough to fish on the way over,” he added, as he looked from the window and saw the stretch of mud and water between the two bungalows.

“If you go you must hurry right over and not stay out in the rain any longer than you can help,” insisted his mother. “No lingering to fish.”

“Oh, then we can go!” cried Janet, jumping up and down in joy.

“Yes,” Mrs. Martin assented. “You will be dry and out of mischief over there. But don’t make too much noise in the attic.”

“We won’t,” the Curlytops promised, and they ran to get their raincoats and rubber boots, for the storm was now pelting down harder than ever.

“I wish I were young enough to go and play in an attic,” sighed Mr. Martin, as he watched the three children getting ready for the trip. “But I can manage to keep busy around the bungalow to-day, and to-morrow the sun may be shining,” he added.

Trouble was as eagerly excited as were his brother and sister who were getting their rain things ready, while Mrs. Martin laid out William’s rubber coat and boots. The children were to take slippers with them to wear in the Taylor bungalow after removing their wet and muddy boots.

When the side bungalow door was opened such a blast of wind and deluge of rain swept in as to cause Mrs. Martin to exclaim:

“Oh, what a dreadful storm! I hope nothing happens!”

The two bungalows stood in a little patch of woods about five hundred feet apart, and between them was a cleared place, which was fast being turned into a muddy bog by the falling rain.

But the Curlytops and Trouble were well protected by their rubber coats and boots, and with shouts of joy, as they felt the pelting rain in their faces, they ran down the steps and started across the open place. They could see Tom and Lola Taylor at their windows, watching for them to come over.

Half way across, Janet, who was behind her brother, heard Trouble call out as if something had happened. He was back of her and she turned to look at him, asking:

“What’s the matter, William?”

“I—I—now—I’m stuck in the mud!” she heard him say.

The wind was blowing hard and the rain was pelting down.

“Oh dear!” sighed Janet. “I s’pose I’ve got to pull you out!”

She had just managed to leap over a mud puddle, but it would not do to leave William caught fast in the bog, so the sister was hurrying toward him when he cried:

“I’m all right now! I pulled ’em out.”

“What did you pull out?” Janet asked, bending her head down to keep the rain out of her face. For this reason she did not see William very plainly. “What did you pull out, Trouble?”

“I pulled my feet out,” he explained. Janet, thinking he meant he had pulled his feet out of the mud, said:

“All right! That’s good! Come on!”

Then she turned and hurried to catch up to Ted, first making sure, however, that Trouble was following close behind her. She heard him laughing, but did not guess why.

A few moments later the three children were on the porch of the Taylor bungalow, on the sheltered side, and Tom and Lola rushed out.

“I’m so glad your mother let you come over!” exclaimed Lola.

“We’ll have packs of fun up in the attic!” said Tom to Ted.

And then Lola, looking at Trouble, cried:

“Why, where are his boots?” She pointed to William’s legs, and the others saw that he was in his stockings—wet, muddy stockings.

“Trouble!” cried Janet. “Where in the world are your boots?”

“I left ’em back there—stuck in the mud,” the little fellow explained.

“But why didn’t you tell me?” Janet wanted to know. “I asked if you were all right and you said you were, so I turned around and hurried on. Oh, Trouble!”

“I told you I’d pulled ’em out,” said Trouble. “I couldn’t get my boots loose so I pulled my feet out of my boots and I ran. The mud feels funny up between my toes!” and he stamped about on the porch making muddy marks.

“Well, you certainly have done it!” cried Ted, when he saw what had happened to his small brother. But when Mrs. Taylor, guessing something was wrong, came to the door, she could not help laughing.

“Trouble thought he was doing right,” she said. “He couldn’t pull his boots loose so he pulled his feet and legs out of his boots.”

“I see them back there in the mud,” Teddy said. “I’ll get ’em!”

“And I’ll take him in and put some dry stockings on him,” went on Lola’s mother, leading the small boy into the house.

Trouble’s boots were stuck so hard and fast in the thick mud that Ted could hardly pull them out. But at last he managed, though not before they were partly filled with water from the rain.

Having retrieved his brother’s boots, Ted ran back to the Taylor bungalow, where Trouble was having his feet washed and dried. His slippers were snug and dry in Ted’s raincoat pocket, and everything was soon all right, though Trouble had to go without stockings until his were rinsed out and dried by Mrs. Taylor, for Lola’s hose, the smallest in the summer bungalow, were much too large for him.

The wet boots of the little boy were put by the fire to dry, together with those of Ted and Janet, and then, having telephoned over to Mrs. Martin an account of what had happened, Mrs. Taylor told the five children to go up into the attic to play.

“Oh, what a fine place!” exclaimed Ted as he viewed it.

“And what lots of things to play with!” added Janet.

“The family that was here before must have left them,” stated Lola. “Because this is the first time we ever rented this place. There are two old dolls here,” she went on, bringing them out from a corner under the eaves. “We can play with them, Jan.”

“And we can play steamboat with these, Ted!” called Tom to his chum, as he pulled out into the center of the attic an old trunk and a broken baby carriage, the body pulled clear of the wheels.

“Oh, fine!” cried Ted, when he saw the wheels. “We can fix those and take turns steering with it!”

“I want to play steamboat!” announced Trouble.

“You can sit in the trunk and be a passenger,” said Tom.

Some chairs were hauled out and added to the “boat,” and Lola and Janet

sat in that with the dolls they had discovered.

“This is fun!” cried Ted as Tom tooted to blow the whistle while one of the wheels of the baby carriage spun around.

“Let it rain all it wants to!” agreed Lola and Janet. William laughed with delight. Being storm-bound wasn’t as bad as it had seemed at first.

“Now we’re off to Chicago!” cried Ted. “All aboard!”

“Don’t forget to collect the tickets,” cautioned Tom. “Every passenger must have a ticket.”

But playing steamboat was not enough to amuse the children for very long at a time, and when Ted discovered a roll of carpet and a small mattress in one corner of the attic, he had a new idea.

“We’ll play circus!” he exclaimed. “We can put this carpet down on the floor and roll around and turn somersaults and jump and land on the mattress and it won’t hurt us!”

“Fine!” agreed Tom.

The long strip of carpet was laid across the attic floor, and while Tom was putting the mattress in place Ted cried:

“Watch me! Here goes for the first somersault!”

He began turning head over heels on the strip of carpet, doing one somersault after another, meanwhile drawing near the end of the big attic. Suddenly, as his sister and Lola were watching, they heard Ted give a cry of alarm. He tried to check his last somersault but could not, and then, with a shout, the boy disappeared.

“He—he went right down through the floor!” cried Janet. “Oh, Teddy!”

CHAPTER XII

JANET SEES SOMETHING

TOM dropped the mattress he was putting in place so it could be used for the attic circus tricks, and ran over to the side of Janet and Lola. Trouble was in one corner trying to turn over as he had seen Ted do.

“What’s the matter?” asked Tom.

“Ted—Ted—went right through the floor!” gasped Janet.

“He couldn’t do that, you know!” stated Tom. “How could he go through the floor?”

“There must be a hole!” cried Lola.

“A hole in our attic floor! How could there be?” her brother wanted to know.

“Well, anyhow, Ted isn’t here! He’s gone!” cried Janet. “He was somersaulting along the strip of carpet, and when he got to the end he just disappeared!”

“Like a trick!” added Lola who had also seen the boy vanish.

“Maybe it is a new circus trick he’s doing,” suggested Tom. “That’s pretty good! Hello, Ted! Where are you?” he called.

But Teddy did not answer, nor was he in sight in the attic. The top part of the bungalow was lighted by two windows, and the end of the strip of carpet was near one window. It was in this direction that Ted had turned his somersaults, only to have them stop so suddenly.

“What could have happened?” gasped Lola.

“I’m going to find out!” declared her brother. He started to walk along the strip of carpet, when Lola reached out, catching him by the arm, and saying:

“Be careful, Tom!”

“What of?”

“You might disappear, too!”

“I’ll be careful,” he promised. “I have to find Ted!” he added, with chum-like loyalty.

He walked slowly across the attic in the direction Ted had vanished. Then he suddenly uttered a cry of surprise and delight.

“I’ve found him! I see him! Ted’s all right!” shouted Tom.

“Where is he?” demanded Janet, hastening with Lola toward Tom, while William, guessing that something had happened, stopped trying to flop himself over and ran toward the others.

“He’s down there through that hole on a bed,” was Tom’s answer. As his sister and Janet pressed forward he added: “Look out you don’t fall down too!”

There, in the attic floor, just at the end of the strip of carpet, was a square hole, leading down into a room below. The hole had been covered by a trapdoor. This door, for some unknown reason, had dropped and opened downward, instead of upward, as it should have done to make it safe, and directly under the trapdoor opening was a bed. On this bed Teddy Martin was sitting, looking up in a sort of dazed fashion at the faces of his sister, Tom, and Lola above him.

“Hello!” called Tom, as if he had not seen his chum for several days.

“Hello!” answered Ted in a matter of fact way.

This struck the girls as so funny that they burst out laughing, which was the best thing they could have done, for every one had been a bit frightened. Trouble also began to chuckle.

“What’d you go down there for?” went on Tom.

“I couldn’t help myself,” Teddy answered, laughing now with the rest. “I was somersaulting along and, all of a sudden, I felt myself falling. I thought I’d get hurt, but I fell on this soft bed and I’m all right. I felt sort of funny at first, though. I heard you calling me, but I couldn’t answer.”

“Maybe you were dizzy,” suggested Lola.

“I guess that was it,” Ted admitted, as he slid off the bed. “How can I get out of here?” he asked, looking up at Tom. “The door’s shut.”

“But it isn’t locked,” said the other boy. “Walk out and you’ll come to the stairs through a hall. Then you can come up here again.”

“But that trapdoor had better be fixed,” said Lola. “Somebody else might fall down.”

“Whose room is that that Ted fell into?” asked Janet, as her brother pushed open the door. By leaning over the edge of the opening in the floor they could watch him from above.

“It isn’t anybody’s room,” stated Tom. “It’s a sort of extra storeroom, and mother put the bed in there for company. It’s a good thing Ted fell on it.”

“It surely is,” agreed Janet.

By this time Mrs. Taylor had heard the unusual shouts of the children and had come to see what was wrong. When she learned the story of Ted falling through the trapdoor, she said:

“How lucky it was that the bed happened to be under that trap! I didn’t know that door opened. I must have Mr. Taylor nail it shut at once. The next person to fall through might get hurt.”

“It’s funny the trapdoor opens down,” said Ted, as he went up to the attic again.

When Mr. Taylor, who was also storm-bound, as was Mr. Martin, examined the door, he found that it was not intended to swing down. It was made to open up so things too large for the small attic stairs could be hoisted through the trap; but a broken hinge and a torn-off flange had let the door drop.

“I never knew that trapdoor was there,” said Mr. Taylor, as he closed it, nailing it shut so no more accidents could happen.

Ted and Tom would have been glad to have the trapdoor left as it was, as they thought, by leaving the soft bed under it, they could do better circus tricks. But when Tom proposed this his father objected.

“It’s too risky,” he said. “Play circus some other way.”

So Ted and Tom had to do this. But they had a lot of fun, and so did Lola and Janet before the rainy day was over. Trouble also enjoyed himself.

Night was coming on and Ted and Janet were thinking of going home. They looked about for Trouble, but he was not to be found, though they looked all over the bungalow and in the attic. Nor did the small boy answer when his name was called.

“Oh, where is Trouble?” wailed Janet. “Do you think he could have gone home, Mrs. Taylor?”

“I don’t know, dear. Perhaps I had better telephone to your mother and find out.”

“Oh, no! Not yet, please!”

So the search went on, and at length Tom found him curled up sound asleep in the old trunk that earlier in the day had been used to play the steamboat game.

“Go ’way and let me alone!” protested Trouble when Janet tried to lift him out. “I’m captain an’ I’m all aboard!”

“He’s talking in his sleep,” said Ted.

But at length William was awakened and his now dry boots put on him so he could wade through the mud and water back to “Bushytail Bungalow,” as the Curlytops named their summer cottage, after the two squirrels that had dragged the nut-filled shoes down the stairs.

It was still raining when night darkened the woods, though as Tom and his sister called farewells to their playmates they added that they hoped the sun would shine on the morrow.

“We’ll go hunting to-morrow, Ted, if it’s clear!” called Tom.

“Sure!” answered the Curlytop boy.

“What are you going to hunt? Don’t you mean fishing?” asked Janet of her brother, as they hurried into their own bungalow.

“No, we’re going to hunt animals!” Ted insisted. “Of course we aren’t going to shoot any of ’em,” he added. “We’re just going to hunt around and find where they have their dens, holes, and caves. So if ever we do want to hunt with guns we’ll know where to come.”

In the night the rain stopped and when morning came there was a warm sun and a gentle wind that would soon dry the woods so the children could go out to play.

“We’ll take our dolls and give them a picnic in the woods,” proposed Lola to Janet, as the two met on the porch of Bushytail Bungalow.

“That will be fun!” agreed Janet. “The boys are going hunting.”

Trouble ran into the house and came out with a little wooden pop-gun that shot a cork. He started off after Ted, who had gone to call for his chum Tom.

“Come back, Trouble! Where are you going?” his sister asked.

“I’m going hunting with Ted and Tom, I have a gun and I can shoot a bear!”

“No you don’t, you little tyke!” said his mother, with a laugh, as she ran after him and caught him. “You let Ted and Tom go off by themselves to-day.

You can't bother them."

"But I want to have some fun!" wailed Trouble.

"Let's take him with us," proposed Lola.

"It would be nice if you would," said Mrs. Martin. "I have some work I need to do."

William was almost as well satisfied to go with the girls as he would have been to tramp along with the boys who walked almost too fast for him. So he followed his sister and Lola along a path through the woods, carrying his pop-gun with him.

Lola and Janet found a pleasant glade near a spring of water where they sat down on two stumps, there to change the dresses of their dolls, putting on "old clothes," so that the pretend children could play about on the moss-covered ground.

Janet had just gotten her doll ready and was going to see where Trouble had wandered to, when she heard a rustling in the bushes, a sound as of some one walking on dried leaves. Then she caught sight of a long, sharp nose and two bright eyes peering out at her from a hole in the ground.

"Look, Lola! Look!" Janet whispered, pointing. "Do you see that? What is it?"

CHAPTER XIII

A NIGHT ALARM

LOLA, who was tying a red ribbon around her doll's hair to make her look extra pretty, turned at the sound of Janet's voice and glanced to where her playmate pointed.

"I don't see anything," said Lola.

"Right there! In that hole under the old stump!" and Janet's voice was now a whisper. "It's—oh, it's a bear! Lola! Let's run! Mother! Oh! Oh!"

At this instant Lola saw the thing at which Janet was pointing. It was an animal. Lola looked long enough to make sure of this. Then, with a cry that echoed, as did Janet's through the woods, Lola dropped her doll and sprang down the hillside path, followed by Janet.

"Did you—did you see it?" panted Janet, casting one wild look back over her shoulder.

"Yes, I—I saw it," and Lola's voice was also short-breathed. "But it wasn't a bear!"

"It was some sort of animal!" went on Janet.

"I know! But it wasn't a bear. I think it was a wolf!"

"That's just as bad!" cried Janet. "Run faster!"

Lola did, and the two made good speed away from the place until all of sudden, Lola happened to think of Janet's small brother.

"Where's William?" she asked, slowing up a bit.

The same thought came into the mind of Janet, for she had been about to go in search of her brother when she saw the beast.

"If he's back there with that wolf," began Lola, "he'll be—"

But just then Janet caught sight of William ahead of them and farther along the path which led down the hill. Her little brother was slinking along with his pop-gun held in readiness as he must have imagined a hunter would move through the forest. Trouble had circled around the place where Janet and Lola

were playing with their dolls and was safe on ahead.

“Thank goodness!” murmured Lola. “The wolf can’t get him!”

“It was a bear, I’m sure!” declared Janet more calmly now, for a backward look did not show any animal chasing them.

“Well, a bear then,” echoed Lola. “I didn’t look very good I was so scared. I just ran!”

“So did I!”

The two girls had slowed down now, and Trouble waved one hand toward them.

“I’m a hunter!” he said.

Just then Lola gave a scream.

“What’s the matter?” asked her playmate.

“My doll! My doll!” and Lola continued to scream. “I dropped my doll back there and now the wolf—I mean bear—or whatever it is—will eat my doll! Oh! Oh, I’ve got to go back!”

It was dreadful! Even Janet knew that. But to go back where she had seen that sharp nose and glittering eyes—that was dreadful, too. Still they could not leave Lola’s doll to the mercy of the wild beast.

“Will you come back with me?” asked Lola.

It was a great test of friendship, but Janet never hesitated.

“I—I’ll go with you,” she said in a low voice. “But maybe we won’t have to.”

“Won’t have to? What do you mean?”

“I mean the bear—or maybe it was a wolf, I’m not sure—won’t eat dolls, will he? Your doll is stuffed with sawdust and—”

“Well, if he won’t eat her he’ll tear off all her clothes and even if it’s an old dress I don’t want it torn,” stated Lola. “We just have to go back, Janet!”

Just then there was a rattling and cracking in the bushes back of the girls.

“Here it comes!” screamed Lola, and she would have dashed on again, leaving her doll to its fate but Janet cried:

“It’s Tom and Ted!” and the two hunters, with bows and arrows they had made in the woods, came stalking out. It was their advance that had made the

noise.

“Oh, I’m so glad!” exclaimed Lola, “If it had been that bear, or wolf—” She sank limply on a stump.

“What’s the matter?” asked her brother, guessing that something was wrong.

“Did you see a wolf?” asked Ted, catching the word.

“Or a bear, we aren’t sure which,” answered Lola.

“Tell us! Show us where it was!” cried Tom. “We can shoot it now. We’re regular hunters—we have bows and arrows!”

Between them the girls managed to tell what they had seen, and then Trouble came shuffling up the hill with his pop-gun.

“Come on!” yelled Ted to his chum, when they had learned the direction of the place from which the girls had fled. “We’ll get that wolf. I guess it’s a fox and not a bear,” Ted went on, “because there aren’t any bears or any wolves in these woods, mother said.”

“Oh, you’d better not go!” cried Janet.

But the boys rushed away in spite of her warning calls. Hardly knowing what to do, afraid to stay there with Trouble and afraid to go back, at last Janet and Lola walked slowly in the direction taken by their brothers.

Presently they heard loud laughter, and a moment later Ted and Tom came running down the hill.

“Did you shoot it?” asked Janet.

“Was it a bear or a wolf?” Lola wanted to know.

“Neither one—it was only a little red fox,” answered Tom, with a laugh.

“And we didn’t shoot it because it ran so fast we couldn’t,” added his chum.

“Then it’s gone?” asked Janet.

“It ran back into its hole just as we got there,” Ted reported. “But we had a good look at him and he’s only a red fox.”

“Was my doll all right?” faltered Lola.

“Doll!” exclaimed her brother. “We didn’t see any doll.”

“Oh, then maybe that fox took her into his den!” and she was nearly ready

to cry.

But Janet proposed that they hurry back and look. When they had done this they found the doll just where Lola had dropped it, and found, too, that it had suffered no harm at all.

The four stood there, looking at the freshly dug hole out of which the red fox had so unexpectedly popped to peer at the girls, when there came a sharp sound and Ted felt a stinging pain on the back of his head.

“Hey! What’s that?” he exclaimed.

“Oh, I didn’t mean to do it!” cried Trouble. “My pop-gun went off when I wasn’t looking!”

“You should have had it here when the girls saw the fox,” went on Ted, with a laugh, as he picked up the cork that had hit him, without, however, doing any real harm. “Could you hit a fox, Trouble?”

“He hit you, anyhow!” chuckled Tom.

“We’d better not stay here,” suggested Janet to Lola. “It’s nice, but that fox might come back. Let’s go down by the lake.”

This the girls did, and Trouble went with them. He said he would shoot some fishes, and he did pop his cork into the shallow water near shore several times, but without hitting any fish. He took off his shoes and stockings and waded in after the cork, having a lot of fun this way while Lola and Janet played with their dolls.

Mr. Martin was to go to Cresco the next day, taking the early morning train with Mr. Taylor. They would come back, however, for the week-end.

In the middle of the night Mrs. Martin was suddenly awakened by hearing a noise in the room where Trouble slept on a cot beside Ted’s. The mother of the Curlytops raised herself up in bed and listened.

She heard Trouble shrilly calling:

“Ted! Teddy! Wake up!”

But Theodore was sleeping soundly. He and Tom had tramped several miles through the woods that day.

“Ted! Teddy!” called Trouble again. “Wake up!”

“What is it, dear?” asked Mrs. Martin in a low voice, as she quietly prepared to get out of bed, for she did not want to awaken her husband, who must be up early to catch the train. “Do you want a drink of water?”

She could hear William sigh in relief as she answered him. But instead of saying he wanted a drink, which he often did, he said:

“Mother, there’s something in my room! It’s a animal, and I guess it’s an elephant! I wish you’d come and take it out!”

CHAPTER XIV

IN SWIMMING

WITH a little jump, Mrs. Martin was out of bed and hastening down the hall toward the room of her two sons. She did not really think anything had happened, and that there was no elephant in Trouble's room she was very certain.

"He must have had a queer dream and it is with him now, even though he is awake," she thought. "Or perhaps he is talking in his sleep. William! William!" she called softly, so as not to awaken the others.

"Mother! Mother!" shrilly whispered the little lad. "Come and get this animal out of my room!"

His voice was so natural now and he seemed so alarmed that his mother was sure something had happened. She glided quickly along the hall to the door of Teddy's room. She pushed open the door and looked in.

There was a bright moon, and the beams were shining on the open window in the boys' bedchamber. Mrs. Martin looked first at one cot and then at the other. On one Teddy was peacefully sleeping. In the other, William was sitting up, as close to the wall as he could get, and he was pointing to something on the moonlit window sill.

His mother looked in the same direction and saw a queer, wizened face, long, hairy paws, and what Trouble must have thought was an elephant's trunk, for it was slowly moving to and fro.

"Oh, my dear!" cried Mrs. Martin, and then, with a chatter of seeming rage, the beast leaped from the window sill while Trouble's mother sprang toward his cot to shield him.

But she need not have been afraid, for the creature on the window sill leaped out and not in, and jumped into a tree the branches of which were close against the bungalow.

"Now the little elephant's gone!" said Trouble, with a sigh of relief. "I wish I had my pop-gun. I could 'a' shot him!"

“That wasn’t an elephant, Trouble,” said his mother.

“What was it?” asked the little boy.

Just then Mr. Martin, who had been roused by his wife’s cry, came running in.

“What’s the matter?” he asked, as he turned on the light in the hall. “Did anything happen?”

“There was a little elephant on my window sill,” answered Trouble, getting ready to snuggle down in bed again to go to sleep. “He was a nice little elephant and he had a trunk. Maybe you can catch him if you go down in the woods, Daddy, ’cause he jumped out the window.”

“An elephant in here! Nonsense!” exclaimed Mr. Martin, with a laugh.

“I guess Trouble was having one of his queer dreams,” said the mother of the Curlytops, and she made a sign to her husband to go out of the room. “He wasn’t exactly talking in his sleep,” she went on, “but it was like that. There was no elephant, William. Go to sleep!”

Trouble did not answer. His mother went over to his cot. He was fast asleep again, forgetting all about the “elephant.” The coming in of his father and mother had made everything right.

Mrs. Martin was tiptoeing out of the room after her husband, who did not quite know why his wife had made him that motion, when Ted, awakened by the talking and the brighter light, sat up and asked sleepily:

“What’s the matter?”

“Nothing, dear. It’s all right. Go to sleep again. Trouble was a bit disturbed and I came in to quiet him. It’s all right.”

So Teddy turned over and with a contented sigh snuggled his head down on the pillow, probably to dream of the fun he would have on the coming day. Before Mrs. Martin left the room she went over to the window and looked out into the woods. She saw nothing. Then she went out into the hall where her husband awaited her.

“What was it?” Mr. Martin asked.

“There was some sort of an animal on the window sill of the boys’ room when I went in,” was the answer. “I didn’t want to let William think I had seen it, and I didn’t want to arouse Teddy. But there was some sort of a beast that jumped out into one of the trees as I went into the room.”

“It couldn’t have been even a baby elephant,” said Mr. Martin, with a

smile. “Elephants don’t climb trees. Besides—”

“It was a monkey,” interrupted Mrs. Martin.

“A monkey?”

“Yes, a monkey with a long tail. It was the tail that made William think he saw an elephant’s trunk. The monkey jumped out into a tree near the window. It probably climbed up the tree and so got to the window sill.”

“Hum! A monkey!” repeated Mr. Martin musingly. “I wonder how a monkey got in these woods!”

“Probably some of Animal Joe’s beasts have escaped,” replied the Curlytops’ mother. “If I didn’t know they were tame animals, I might be a bit frightened. But as long as they are trained for pets, there is nothing to worry about. Only I wish he’d keep them locked up so they won’t be waking us up in the middle of the night,” and with a laugh she went back to her room.

“That’s so,” agreed her husband. “It isn’t any fun to have monkeys come in our windows. I’ll look up Joe and tell him where he can find his missing monkey. In the morning we can tell William and Teddy what really was in the room.”

“Then they’ll want to chase through the woods and find the monkey,” said Mrs. Martin. “Well, I guess there will be no harm in that.”

In the morning, though Trouble did not remember much of what had happened the night before, Ted, at the breakfast table, inquired:

“What did you come into my room last night for, Mother?”

“To quiet William. He saw an elephant on the window sill,” was the smiling answer.

“An elephant!” cried Teddy.

“Oh, now I ’member!” exclaimed the little fellow. “He had a long trunk and he waved it at me!”

“You’re crazy!” cried Teddy, with a laugh.

“No,” went on Mrs. Martin, with a smile. “There was something in your room, Teddy, but it was a monkey, not an elephant.”

“A monkey!” cried the Curlytop lad. “Oh, I wish I’d stayed awake! Tell me about it!”

Then, while Mr. Martin hurried to get ready to take the train back to Cresco with Mr. Taylor, the story of the night alarm was told.

“I guess it must be one of Animal Joe’s monkeys,” decided Teddy, when the story ended. “Tom and I will catch that monkey and maybe Joe will give us a reward.”

“I’ll help you,” offered William.

“Finish your breakfast first,” advised his mother.

Mr. Martin was already through with his. He hurried out of the bungalow, meeting Mr. Taylor on the road that ran through the woods. A man who had a wood lot farther up Lake Rimón had agreed to take the two fathers to the station in his auto, and he now came along to help them catch the train.

“Good-bye!” called Mr. Martin to his family, waving his hand to the Curlytops. “I’ll be back on Friday.”

“So will I!” added Mr. Taylor.

“We’ll have the monkey caught by that time!” promised Ted.

Tom was quite as excited as was his chum when he heard what had happened in Bushytail Bungalow during the night.

“We sure will catch that monkey!” declared Tom.

A little later he and Ted were roaming the woods, carrying their bows and blunt arrows.

Up and down through the woods roamed the two boys, looking this way and that for a sight of the long-tailed monkey. Once or twice they thought they saw or heard him, but it always turned out to be a bird or perhaps a fox or some other animal skulking through the bushes.

So about the middle of the forenoon the boys, tired and warm, reached the edge of the lake in a quiet shaded spot where there was a sandy beach and shallow water out for quite a distance.

“I know what we can do!” exclaimed Ted.

“What?” asked Tom, looking at the cool water.

“We can go in swimming!”

“That’s just what I was thinking of!” exclaimed his chum.

They quickly began to undress. They put their clothes near a pile of stones on the bank, together with their bows and arrows. Then into the water they plunged.

“This is great!” cried Tom, splashing about.

“Best fun I ever had!” agreed Ted.

Both boys could swim fairly well, though they did not go out too far, where it was deep, having promised their mothers not to.

For half an hour they enjoyed the limpid coolness of the water, swimming, floating, and doing all the tricks dear to the hearts of boys. Then, as Ted noticed how high in the heavens the sun had climbed, he exclaimed:

“I guess it must be almost dinner time!”

“Yes, it’s about noon,” agreed Tom. “We’d better get out and dry ourselves and go home. We can hunt that monkey again this afternoon.”

They raced out of the lake, Ted slightly in the lead. When he got to the pile of stones he stopped suddenly.

“What’s the matter?” asked Tom, following.

“Didn’t we leave our clothes here?”

“Sure, we did! Why?”

“Well, they’re not here now! They’re gone!”

CHAPTER XV

ON THE ISLAND

“YOU’RE JOKING!” exclaimed Tom when he realized what Teddy Martin had said about the clothes. “They can’t be gone!”

“But they are!” Teddy insisted. “You don’t see ’em anywhere, do you?”

Tom looked all around the pile of stones. They were high and dry above the high-water mark of the lake, which in spring and early summer was farther up the shore than later in the season.

“No, I don’t see ’em,” Tom admitted. “Ah, you hid ’em!” he exclaimed, with a laugh.

“I did not!” declared Teddy. “I was in the water all the time with you. I didn’t come out until you did! How could I hide ’em?”

“That’s so—you couldn’t,” agreed Tom. “But where are our clothes?”

“That’s what I’d like to know,” echoed Ted. “They’re gone, all right. Somebody took ’em!”

Tom was wandering aimlessly up and down the lake shore near the rocks when suddenly he uttered a joyful cry and ran toward a clump of bushes—that is, he ran as fast as he could over the rough stones of the beach.

“There they are!” he shouted, pointing. “There are our clothes on that bush. The wind must ’a’ blown ’em there!”

He was so excited that he was forgetting half his words and clipping the others off short.

“It would take a strong wind to blow all our clothes off the rocks over on the bushes,” declared Ted, as he ran along after his chum. “And I didn’t notice much wind when we were in the lake.”

Tom did not answer, for, by this time, he was at the bush, pulling off some garments. Then he called:

“It’s only part of our clothes—just our union suits. Our pants and shirts are gone!”

And when Ted got there he found this to be true. Only the undergarments of the boys were on the bush—their outer clothing had disappeared.

“What are we going to do?” asked Tom, shivering a little as he began to dry himself on his underwear before pulling it on. “We can’t go home this way, and I don’t see our other clothes.”

“I don’t either,” agreed his chum, beginning to dress as much as possible. “If we could slip through the woods and go in the back way it would be all right—if we didn’t meet any folks.”

The two searched, but found no more of their garments. They went back to the rocks again, but the only things there were the home-made bows and arrows.

Then Ted had a thought.

“Say!” he cried to his chum. “I know who took our things!”

“Who?”

“That monkey of Animal Joe’s we’re hunting. It was the monkey who sneaked out of the woods when we weren’t looking and took our clothes. He ran away with them but dropped our union suits.”

“Say, I believe he did!” cried Tom. “We have a good reason for hunting him now.”

“That’s what!” exclaimed Ted. “But we’ll have to go home and get some shoes. We can’t go through the woods barefooted.”

“No, I guess we can’t. We’ll go home.”

A little later two somewhat bashful boys, slipping from bush to bush, made their way to the back doors of their respective bungalows. Tom got in without being seen, but as Ted was entering and going up the back stairs, his mother saw him and called:

“What’s the matter? Where have you been?”

“I’ve been in swimming,” Teddy answered. “You said I might if I didn’t go where it was deep, and we didn’t.”

“Of course it was all right for you to go in swimming. But, my dear boy, where are your clothes?”

“The monkey took them!”

“The monkey?”

“Yes, he took Tom’s clothes and mine!” and standing halfway up the stairs, Ted told the story.

“I never heard of such a thing!” exclaimed his mother. “You didn’t see the monkey, did you?”

“No, Mother. But who else could it have been? There aren’t any boys around here who would do such a thing, are there?”

“I hardly believe so. But you can’t tell. And if a monkey is roaming around in the woods he might be mischievous enough to do such a trick as that.”

“He might dress up in our clothes,” went on Ted. “They were old ones, so it won’t hurt much if he tears them. But Tom and I are going to hunt him again after dinner. We have a good reason for chasing him now.”

“Yes, I suppose so,” agreed Mrs. Martin. “But I wish you would wait until your father comes back before doing any more hunting after that monkey. He is going to see Animal Joe, who may know the best way to find this runaway long-tailed chap.”

“Yes,” agreed Ted, “I guess he would. But we want to have some fun this afternoon, Tom and I do.”

“Then come with us,” invited Mrs. Martin.

“Where you going?”

“On a picnic to Squirrel Island,” was the answer. “Mrs. Taylor and I are going to take William and the girls. You boys may come if you like.”

“I guess we’d like, all right,” said Ted, with a laugh.

“Then hurry and get dressed. Don’t worry about your clothes that are missing. You have another old suit you can wear. And I heard Tom’s mother say she brought along plenty of old clothes for him.”

After a small, hasty lunch, for they planned to eat again on Squirrel Island, which was about a mile out in Lake Rimón, the party assembled on the shore between the two bungalows. There was a large boat and a small one, and it was decided to go in the larger craft. Both Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Taylor could row, but the boys pleaded to be allowed to take the oars, so they were permitted to do so, and the merry little party soon set off over the blue waters.

“Are there squirrels on the island?” asked Trouble, as he sat between Janet and Lola, who had promised to watch him.

“I suppose there must be or it wouldn’t have that name,” Mrs. Taylor said.

“Then I’m going to shoot some with my pop-gun!” decided Trouble, bringing his toy out from the bottom of the boat.

“Oh, you wouldn’t hurt the pretty squirrels, would you?” asked his sister. “I thought you liked squirrels!”

“I do,” Trouble said. “And I won’t shoot any to hurt ’em. I will just shoot ’em to make them feel tickled and they’ll laugh and then I can catch them easy.”

The boat was tied to a tree on shore and when the baskets of lunch were lifted out the party walked toward the middle of the island. They had no idea of the queer adventure that was soon going to take place.

CHAPTER XVI

A QUEER DOG

SQUIRREL ISLAND was a beautiful place for a picnic. In fact, it was beautiful, anyhow, whether one was there on a picnic or not. But, of course, the Curlytops thought it was ever so much nicer when they had two baskets of lunch with them.

“We can have a lot of fun here!” exclaimed Ted to Tom, as they walked on ahead of the others, carrying the baskets.

“That’s right!” Tom agreed. “I don’t s’pose we can find that monkey here, though, with our clothes.”

“No, I guess not,” Ted replied. “He couldn’t swim over from the main shore,” and the lad looked back toward the beach they had left. It was about a mile away, perhaps a little less.

There was a grassy glade in the center of the island where there was a spring of clear, sparkling water, and it was decided to eat the lunch here about the middle of the afternoon. It was now only a little after one o’clock.

“Well, now you children can play about as much as you please,” said Mrs. Martin to the boys and girls. “Mrs. Taylor and I will rest in the shade and do a little sewing we brought with us. But don’t go so far away that we can’t call you back to lunch.”

“Oh, we won’t go too far for that!” promised Tom, with a laugh.

“No, indeed!” echoed Ted.

Janet and Lola had brought some smooth pebbles from the shore and they set about playing jackstones with them, while Trouble was satisfied to shoot the cork from his pop-gun toward a big stump that his mother pointed out to him, telling the little chap he could pretend it was an elephant.

This left Ted and Tom free to wander about as they pleased, and they took their bows and arrows and started for the far end of the island, half hoping, by some chance, they might come upon the monkey.

“Though if he did bring our clothes with him they’d be all wet,” laughed

Ted.

“Unless the monkey rowed over in a boat as we did,” added Tom.

This idea was so odd that the two boys laughed heartily at it, and then they wandered on through the woods, enjoying every minute of the beautiful summer day.

Several times Ted or Tom thought they heard animals moving about in the thick underbrush of the island. Once Tom shot an arrow into a quivering bush. But he hit nothing, and very likely the noise and movements were made by flitting birds that were keeping themselves hidden from the human visitors.

At length a long, clear call sounded through the trees.

“Whoo-oo! Ho, boys! Come to lunch!”

“That’s mother calling us!” said Ted.

“All right,” agreed his chum. “We’ll hurry back. I’m hungry, aren’t you?”

“I sure am!”

Following the meal, the mothers wandered about a little with the children, finding prettily colored stones on the shore of the island opposite to that on which they had landed. There were flowers to look at and to search for in the flower book that Mrs. Martin had brought along. Lola and Janet picked up a number of very large acorns, from which they took the caps. These were to be used as cups and saucers when they again played keeping house.

“Well, I guess it is nearly time to go back now,” said Mrs. Martin after a while. “The sun is getting low and we want to be back on the main shore before it begins to get dark.”

The children would have liked to stay longer, but it was decided that it was best to leave. So after the empty dishes had been packed back in the baskets (there was no food remaining to pack) the start was made for the other shore.

Ted was the first to reach the place where the boat had been moored, and the others heard him set up an excited shouting as he ran out on the beach.

“Our boat’s gone!” cried Ted.

“Gone?” echoed Mrs. Taylor.

“Is it really gone?” exclaimed Janet.

By this time they had all come out of the woods and were on the open beach. They saw Ted pointing down the lake, and there, about a quarter of a mile away, being gently blown along by the wind, was their rowboat.

“How in the world did it get away down there?” asked Lola.

“The rope must have come loosened,” said her mother. “I thought I tied it firmly, but either I didn’t or—”

“Somebody came and untied it!” cried Tom. “That’s how it happened! Somebody untied the rope and let our boat go adrift!”

“I am so sorry about it!” exclaimed Mrs. Taylor. “It is all my fault for tying such a foolish knot.”

“I would very likely have done just the same,” said the mother of the Curlytops. “And perhaps it wasn’t your fault at all. Maybe the rope rubbed against a sharp rock and was cut through. We can tell when we get the boat back.”

“Yes but how are we to get it back?” asked Tom’s mother. “The wind is blowing it away from us. Though perhaps if we shout some one on the main shore may hear us and come out to get us in another boat. Can your maid row a boat?”

“I don’t believe so,” answered Mrs. Martin. “I never asked Nora whether she could or not. How about your cook?”

“I don’t believe she knows one end of an oar from the other.”

“We’ll get that boat!” suddenly cried Ted. “Tom and I!”

“How?” asked his mother.

“We’ll swim for it!”

“Indeed you won’t! It’s too far and the water is too deep!”

“Maybe we could make a raft,” suggested Tom hopefully.

“No, that can’t be done, either,” laughed his mother. “It would be too dangerous even if it weren’t absurd, and you couldn’t make a raft that would hold us all. We shall just have to call for help and wait until it comes. We’ll all shout! Ready now! Yell!”

They were just going to do this when there was a rustling in the bushes and out on the beach ran a dog. Quite a queer dog he was, for after wagging his tail to show how glad he was to see the boys and girls, he suddenly stood on his hind legs and began walking around in that fashion.

“Oh, what a queer dog!” cried Janet.

CHAPTER XVII

TROUBLE'S TRICK

MRS. MARTIN and her friend and neighbor, Mrs. Taylor, were more worried about how they were to get off the island with no boat than they were interested in looking at a strange dog. Dogs were common, but boats that drifted away were not so much so.

“Better be careful of that dog, children!” called Mrs. Taylor. “He’s strange and he may nip you.”

“Oh, he’s real gentle!” exclaimed Tom. “Look! He lets me pet him!”

“Don’t get too friendly,” warned Ted’s mother, as she saw him and his chum, with the girls and Trouble, gathering around the dog that, after marching around on his hind legs a little while, now dropped to all four paws and walked naturally.

“I’m going to have him for my dog!” declared William.

“Oh, I don’t believe you could do that,” said Janet. “This dog belongs to somebody who’ll want him back.”

“Is it somebody on this island?” asked the small boy.

“It must be,” remarked Tom. “But we didn’t see any house, did we, Ted?”

“No; and I don’t believe anybody lives here.”

By this time the two ladies who had been watching their boat drift farther and farther away began to think that something must be done. They had been going to shout for help when the strange dog appeared so suddenly, and now, hearing Tom say something about the dog having swum over from the main shore, Mrs. Taylor said to Mrs. Martin:

“Do you suppose we could get that dog to swim after our boat and tow it back to us?”

“Oh, what a wonderful idea!” cried the mother of the Curlytops. “If that could be done everything would be all right. Here, Rover!” she called, snapping her fingers and whistling. “Here, Rover!”

“Is his name Rover?” asked Janet.

The dog didn't seem to care what his name was, for he at once bounded to the side of Mrs. Martin, capering about her and wagging his tail.

“Rover is as good a name as any,” replied Mrs. Martin. “Whose dog are you, anyhow?” she went on, patting his head. She could now see that the strange animal was kind and gentle, and she no longer objected to having the children near him.

“He must have swum over from the main shore,” declared Tom, “and he's been hiding around, maybe sleeping in the bushes, until just now. Maybe he will get our boat. Shall I tell him to?”

“How can he pull that boat back here?” asked Lola.

“He can row it same as mother does,” said Trouble, as if that settled the matter. Amid the laughter of the others Janet said:

“The dog couldn't row, Trouble, but maybe he could get hold of the end of the rope, that's fast to the boat, and hold it in his mouth and swim back to us here.”

“That's just what I was thinking!” exclaimed Ted.

“Well, we've got to do something pretty soon, or else stay on this island all night!” declared Mrs. Taylor.

“Unless we can make some one hear by shouting, so they will come in a boat and take us off,” added Mrs. Martin.

But as the ladies looked toward the rather lonesome shore of the mainland, where their summer bungalows were located, they very much doubted that they could get help from there.

“Try the dog!” decided Mrs. Martin. “I hope he can be made to do what we want.”

“I'll see if he'll fetch back a stick!” proposed Ted.

He tossed a small branch into the water, pointed to it and called to the dog:

“Go get it, Rover!”

With a bark, the dog bounded into the water, grabbed the stick in his mouth, and came swimming back, to climb out on shore and drop it at Ted's feet. Then he looked up into the boy's face as much as to ask:

“Do it again!”

Once again the dog did the trick.

“Try the boat now!” begged Mrs. Martin, for the shadows were lengthening and it would soon begin to get dark.

“Here, Rover!” called Ted, pointing to the boat which was slowly drifting farther and farther away. “Go get it! Bring back the boat! Get hold of the rope and tow the boat back, Rover!”

“Will he be strong enough?” asked Mrs. Taylor in a low voice while Ted continued to repeat his commands.

“If a dog can pull a drowning person out of the water, I should think this one could tow a boat back,” Mrs. Martin said. “An empty boat can easily be pulled along in the water.”

For a time Rover, which they decided they would call the dog until they could learn his right name, thought Ted should toss the stick in again. But at last the animal appeared to understand that it was the boat that was wanted.

Then with a bark, which seemed to indicate that he would do the best he could, Rover plunged into the lake and began paddling in the direction of the drifting boat.

“Oh, he’s going to do it!” cried Tom.

“Don’t be too sure,” his mother said. “He may turn back after he gets halfway there.”

Anxiously, they all watched Rover, especially the two ladies, for they realized, better than did the children, how unpleasant it would be if they had to stay on that island all night.

The boat had not drifted away quite as far as it seemed at first, and Rover reached it in short time. Then, instead of trying to climb in, as some dogs might have done, he paddled all around it until he saw the dangling rope floating on top of the water, for it had not yet had time to become soaked, after which it would sink.

Then, probably imagining or pretending the rope was a stick he had to bring back, Rover took the free end in his mouth and began to swim to the island where the little party of picnickers awaited him.

“Oh, isn’t he a darling!” cried Lola when she saw what the dog had started to do.

“Sure!” agreed Tom Taylor. “Look at him pull, would you!”

For now Rover had to swim as hard as he could and pull on the rope with

all his might to turn the drifting boat about and get it started toward the island. Luckily, there was no current, as there would have been in a river, and no tide, as there would have been in the ocean. So after he had once stopped the boat from drifting away and had turned it about and started it on the backward journey, it was easy for Rover to swim along, towing the craft.

But the boys could see that he had a hard struggle until he had swung the boat about. However, it was done at last, and then, clapping their hands at the success of the dog, the two ladies eagerly watched him coming back nearer and nearer to the island.

“He’s a good dog!” declared Trouble.

Finally, somewhat tired by his long swim and by the work, Rover climbed out on the bank, the rope still in his mouth. He dropped the end of the rope on the ground at Ted’s feet, and the Curlytop boy made haste to pull the boat in closer to shore so that his mother and the others could get in, Tom and the girls helping Ted in this work.

“The rope isn’t cut and it isn’t worn out by rubbing on the rock,” Ted reported when he looked at it. “I guess it just came untied.”

“I suppose so,” agreed Mrs. Taylor. “And it was all my fault for making such a poor knot.”

“Don’t blame yourself,” again consoled Mrs. Martin. “The same thing might have happened to me. Anyhow, we’re all right now. Are the oars in the boat, Ted?”

“Yes, Mother, they’re here!”

“Then we’ll soon be home.”

“Shall we take the dog with us?” asked Janet.

“If he wants to come,” her mother said. “It wouldn’t seem right to leave him alone on this island after what he has done for us. But maybe he wants to stay here.”

It did not seem so, however, for when the children got into the boat Rover followed, taking his place up in the bow with the two boys and William. Then Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Martin got in and began rowing across the lake in the light of the purple and golden sunset.

“My, we’re well out of that trouble!” exclaimed Mrs. Martin, looking back toward the island where she had been afraid they might have to stay all night.

It did not take long to row across the stretch of water between the main

shore and Squirrel Island, and in a short time the boat was securely tied to the little dock in front of the bungalows, and the two maids, Nora and Mary, hastened down to the shore.

“I thought you were lost!” said Nora to the Curlytops.

“We almost had to stay on the island all night,” Janet replied. Mrs. Taylor was telling her maid what had happened.

“We have a new dog,” Trouble said, walking along beside the animal, who seemed especially fond of children.

“Oh, are you going to keep him?” asked Nora, who was fond of pets.

“He’s going to be part my dog!” went on Trouble.

“Oh, you mustn’t say that!” exclaimed Mrs. Martin. “We don’t know whose dog he is! Though I must say of all the dogs I have ever seen this one is the smartest!”

The two ladies hurried into the bungalows to see to the getting of the evening meal, leaving the children out in front of the bungalows with the dog. Pretty soon the voice of Trouble was heard. His mother looked out of the window and saw him with the dog off a little way from the others. Trouble was shouting:

“I got a trick! Oh, I got a funny trick! Look! Look! See what Rover does for me! It’s a fine trick!”

CHAPTER XVIII

ANIMAL JOE

“TROUBLE! Trouble! What’s the matter?” his mother called, hurrying out of the bungalow toward him.

The other children, hearing the shouts of the little fellow and the question of his mother, left off getting the empty baskets and oars out of the boat and ran toward him.

“What’s the matter?” asked Mrs. Martin again.

“Nothing’s the matter!” Trouble answered, with a gleeful laugh. “I’m having a lot of fun! Look at the trick Rover did for me!”

By this time the others were near enough to see what was taking place. Trouble had taken his pop-gun with him out of the boat, not having shot any monkeys or other wild beasts. In some way Rover had become possessed of the little wooden weapon and was holding it in his front paws and marching around, upright on his hind legs.

“Just like a soldier!” shouted Trouble, laughing as he capered about the dog. “Rover’s doing a soldier trick for me!”

That is just what the clever animal was doing. Afterward Trouble said he had held out his pop-gun toward the dog, and as if that was a signal for him to do the trick, Rover had taken it and at once began marching.

“He’s a real trick dog!” declared Tom.

“Best I ever saw!” agreed Teddy. “We’re surely going to keep him now! I wonder if he can do any other tricks?”

“Maybe he can play dead,” suggested Tom. “Most dogs that play the soldier trick can play dead if you tell ’em to.”

“We’ll try,” agreed Ted.

When Rover had marched about several times with the toy gun, to the great delight of Trouble and the two girls, no less than that of Ted and Tom, the dog, as if he had had enough of that, dropped the little weapon and began walking on his four legs.

“Dead dog!” suddenly cried Ted, snapping his fingers sharply. “Dead dog!”

Just as if he was used to doing this all his life, Rover suddenly flopped down, rolled over, and lay perfectly still.

“Oh, isn’t he wonderful?” cried Lola.

“I do hope we can keep him!” exclaimed Janet.

“Wake up!” called Tom, and up sprang Rover, running about, wagging his tail, and barking loudly.

“I’m glad we found him,” said Ted.

“So’m I,” added his chum.

“But I found out how he could do a trick!” exclaimed William, and the others agreed with him.

“He can stay at your bungalow part of the time,” said Tom to Ted, “and part of the time at mine.”

“Sure,” agreed the Curlytop lad.

“Now see here, my dears,” Mrs. Martin made haste to say. “I know this is a very nice dog and I know you’d love to keep him. But there is no use making plans and thinking you can have him. Such a valuable trick animal as this is sure to belong to some one and his master will be after him sooner or later.”

“I suppose so,” gloomily admitted Ted.

“So don’t get your heart set on keeping him,” went on his mother. “Of course, he may stay here until his owner comes, and we will feed him, for he must be hungry.”

“We’ll find out if he can do any other tricks,” suggested Tom.

“But don’t set your heart on keeping him!” warned his mother, and the boys promised they would not, though undoubtedly they had hopes, deep in their hearts, that, after all, Rover’s owner might not come for him and that they could keep the animal.

Rover proved that he was hungry by eagerly eating the table scraps which Nora set out for him. Then, in order that things might be evened up, Tom went over to his bungalow and got some scraps there.

“Because we’re going to share half and half with this dog, Ted and I are, as long as he’ll stay here,” Tom explained.

As far as Rover was concerned, he seemed contented to stay at the summer camp as long as the children would keep him. He licked his chops after his double meal and then curled up on the porch of Bushytail Bungalow where he prepared to sleep and dry off after his swim.

“It will be your turn to have him to-morrow,” said Janet in a low voice to Lola as she saw her girl chum looking a little disappointed because the dog was not over on the porch of “Somersault Bungalow,” as the Taylor cottage had been named because of Ted’s fall through the trapdoor while he was turning somersaults.

“I’d love to have him for our dog,” remarked Lola, giving Rover a farewell pat as she and her brother and mother went over the clearing, for Mary had called that supper was ready.

“Didn’t we have fun on the island?” said Janet to Ted that night, when they were going to bed.

“Lots!” agreed the Curlytop boy. “And that dog is great!”

When, toward morning, Mrs. Martin heard Rover still moving about on the porch, she said to herself:

“Well, he seems to be going to stay. I hope the children don’t get too much attached to him, for they will have to give him up sooner or later.”

And it was with shouts of delight that Ted, Janet and Trouble ran out on the porch before breakfast, to greet their new pet, while Rover barked and capered about in joy at the sight of the children.

“He watched the bungalow all night, didn’t he, Mother?” asked Trouble.

“Yes, he surely did,” was the answer.

“Shall we take him hunting with us to-day?” Tom suggested to his chum, when the Taylor boy had hurried over to Bushytail Bungalow after his breakfast.

“Sure!” was the answer. “I guess maybe we can catch that monkey that took our clothes, now that we have a dog to trail him.”

“Sure!” assented Tom. “We’ll have a lot of fun. I’m going to make some new arrows.”

But even with Rover to scurry about in the woods with them, the boys had no luck hunting the animal they suspected of having taken their clothes the day they went in swimming. Rover did scare up a number of ground-nesting birds and a few squirrels that fled, chattering, to the tops of the trees. But the boys

were not hunting this sort of game, and hurried on.

Lola and Janet remained near the bungalows that day, either wading or making a playhouse under a big tree, while Trouble wandered here and there with his pop-gun, rather sorrowful because the older boys had not taken him hunting with them.

He almost cried when Ted and Tom went away with Rover, but his mother consoled him by suggesting that, since his father was away, he had better remain near the bungalow with his pop-gun as a sort of guard.

“All right, Mother!” Trouble agreed. “I’ll shoot any bears if they come out of the woods.”

So he marched up and down and around the two bungalows, now and then shooting his harmless cork bullets at trees to practice. So the day passed, with jolly fun for all.

Toward evening Ted and Tom came tramping back through the woods, having been gone since morning. They had taken a lunch with them, and something for Rover to eat. The dog came back with them.

“Did you catch a monkey?” asked Lola, with a laugh, while Trouble hurried over to the dog, making him do the soldier trick again.

“We didn’t even hear a hand organ,” replied Tom, with a grin.

The boys were telling some of their adventures that had happened during the day and Trouble was making Rover lie down and pretend to be a “dead dog,” when some one was heard approaching the bungalows along the woodland path. There was the rustling of bushes and the cracking of sticks under heavy shoes.

“Oh, maybe my daddy is coming home!” cried Janet, jumping up.

But a moment later a strange man stalked into the clearing. He was big and burned brown by the sun and wind, but he had a pleasant smile as he said:

“I’m Animal Joe Tacker. I hear you folks found a trick dog, and I came to see if it’s mine!”

The Curlytops and their playmates looked at Animal Joe and then at Rover, with whom Trouble was playing.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BIG WIND

“MAYBE you folks have heard about me,” went on the visitor, still smiling good-naturedly. “I train animals and sell pets for a living. I have a sort of animal farm back there,” and he pointed off through the woods.

By this time Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Taylor, having heard the tones of a strange man’s voice, had come out into the clearing. Turning toward the two ladies, Animal Joe again explained why he had called.

“I’ve lost a valuable trick dog,” said the animal man, “and a wood-chopper told me he’d heard you folks found one. So I came to inquire—”

By this time Rover had heard the sound of the man’s voice and with a joyful bark and frantic waggings of his tail had leaped to his side, almost knocking Trouble over in the frantic rush.

“Well, here you are, Kalah!” exclaimed the animal man, leaning over to pet the dog, that seemed overjoyed to see his master again. At the same time Rover, or Kalah, to give him his right name, presumably wanted to show that he was still fond of his new friends, for he ran back to Trouble, nearly overwhelming the little chap with his eager affection, and then frisked about Ted, Tom, and the two girls, not forgetting Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Taylor.

“Is that your lost dog?” asked Mrs. Martin.

“That’s Kalah, yes, ma’am,” was the answer. “He’s been missing for nearly a week. I couldn’t imagine what had become of him. It isn’t the first time I’ve lost some of my animals. Might I ask if you picked him up or if he came here to you?” went on Animal Joe.

“We found him on Squirrel Island,” answered Mrs. Martin, and she told about the drifting boat.

“Oh, yes, Kalah is smart!” admitted the animal trainer. “He’s a valuable dog. Some day I expect to sell him for a great deal of money.”

“How much?” asked Ted quickly, while Tom added:

“I have six dollars and nineteen cents saved up in my bank.”

Both lads evidently hoped to be able to purchase the trick dog when he should be sold, but Animal Joe smiled as he said:

“I’m afraid I’d have to get much more than that for him. I paid a pretty good price when he was a puppy and it took me a while to train him.”

“Can he do other tricks besides marching like a soldier, playing dead, and shaking paws?” asked Ted, for this last trick he and Tom had discovered only the day before when they were out in the woods with the dog.

“Oh, yes, he does a number of tricks,” said Animal Joe, a name which, he said, he preferred being called by rather than Mr. Tacker. “I’ll show you some. Here, Kalah!”

The dog ran to him instantly, ears raised, head cocked on one side, and a snapping look in the eyes. The animal man held out a stick, and Kalah leaped over it. Back he came, leaping again, with the stick held higher, until he was jumping a height almost over Animal Joe’s head.

“And that’s pretty good for a setter,” said the animal man. Kalah was that breed of a dog. “Of course greyhounds can leap much higher than that, but Kalah does very well,” and this the Curlytops and their friends readily admitted.

Animal Joe then had Kalah do other tricks, such as sitting on a chair, pretending to say his “prayers,” and climbing a ladder.

“Kalah must have wanted to travel a bit,” said the trainer when the dog, tired from showing off, was curled up at his feet. “He wandered away, though why in the world he ever swam over to Squirrel Island is more than I can guess. He must have been there for a couple of days, on a sort of vacation.”

“It was a good thing for us he was there,” observed Mrs. Taylor. “Else we might never have gotten off after our boat drifted away.”

“Oh, I guess you would,” said Mr. Tacker. “Fishermen often land on the island, and some of them would have rescued you.”

“The next day perhaps,” agreed Mrs. Taylor, with a smile. “But we didn’t care to stay all night, and Rover, as the children named your dog, saved us.”

“You spoke,” said Mrs. Martin, addressing Animal Joe, “about this not being the first time you had lost some of your animals. I presume you mean down in Cresco not long ago, don’t you?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said the animal man. “Some of my animals and two parrots got loose. The birds went into a store and a gentleman there caught my parrots

and—”

“That was our father!” cried the Curlytops in the same breath.

“Your father—Mr. Martin?” asked Animal Joe, in surprise. “Are you the Curlytops?”

“Yes,” answered Janet, while Ted inquired:

“How did you know our nicknames?”

“Why, when your father caught some of my pets,” replied the animal man, “he chanced to speak of his children, saying they would enjoy seeing my animals and birds. And he mentioned that you were called Curlytops. Are these more of you?” he asked, looking from Ted and Janet to Lola and Tom.

“They are neighbors of ours,” explained Mrs. Martin. “We are camping here for the summer.”

“Well, it’s quite strange that I should happen to meet you,” said Animal Joe. “To think of finding my dog with the same children whose father helped me before! Quite strange, I call it!”

“Can we see Rover—I mean Kalah once in a while?” asked Ted, with a sigh of regret as he thought of the new pet being taken away.

“Sure, you can!” agreed Animal Joe. “My place isn’t far from here. I have a lot of pets. Come over any time you like. Glad to see you. And now we’d better be getting back, Kalah. I didn’t expect to find you so easily.”

“Good-bye, Kalah!” said Janet softly, and she and Lola patted the head of the intelligent dog. Trouble burst into tears when Mr. Tacker took his pet away, but Tom and Ted said they would take the little fellow to the “animal farm,” as several called it, and so William dried his tears, insisting on kissing Kalah before the dog disappeared with his master around a turn in the woodland path.

“We’ll be over to see you to-morrow!” called Ted, as he and Tom and the girls waved a farewell to the animal man.

“Come any time you like and stay as long as you please,” was the invitation they received.

Mr. Martin and Mr. Taylor returned from Cresco later that day, just as dusk was falling. They would not have to go back to business again until the middle of the next week.

“Then you can have a lot of fun with us!” said Ted, as he stood beside his father’s chair while Trouble climbed into Mr. Martin’s lap.

The story of the trip to Squirrel Island, the drifting away of the boat and the rescue by Kalah, was told by the children in turn.

“I intended to look up Animal Joe as soon as I had the chance,” said Mr. Martin, when he heard how Kalah’s master had come for him. “We can go over Monday or Tuesday.”

“Why not to-morrow?” asked Ted eagerly.

“Because Mr. Taylor and I promised ourselves we’d go fishing to-morrow,” was the answer. “Saturday is always when we fish,” he added, with a smile.

“Could Tom and I come?” Ted wanted to know. And when he was given an invitation he rushed over to tell his chum. Lola and Janet did not care much about fishing and were content to stay at home. But they, too, had fun wading, learning how to row under Mrs. Martin’s instruction and playing in the woods, where they took paper dolls and made moss houses for them.

When Monday came the two families went to Animal Joe’s place, which was about two miles from the bungalow camp. The road was a winding one through the woods, but Mr. Tacker had told Mrs. Martin just how to find his place, and they had no trouble.

Animal Joe kept a sort of farm for pets of various sorts. He had dogs and cats, a few small ponies, a number of parrots and other birds, and some monkeys. Seeing these long-tailed chaps swinging about on the bars and trapezes in their cage made Ted and Tom remember something, and Ted asked:

“Did you lose a monkey and did he take our clothes when we were in swimming?”

“Well, I don’t know about that last part,” said Animal Joe, with a laugh, as he led the visitors about the place. “But I certainly lost a monkey last week, and I wouldn’t be a bit surprised but what he did take your clothes. He was a tricky, mischievous chap. I’d like to get him back, though, and I’ll pay a reward of ten dollars for him.”

“Ten dollars!” cried Tom.

“That’s five apiece if you and I can find the fellow, Tom!” exclaimed Ted.

“That’s right,” went on the pet trainer. “So in your spare time you can look for this missing monkey of mine.”

“Won’t the monkey bite the boys if they try to catch him?” asked Mrs.

Taylor.

“Not a bit of it,” was the answer. “All they need to do, if they see him, is to hold an onion out to Chicko, and he’ll come down and make friends at once.”

“An onion!” exclaimed Mr. Martin, making a wry face, for he did not care for that strong vegetable. “If I were a monkey I’d never go near an onion.”

The Curlytops and their friends spent some time at Animal Joe’s place, listening to the parrots talk, hearing the monkeys chatter and taking turns riding on the back of a Shetland pony. Of course, they saw Kalah, who seemed as glad to meet the children again as they were to pet him.

The boys and girls, including Trouble, would have stayed the rest of the day at Animal Joe’s place, but Mr. Martin, looking at the sky, remarked:

“I think we’re going to have a storm. We’d better get back home before it breaks.”

“Yes, there’s going to be a blow,” agreed Mr. Tacker. “We’re going to have some hard wind before morning. I must fasten some of my cages a bit better.”

Farewells were exchanged, and, promising to come again to see Kalah and the other animals, the Curlytops and their friends hastened back along the woodland path. It began to get dark because of the black clouds overcasting the sky, and when the bungalows were reached it was almost like night, though on other evenings, at this hour, the sunset glow was still in the sky.

“Now let it blow!” exclaimed Mrs. Martin when they were all in the house and the doors were closed. Nora had already started to get supper. “Let it blow!” went on Mrs. Martin. “We shall be snug and dry in here!”

As if accepting her invitation, the wind suddenly sprang up and howled around the house, while the rain splattered against the windows. Before supper was over a violent storm was whipping up whitecaps on Lake Rimón, and the trees in the forest were being lashed by the powerful gale.

The storm grew worse with the passing of the night, and Mr. and Mrs. Martin began to fear that the wind might endanger the bungalow. Once a loose shutter that had been banging, was torn off by the gale and carried up into a tree, where the children, when they came down to breakfast, looked at it in amazement.

“It’s a powerful wind,” said Mr. Martin. “I’m glad I don’t have to be out in it.”

“I like it!” exclaimed Ted, with shining eyes.

But the time was to come, and very soon, when he was to have more of that wind than he cared for.

CHAPTER XX

TED IS MISSING

“CAN’T I go out and play?” asked Trouble, who stood first on one leg and then on the other and who went first to one window and then to another of the bungalow, looking out into the wind-swept and rain-drenched woods.

“Go out? No, indeed, Trouble!” exclaimed his mother. “This is a terrible storm!”

“But I want to have some fun,” he complained. “It’s no fun shooting my pop-gun in here,” for he had been doing that for a while. Trouble never liked to do anything very long at a time.

“Can’t you amuse him, Janet?” asked her mother, who wanted to be quiet to discuss some business matters with Mr. Martin. “Take him up in the attic, you and Ted.”

“Oh, that will be fun!” exclaimed William, always ready for something new in the way of play.

“It would be more fun if we could have Tom and Lola over,” suggested Ted who, almost like his brother, had been wandering rather disconsolately about the bungalow.

“You may ask them,” assented Mrs. Martin with a smile as she went back to the room where she had been talking matters over with her husband. “But I hardly believe Mrs. Taylor will let her children come out in such a storm—I know you can’t go out,” and she seemed to be looking at William.

Ted went to the telephone and called up Somersault Bungalow where, he could easily imagine, Tom and Lola were wishing, as much as were Ted and his sister, that they could have some fun.

“Will your mother let you come over, Tom?” inquired Ted, speaking into the telephone.

“Tell him to bring Lola and we’ll play in our attic,” suggested Janet, who stood at her brother’s side.

Ted added this information and Tom said:

“Wait, and I’ll find out.”

He ran to tell his mother about the matter and ask her permission. Mrs. Taylor knew the children would be fretful if kept in the bungalow all day, so she said:

“Wait until I look at the weather and then I’ll decide.”

She peered out of a window, studied the scudding clouds which were being torn along and apart by the fierce wind, and then glanced across the open space that separated the two bungalows. The ground was deep in mud and water, the wind swept the rain across the little clearing, and, what was worse, every now and then big pieces of bark or small tree branches would topple down.

“I’m afraid it’s a bit dangerous to go out now,” Mrs. Taylor said, coming back to Tom, who was waiting to telephone the decision to Ted. “But I guess it will slack up in about half an hour, and then you may go over.”

“Oh, good!” cried Tom, hastening to tell the good news.

“Fine!” cried Ted when he heard it. “I’ll get some things ready so we can have some fun.”

The storm was almost forgotten now in the anticipation of having “company,” and even Trouble grew less fretful as he went up to the attic with his sister and brother. Janet got out several of her dolls. But Ted and Tom would not play with these.

However, Ted knew of several things in the attic with which he and Tom could have fun while their sisters played with the dolls, and Trouble, perhaps, would shoot at a mark with his beloved pop-gun. At last the preparations were made and all that remained was for the other children to dash across the clearing as soon as there should be a lull in the storm.

“I think it’s stopping now,” said Janet to her brother, as she listened to the pattering of the rain on the attic roof.

“It doesn’t sound quite so hard,” agreed Teddy. “I’ll go down to the back door and look out. Maybe Tom and Lola are coming over now.”

Going down the stairs, Ted hurried to the back door, as it was in this way his chum and Lola would come after their dash across the clearing from their own bungalow.

“It hasn’t stopped very much,” Teddy said to himself, as he opened the door and noticed how hard the wind was still blowing and how fast the rain was dashing down.

He could see no signs of the children coming out of the other bungalow, but he stood in the doorway waiting. Then, suddenly, Ted caught sight of something that made him exclaim:

“There’s that monkey Chicko! The one Animal Joe said he’d give ten dollars reward for! Yes, there’s that monkey!”

He caught sight of some animal in a rain-drenched tree.

“I’m going to get him!” decided Ted Martin.

Without stopping to think whether it was right or wise, and never thinking of telling his mother or father, Ted hurried into the hall, got his rubber coat and boots, put them on, and hurried out the back door into the storm.

“It isn’t raining so hard now,” Ted told himself. “And it won’t take me long to catch that monkey and get back by the time Tom and Lola come over. If I get the monkey I’ll give five of the ten dollars to Tom anyhow, because he’d help me catch him if he was here.”

All Ted thought of was that monkey, and he felt sure he could capture the little beast. So the Curlytop boy hurried on through the storm, which, though it might have lulled for a moment, was now as bad as ever. Still Ted did not think of turning back.

It was perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes later that Janet, tired of waiting in the attic, ran downstairs just as her mother had finished her talk with Mr. Martin.

“Where’s Ted?” asked Janet.

“Ted? Isn’t he up in the attic with you?” asked Mrs. Martin. “Did the Taylor children come over?”

“No,” Janet replied. “Ted came down to see if they were coming, but he didn’t come back upstairs and—”

“I wonder if he could have gone out in the storm!” exclaimed Janet’s mother.

“Maybe he’s over at the Taylor bungalow,” suggested Mr. Martin.

But at that moment, the rain and wind again letting up for an instant, Lola and her brother were seen running across the clearing. Ted was not with them.

“Why, where can he have gone?” asked his mother, with a sinking of the heart. Certainly Teddy had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXI

BROKEN CAGES

“THIS is a bad storm,” said Ted Martin to himself, as he shut the back door behind him and hurried out into the rainy forest after the monkey. The Curlytop boy was quite sure it was a monkey he had seen swinging about in the tree tops near the bungalow. “It’s a bad storm, but I won’t be out in it long,” thought Ted.

His rubber coat and boots kept him dry, and his hat, made of yellow oilcloth, such as the sailors and fishermen call a “sou’wester,” made him as snug as could well be desired.

“It won’t take me long to catch that monkey and bring him to the house,” reflected Ted. “Then I’ll collect the ten dollars from Animal Joe and give Tom half. Five apiece! Oh, boy!”

He was so delighted with the idea of getting the reward and was thinking so much about what he would do with his share, he had decided to give some to Janet and Trouble—Ted was thinking so much about this that he did not heed the storm.

“Mother would say it was pretty bad,” he reflected. “But I don’t mind it, and as soon as I get that monkey I’ll hurry back. I only hope he’s tame and won’t cut up too much.”

Changing his thoughts from the reward to the monkey, without the capture of which there would be no ten dollars, Ted began to look more closely for a sight of the leaping creature. Just ahead of him, off through the woods and along a path the Curlytop boy had never taken before, he saw a movement in the trees, and he was sure he saw a leaping, hairy body.

“There he goes!” cried Ted, and he sprang forward to follow.

The wind still blew hard, the rain pelted, and now and then broken branches from the trees fell down. Once Ted was hit on the shoulder by a branch that, however, being rotted, was so light in weight that it did him no harm.

“But if that had been a solid stick it would have hurt,” said Ted, as he

plunged on.

He was so interested in keeping after the monkey that he gave little heed to where he was going, or how far he was getting from the bungalow. Nor did he mind stepping into bog holes, from which he pulled his rubber boots with no little trouble at times.

On and on he went. He lost sight of that wet, hairy body, but he could see the tree branches moving ahead of him and thought sure it was the leaping monkey that caused this. Ted did not stop to think that the wind might be causing the disturbance among the branches. All he thought of was the monkey.

After a while he realized, however, that he had been away from the bungalow some time. He had come out so quickly, not saying a word to any one where he was going, that he had paid no attention to the time. But now he began to reflect that he had been running through the woods for, so he judged, nearly half an hour.

“Maybe mother won’t like it—me, running off like this,” thought Ted. “But it will be all right when I get back with the monkey. I wonder where the fellow is, anyhow!”

For the first time the Curlytop lad began to think that perhaps the monkey might escape him. He was a better traveler in the forest than was Ted, even in the rain. And Ted, now that he stopped to think, remembered that he had not seen a glimpse of the hairy body for some time, nor had he seen the trees shaking as though the monkey had leaped from one branch to the other or had swung by means of his tail.

“I guess he’s gotten away from me!” Ted had to admit, with a sigh, when, after several minutes of looking about in the storm-swept woods, he neither saw nor heard anything of the escaped animal. “I’d better go back home.”

This was easy enough to say, but not so easy to do. Ted thought he could go back the way he had come, but for the first time he noticed that he was off the path. There was no road, trail, or path to be seen. He was in the depth of the forest, how far from the bungalow he did not know, and how to get there he could not guess.

“But I’ll get back there somehow!” exclaimed Ted to himself. For a young boy, he was brave. He did not want to admit that he was lost, but, as a matter of fact, he was.

Then the rain, which had let up for a while, was coming down harder than ever and the wind howled and roared through the trees, bending their tops and

breaking off branches.

“I guess that monkey will go in some place to stay,” thought Ted. “I wish I had some place to go, myself. It’s getting fierce! I guess I won’t get back to the bungalow right away.”

He was now beginning to admit, that perhaps, after all, he might be lost. He turned about helplessly, the rain beating on his face and the wind whipping his rubber coat about his legs. At last Ted thought he saw a path off to the left. He hoped it would lead to the bungalow, and hurried along it. There was a fallen tree across the path, and Ted leaped over it. But he slipped just as a powerful blast of wind swept through the forest.

Down went poor Ted, one leg being stretched across the fallen log. The next moment a rotten tree, standing near by, was toppled over by the blast and fell across Ted, pinning him down by the leg that lay over the log.

“Oh, I’m caught! I’m caught!” Ted cried. “Help! Help!” Then the pain in his leg made him feel so queer that he had to close his eyes. It was, he said afterward, as if he had fallen asleep, but he had fainted. There he lay, unconscious in the rain, caught under the fallen tree.

Before this, however, those back in the bungalow had missed Teddy. When Lola and Tom came running across the clearing, to come and play with the Curlytops, they were surprised to have Mrs. Martin ask:

“Did Teddy go over to your house?”

“Why, no,” Tom answered. “He was talking to me over the telephone, and he asked Lola and me to come over, but he didn’t go to our house.”

“That’s queer,” said Mrs. Martin, closing the door after the rain-drenched Taylor children had entered the bungalow. “I guess he is either down cellar or up in the attic, getting ready to play some game.”

“I’ll look up in the attic,” offered Janet.

“And I’ll look in the cellar,” said Mrs. Martin.

But a glance around the cellar did not show Ted, nor did he answer when his name was called.

“He must be up in the attic,” Mrs. Martin said.

However, Janet and the Taylor children, with Trouble tagging along behind carrying his pop-gun, came down from the attic to report:

“Ted isn’t up there!”

“He must be hiding,” said his mother. But the attic was not very large, and there were not many places to hide, so it was soon made plain that Ted was not playing any tricks there.

“What’s all the excitement about?” asked Mr. Martin, coming out of a room he called his “den,” where he had been writing letters.

“Ted’s gone!” gasped Janet.

“You mean he’s hiding?” asked her father, for the children often played this joke one on the other.

“I don’t believe he is,” said Mrs. Martin, with a serious look on her face. “We have hunted everywhere and I have just investigated and found that his rubber coat, boots and hat are gone. I told him not to go out in the storm, but he seems to have gone.”

“Maybe he went over to meet us,” suggested Tom.

“He wouldn’t be gone all this time doing that,” objected Mrs. Martin. “Moreover, he would be in sight all the while if he merely ran across the clearing to your house. No, he must have gone off into the woods for some reason, slipping out the back door.”

“I have it!” suddenly exclaimed Mr. Martin. “Ted has gone to Animal Joe’s place to get a dog or a cat to play with during the storm. Depend upon it, he’s gone to the animal farm!”

“Oh, he shouldn’t have done that without asking permission!” said Mrs. Martin.

“I know he shouldn’t,” agreed Ted’s father, “and he must be scolded for it when he comes back. But there’s where he went. I suppose he thought the storm was letting up a bit. It did for a little while. But it’s worse than ever now.”

“Off in the woods to that animal place! He may get hurt!” exclaimed Ted’s mother.

“It isn’t far,” said Mr. Martin, a bit uneasy himself. “But he shouldn’t have gone. I’ll put on my rubber coat and boots and go after him.”

“I’ll come, too,” offered Tom, eager to go.

“No, you had better stay here,” said Mr. Martin. “I’ll stop in and tell your father about it. Maybe he’ll go with me.”

Mr. Taylor, when he heard about Ted being missing, was very willing to accompany his friend and neighbor through the woods to Animal Joe’s farm.

Mr. Taylor knew Mr. Martin would help look for Tom if that boy happened to be lost.

In a short time the two men, well protected from the storm, were tramping off through the woods along the road that led to the farm of the animal man.

“Ted can’t have gone very fast against this wind,” his father said. “We’ll catch up to him when he’s about half way there, I think.”

“Very likely,” agreed Mr. Taylor.

But the men saw no signs of Ted; and when three quarters of the way to Joe’s place had been covered, the storm grew worse, and it was hard work struggling through it. But at last Mr. Martin, peering amid the trees, called:

“Here we are. Here’s the animal farm!”

Hardly had he spoken than there came a wild blast of wind, almost like a tornado. Several large trees crashed down, and there was a breaking and cracking of wood.

“Look! Look!” cried Mr. Taylor, pointing. “A lot of the animal cages are broken! The beasts are getting out!”

That is just what had happened. Bits of wood from the falling trees had crashed on top of the cages, some of which were blown over, and then amid the roar of the storm, monkeys, dogs, cats, and a number of birds, suddenly released from their cages, fled into the woods.

Mr. Martin saw two monkeys leap over his head up into a tree, and several dogs, followed by a Shetland pony, raced past Mr. Taylor. The animals were frightened by the storm and by the breaking of their cages.

“This is the worst I ever saw!” shouted Mr. Martin, dodging a frightened cat that leaped ahead of him. “I wonder if Ted is here!”

CHAPTER XXII

TO THE RESCUE

FOR a little while, so fierce was the wind, Mr. Martin and Mr. Taylor could do nothing but remain under the shelter of a big, overhanging rock that jutted out of the side of a hill near Animal Joe's place. The rock was like the strong roof of a house. The wind could not blow it away and nothing could fall through it on the heads of the two men.

Then, after a little while, the wind did not blow so hard. No more trees crashed down, and the animals, whose cages had not been broken, quieted down and stopped their frightened yells, squeals, grunts, roars, and various cries.

"There's Animal Joe now!" called Mr. Taylor, as he stepped out of the shelter of the rock, followed by Mr. Martin.

"So he is," agreed the father of the Curlytops. "But I don't see Ted."

By this time Animal Joe had seen the two men. He greeted them with a wave of his hands as Mr. Martin said:

"This is bad luck for you! A lot of your animals have gotten away."

"Yes, it's a bad storm," agreed the pet man. "Don't know when I ever saw a worse. A lot of my cages have been smashed."

"Any animals killed?" asked Mr. Taylor.

"I don't think so! I hope not."

"Can you get them back?" went on Tom's father.

"Most of them," was Animal Joe's reply. "They are all tame, and they will remember the place where they have been fed. I think they will come back after the storm. But what brought you two out in it?" he asked, surprised at the sight of the men standing in the pouring rain. For though the wind had lulled, the rain was coming down almost as hard as ever.

"We're looking for my boy Ted," answered Mr. Martin. "He went out from the bungalow, and I thought he might have come here to get some sort of pet to amuse his sister and his friends until the storm was over."

Animal Joe, who did not seem very much worried over the accident that had befallen him, shook his head while the rain dripped off his cap and down his face.

“No,” he answered, “Ted isn’t here!”

“Have you seen him?” asked Mr. Taylor, noting the disappointed look on Mr. Martin’s face.

“Not to-day. No one has been here since the storm started. I never saw a worse one. I thought my log shack would blow away. As it is, look at the ponies’ stable!”

He pointed to a slab-sided shack where some Shetland ponies had been kept. The stable was now only a mass of boards, but the ponies had gotten out before it fell in, and so were not hurt.

“You certainly have had bad luck!” exclaimed Mr. Martin. “I’d like to stop and help you if I could. But I must find my boy. He is out in this storm and may be hurt.”

“That’s right!” agreed Mr. Tacker. “Never mind my animals. They’re all right—what is left of them,” he added. “The worst of the storm is over now, and the animals that got away will come back, I think.”

“What about the birds?” asked Mr. Taylor.

“I think I can get the parrots, macaws and large ones, but the smaller singing birds will probably fly away and maybe go back south where they came from,” was the answer. “But never mind my pets. I’m going to help you look for your boy!”

“That will be very kind of you,” said Mr. Martin.

“Where did your boy start from and where was he going?” asked Animal Joe, as he trudged along through the dripping forest with Mr. Martin and Mr. Taylor.

“That’s just it—we don’t know,” answered the father of the Curlytop lad. “The children were told to stay in on account of the rain. But while my neighbor’s youngsters were preparing to come over, Ted, saying nothing, slipped out in his raincoat, rubber boots and sou’wester, and we haven’t seen him since. I thought he might have come here.”

“Not that I noticed,” remarked Animal Joe. “But I think we’ll soon find him. These woods aren’t very dense, and not having very long legs, Ted can’t have wandered far.”

“Far enough, I’m afraid,” sighed Mr. Martin.

“We’ll find him soon!” predicted Mr. Taylor hopefully.

“The only danger I fear would be from the storm,” went on Mr. Martin. “I don’t believe there are any wild beasts around here, in spite of the fact that my William is always hoping to hit a bear with his cork pop-gun,” said Ted’s father, with a smile. Though he tried to be light-hearted, it was not easy, and he looked eagerly on both sides as the three tramped through the woods.

“There isn’t much use trying to follow a trail,” said Animal Joe. “The rain would wash out footprints as soon as they were made. We’ll just have to scout around and shout. Maybe Ted will hear and answer us.”

“Are you going back to our bungalows, where Ted started out from, and begin the search there?” asked Mr. Taylor.

“That’s the best plan,” answered Animal Joe. “But of course we’ll be looking out for Ted as we go along.”

This the three men did, stopping now and then to send their voices shouting through the woods. Because the wind had died away after that hurricane burst that had wrecked the animal farm, the voices carried a long distance. After shouting and waiting for an answer, Mr. Martin and his companions would hurry on.

They were about halfway back to the bungalows when, after they had joined their voices in a long, loud shout, Mr. Martin exclaimed:

“Hark! I hear a call!”

They all listened. Through the trees came a cry:

“Here I am! Help! Help!”

“He’s hurt!” gasped Mr. Martin. “That’s Ted’s voice, and he’s hurt!”

“Must be caught in some kind of a trap,” added Mr. Taylor.

“There aren’t any traps around here,” said Animal Joe, with a shake of his head. “Most likely he’s caught under a fallen tree.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Mr. Martin at this thought, and he was glad his wife was not there to hear this.

“Oh, that’s not as bad as it sounds,” Animal Joe made haste to say. “When a tree falls the upper branches sometimes hold up the trunk, and it doesn’t do much damage. I think we’ll find the little fellow held down, but not hurt.”

“I hope so!” exclaimed Mr. Martin.

Pausing now and then to send out their shouts and waiting to hear answering ones so they might be guided to the place where Ted was caught, the three hurried on to the rescue.

At last the voice of the boy came very plainly through the trees, and his father asked:

“Are you badly hurt, Ted?”

“My leg is hurt,” Ted answered, trying not to give way to tears. “I can’t move! I’m caught under a tree!”

A moment later the three men pushed their way through the bushes and came within sight of the Curlytop prisoner, lying on the ground, one leg over a log and held there by the tree on top of him.

CHAPTER XXIII

AT THE WATERFALL

“TED! Oh, Ted!” exclaimed Mr. Martin, at the sight of his son. “I am afraid you’re badly hurt!”

But Ted was brave enough to answer:

“No, it doesn’t hurt as much as it did at first. But I can’t pull my leg out.”

“I hope it isn’t broken,” said Mr. Taylor in a low voice to Animal Joe.

“I hope not, myself. I don’t believe it is,” added Mr. Tacker, as he looked at the tree holding Ted down. “It fell in such a way that only part of the weight is resting on him. We’ll soon have him out of that trap.”

By this time Mr. Martin had reached his son and leaned down, trying to lift Ted out. But the boy was too firmly held for that, and Ted had to call:

“Oh, Daddy, you’re hurting me!”

Then the father stopped pulling, and the two other men hurried up. Animal Joe’s trained eyes told him just what to do.

“If we take hold and lift up the top tree,” he said, “we’ll take the weight off Ted’s leg and he will be free.”

“If only it isn’t broken,” murmured Mr. Taylor, but he did not say this to Mr. Martin, who had enough to worry about.

It was found that the strength of the animal man and Mr. Taylor was enough to lift the fallen tree, while Mr. Martin could stand beside Ted to pull him back out of the natural trap. It was well that this plan was followed, for when the weight that held the boy down was taken off Ted’s leg, he could not move it, and his father, as well as the others, thought it was broken.

“But it isn’t!” Ted suddenly cried when he heard the men speaking in low voices about it. “It’s just like my foot was asleep. It feels like a lot of pins and needles pricking me inside my rubber boot!”

“Then it’s just numb!” his father said, with a sigh of relief. “The tree has pressed on it and stopped the blood from circulating just as happens when you

sit on your leg or lie on your arm, and it 'goes to sleep,' as you call it.”

“Oh, how funny it feels!” cried Ted, as he put his weight on the imprisoned leg that was now free. He at once fell to the ground, for the nerves and muscles were so numb from the pressure that they could not support the lad. “It’s like a thousand pins!” said Ted.

“Better that than a broken leg,” stated Mr. Taylor.

In a little while, after his father had rubbed it and Ted himself had kicked out a few times, the leg’s circulation came back and it was all right, except for a painful bruise.

“Now tell us what happened, Ted,” suggested his father, when, with the rescued boy, the three men had taken shelter from the rain beneath a thick-branched pine tree. “How did you happen to be caught?”

“It happened all of a sudden,” the Curlytop lad explained. “I ran out to get your monkey,” he said to Animal Joe.

“My monkey!” exclaimed the animal man. “Why, the monkeys and other animals got loose only a little while ago, and you’ve been out a couple of hours!”

“Did more of your pets escape?” cried Ted in surprise.

“Yes, a lot of the cages were smashed by the big wind that blew so hard a little while ago,” said Mr. Martin.

“That must have been the same wind that blew the tree down on me,” went on Ted. “But I mean I was after that first monkey; the one that took my clothes and Tom’s.”

“Oh, you mean Chicko!” exclaimed Joe. “I thought he had gone away.”

“I’m pretty sure I saw him in a tree near our bungalow,” went on Ted. “That’s why I ran out in the rain to catch him,” he said to his father. “And the monkey kept going and I kept going and I got lost and then the tree fell on me.”

“It’s too bad, son,” said Mr. Martin. “But of course you should not have gone out when your mother told you not to.”

“I know, Daddy, and I won’t do it again. But I wanted to catch Chicko and get the reward.”

“I wish you had caught him,” said Animal Joe. “Chicko is one of my best monkeys. But I’ll have to offer a lot more rewards for my other animals if they don’t come back,” he added.

“How many got away?” Ted wanted to know eagerly. He was more interested in them and anxious about the escaped pets than he was about himself, though he had been in considerable danger.

On the way back to the bungalow, after thanking Animal Joe for his help in finding the lost boy, Mr. Martin told Ted about the cages being broken and the dogs, cats, monkeys, guinea pigs and other beasts, as well as the parrots and other birds, escaping.

“There’ll be plenty for me and Tom to hunt now!” cried Ted, who limped a little from his sore leg.

“You may catch some of them,” agreed his father. “But I think most of them will go back to Joe’s farm when they get hungry.”

By the time Ted got back to the bungalow it was too late to play in the attic, and after Tom and Lola had listened to Ted’s account of chasing the monkey—or what he thought was the monkey—they went home. Mrs. Martin had been nervous and fearful while waiting for news of her son during the terrible storm, but Mrs. Taylor had come over to bear her company and keep her courage up.

So it was a case of “all’s well that ends well,” and the next day, when the storm was over and the sun was shining, the Curlytops and their friends were ready for more adventures in the woods about the summer camp.

Ted and Tom, much excited about the news of so many pet animals now at large in the forest, decided they would do nothing else all the remainder of the summer but hunt for the monkeys, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, and parrots.

“And we’ll come with you!” decided Janet. “Lola and I!”

There was a time when Ted and Tom would not have made their sisters welcome, but now, with so many animals to be caught, it was voted by the boys that perhaps it would be a good thing to take the girls along.

“They have good eyes and maybe they can see things quicker than we can,” Ted remarked.

“And when they see the animals we’ll catch ’em!” added Tom.

“But we won’t take Trouble,” went on Ted. “He can’t walk far enough and he’d be sure to shoot off that pop-gun of his at the wrong time. We won’t take Trouble!”

That the little fellow might not cry and make a scene on being left behind, the four slipped off without him one morning a few days after the storm.

Though, after Animal Joe's cages were smashed, there were more pets than before at large in the woods, the animals did not come within the view of Janet and Lola, nor near enough for the boys to capture them.

Once, indeed, the boys saw a guinea pig, but the little rodent scrambled down into a hole and no amount of digging could get it out. Several of the parrots were found, wet and sadly bedraggled, in a thicket not far from the farm, and some of the monkeys and other animals were caught by Animal Joe and some men he hired to help him round up his menagerie. Other beasts from the menagerie wandered back themselves to be fed when the storm was over.

"But there's still a Shetland pony, three monkeys besides Chicko, a trick dog, and two Persian cats missing," Joe Tacker reported several days after the storm. These animals, to say nothing of some guinea pigs, which Joe was not very particular about, as he could get more, the Curlytops and their chums hoped to capture and get the additional reward offered for their return. But the first day's hunt was a failure.

When Ted and Janet went to the Taylors' bungalow the second day to get their chums, they found Lola busy in the kitchen and Tom sitting in a chair.

"What's the matter?" asked Ted. "Can't you come hunting to-day?"

"I'm waiting for Lola to bake a cake," Tom answered. "Maybe we can have some to take with us to eat."

"What kind of a cake?" asked Ted eagerly.

"Chocolate," answered Lola. "Only I'm not really baking it," she added. "Mary baked it, but mother said I could spread on the chocolate icing, and I'm going to do that as soon as the cake is cool enough. There it is!" and she pointed to the table on which were several tins of cake layers, hot from the oven.

"Where's the chocolate?" asked Ted.

"In this bowl," and Lola pointed to it on a side table.

"While we're waiting," proposed Tom, "come on outside, Ted, and look at what I made. It's a trap to catch some of Mr. Tacker's animals."

"Can I see it?" asked Janet.

"Sure!" Tom agreed, and Lola went with her girl chum, following the boys, leaving the bowl of chocolate on the table.

What Tom had to show Ted was a maze of sticks, strings and rubber bands which the Taylor boy said was a good trap to catch monkeys, dogs, or cats.

“We’ll set it some place in the woods,” Tom suggested, “and then we can go on hunting, and if we don’t find any of Animal Joe’s pets ourselves, maybe they’ll get caught in the trap.”

“Say, that’s fine!” agreed Ted. “I’ll make a trap to-morrow! This will be easier than tramping around hunting monkeys.”

The boys were more interested in the trap than were the girls, and Lola, thinking of the cake she was to finish, suggested to Janet that they go back to the kitchen.

“As soon as I put the chocolate on the cake we’ll go hunting with the boys,” said Lola. “And this afternoon we’ll go again and take some of my cake with us.”

“That will be lovely!” murmured Janet.

The boys, returning from inspecting Tom’s trap, heard exclamations of dismay from the girls in the kitchen.

“What’s the matter?” called Tom, breaking into a run.

“Somebody took the bowl of chocolate!” complained his sister.

“Ted Martin, was it you?” asked Janet accusingly.

“I did not! I wasn’t near the kitchen!”

“He was with me all the while,” added Tom.

Then Janet had another thought. She stepped quickly to the kitchen door and looked across the clearing toward the other bungalow. She saw Trouble playing out in front, and at the sight of her small brother she set up a shout:

“He took the chocolate! Trouble sneaked in here and took the bowl of chocolate when we were looking at the trap. Look, he’s all covered with chocolate!”

Indeed, Trouble’s face and hands, as well as his blouse were stained brown. The little fellow was busy with a spoon and bowl, it seemed.

With a murmured apology for what her brother had done, Janet ran toward him, followed by the others. But when she drew near the little fellow, Janet saw that they had made a mistake.

Trouble’s hands and face were stained brown, it is true, but it was the brown of mud and water, for William was at one of his favorite games—making mud pies. He had gotten a bowl and spoon from Nora, and was having the time of his life.

“I didn’t think he’d do such a thing as take my chocolate,” said Lola, as they turned back, leaving Trouble all unaware of the serious charge that had been laid against him. “But the bowl of icing is gone! Who took it?”

“A monkey!” cried Tom.

“Oh, I believe it was a monkey!” agreed Janet. “Anyhow, it wasn’t any of us nor Trouble.”

“Maybe Mary might have taken the chocolate in to show mother to see if it was all right,” suggested Tom. But the cook said she had not touched the chocolate, she did not know that Lola had cooked it, and so its disappearance was added to the other mysterious happenings of the summer camp. Though the children were sure one of the escaped monkeys, hiding in a tree outside the bungalow, had watched its chance, swooped down and grabbed the bowl off the table near the window when no one was in the room.

“You run along, dear, with Janet and Ted,” Mrs. Taylor told Lola when informed about the missing chocolate. “Very likely a monkey did take the bowl. But don’t delay. Run along and see if you can find any of the animals. But be careful. I’ll have Mary make more chocolate, and we’ll watch it. Yours would not have done, anyway. You see, dear, the chocolate should be put on the cooled cakes as soon as it is taken from the stove.”

“Oh! I didn’t know that,” murmured Lola.

So the boys and girls started on a morning hunt, setting Tom’s trap in what the boys thought was a likely place near a spring. All morning the four tramped through the woods, having several false excitements about the missing pets, but really seeing none of them.

After lunch they set forth again. Trouble, being asleep, did not tease to go with them. Mary had iced the chocolate cake, and Mrs. Taylor gave the animal hunters four slices, each slice wrapped in oiled paper to be eaten in the middle of the afternoon.

“I know a place we haven’t looked yet!” said Ted, when they were once more in the woods.

“Where?” asked Tom.

“Up near the waterfall. There are lots of places around there where the pets could hide. Let’s go to the waterfall.”

“All right,” agreed Ted, and as the girls were willing, they started up along the river, which, after toppling over a rocky cliff, flowed into Lake Rimon about two miles above the bungalow camp.

“I hope we catch some animals there,” said Janet’s brother, as he scrambled along beside his chum. He little realized what he was going to catch a short time later.

CHAPTER XXIV

LOST IN THE WOODS

“ANYHOW, it’s nice up here,” said Janet.

“Lovely,” agreed Lola.

The two girls were lying on a green, grassy bank at the edge of the river above the waterfall, the noise of which they could hear in the distance.

“It’s nice even if we don’t catch any animals and get a reward and find the monkey that took your chocolate and the boys’ clothes,” went on Janet.

“It surely is,” agreed her friend.

The four had climbed up the hill that led from the lower level of the lake to the higher one where the river tumbled down over the cliff in a cataract. But though they had looked carefully all around and though they had sneaked as cautiously as Indians through the underbrush, they had found none of Animal Joe’s pets.

“Where did Tom and Ted go?” asked Lola, sitting up to toss bits of bark into the river near shore, watching them drift away, for there was a strong current here, due to the water going over the rocky cliff.

“Ted said they were just going a little farther up the river,” replied Janet, plucking a broad blade of grass, which she held between her thumbs to make a whistle. “They wanted to look and make sure no animals were there. Then they’re coming back here,” she added, after giving two blasts on her whistle.

“I wish they’d hurry,” sighed Lola.

“Why?”

“Because I want to eat my piece of chocolate cake. I don’t s’pose it would be polite to eat before the boys come back, would it?”

“It would be nicer to wait for them,” agreed Janet. “But maybe they won’t wait for us. They may eat their cake up there,” and she waved toward the upper reaches of the stream.

“They can’t!” stated Lola.

“Why not?”

“Because I have all the cake here—the boys’ pieces as well as ours,” and Lola indicated a small package she carried. “I asked Mary to put it all in one bag, but the pieces are wrapped up separate,” went on Lola. “I hate to have Tom carry my cake or any of my lunch when we go to the woods. He squashes it so.”

“Just like Ted!” said Janet, with a laugh. “Well, if the cake is here I guess the boys will be coming back soon.”

This proved to be a correct guess, and in a little while the voices of Ted and Tom could be heard “who-oing,” and the girls answered:

“Here we are!”

“Get the lunch ready!” shouted Ted, running toward the girls ahead of his chum.

“Lunch!” cried Janet, with a laugh. “All there is for lunch is chocolate cake, and there wouldn’t be that if it wasn’t for Lola.”

“Chocolate cake makes the best lunch there is,” panted Tom, as he ran up after Ted. “Anyhow, it won’t be long before supper time.”

“I hope the pieces of cake are good and big!” ejaculated Ted, and his sister wanted to nudge him and whisper that it was not polite to say a thing like that when somebody else was providing the cake.

But just then Lola opened the bag and showed the lunch, and the pieces of cake were large enough to suit even the two hungry lads.

“Ah! Ah!” murmured Ted, rubbing his hands over his stomach as, in the movies, he had seen starving shipwrecked sailors do when they were rescued and fed.

“Yum! Yum!” echoed his chum.

Then the four sat down on the grass, eating the cake to the last crumbs and talking about the monkey that had stolen the bowl of chocolate.

“We’ll hunt some more after we rest,” said Ted, rolling in lazy ease on the grass.

“You ought to exercise after you eat!” declared his sister. “If I had a rope I’d do some jumping.”

“I’ll get you one, Janet,” offered Ted. “I saw some wild grapevines back in the woods. A piece of that will make a good rope.”

“Oh, get us some!” begged Lola, and Ted and Tom ran to the forest not far away, returning with two lengths of limber vine with which the girls managed to skip fairly well.

Janet was jumping fast and did not notice how near she had come to the edge of the river. Suddenly she tripped on the vine, tried to recover her balance, and the next moment toppled over, rolling down the bank and into the water with a splash.

“Oh! Oh!” screamed Janet as she found herself in the water.

“Save her! Save her!” yelled Lola, dropping her vine and rushing toward the water.

“Your sister’s fallen in!” shouted Tom to Ted, at the same time running toward the stream.

But Ted had seen what happened as soon as the others had, and he made a jump for the edge of the bank and an instant later was wading out toward Janet, who was being rapidly carried downstream toward the waterfall.

Ted was a good swimmer for a small boy, but now he did not stop even to take off his shoes. He did not intend to swim—at least he hoped he would not have to for he knew the water near the shore was not very deep.

“And I can wade in and pull Janet out better than I can swim out with her,” Ted thought quickly.

The shock and surprise of falling into the river had taken away Janet’s breath. She had also swallowed a little water before she remembered to do as her father had told her to do if she should fall into a stream, which was to close her mouth and not breathe when her head was under. Janet remembered this just in time, and as she was carried down she choked a little and then tried to swim toward shore.

But the current was too strong for her, and there is no telling what might have happened had not Ted jumped in for her just when he did.

“I’ll save you, Jan!” he shouted, grabbing hold of his sister’s hands, which were stretched out to him. Holding on with all his might, Ted braced his feet on the bottom of the stream. The water was about up to his waist now.

“I’ll help you!” cried Tom, and he splashed into the shallow edge of the river, caught hold of Ted about the waist, and thus the two boys pulled Janet to shore, while Lola, who had run back to get it, was reaching out her grapevine rope, hoping it might be of some use. But, luckily, it was not needed, and a little later Janet, wet, bedraggled, and miserable, but thankful to have been

saved from going over the falls, was sitting on the grass, with her brother on one side and Tom on the other, and Lola using her handkerchief to dry Janet's face.

Then, suddenly, Lola began to cry.

"Why! what's the matter?" asked the surprised Tom.

"Ja—Jan might have g-g-g-gone over the falls!" sobbed Lola.

And so Janet might, though of course she might have managed to grab an overhanging tree branch and hold on until help came, even had not Ted got her.

"Don't cry!" Janet urged her playmate. "I'm all right now," and in a short time Lola dried her tears.

"Well, I guess this ends our monkey hunt for to-day," remarked Tom, as he wrung some water from the ends of his knickers.

"Yes, we got to get Janet home," decided Ted, and after some of the water had been squeezed from her dress she ran along with the two boys and Lola down the hillside.

You may well believe that Mrs. Martin was surprised when the little party of pet-hunters returned, and she looked serious when told of what had happened to Janet.

"I think I must forbid you children to go near the river up above the falls," she decided.

With this Mr. Martin agreed, as did Tom's and Lola's parents. So the region around the waterfall became forbidden ground unless the older folks went with the children, and Ted and his sister and chums promised to obey the edict.

It was about a week after this accident. During this time the Curlytops had had lots of fun in the summer camp, though without catching any of Animal Joe's pets. Janet went over to Lola's house one morning and, looking cautiously around, whispered:

"Where's Tom?"

"Gone fishing with Ted, I guess. Why?"

"I didn't want him to hear what I'm going to say. Lola, I have a fine idea!"

"What about?"

"About catching some of those monkeys and Animal Joe's other pets. Let

you and me go off in the woods by ourselves and see if we can catch any.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t dare!” gasped Lola.

“Why not? We won’t go near the falls. And it might just happen that we’d find a monkey, or maybe a trick dog or one of those Persian cats. You wouldn’t be afraid of them, would you?”

“No, of course I wouldn’t,” Lola admitted, after thinking it over.

“And it would be fun if we could beat the boys and get some of that reward ourselves,” went on Janet.

“It surely would,” agreed Lola.

“All right—then let’s go!”

Now though the Curlytop lass and her chum did not intend to wander very far in their search for the missing pets, yet before they realized it they were deep in the depths of the woods, though, as miles go, not very far from the bungalow camp.

They wandered on and on, first on one path and then on another, and finally over such a maze of old trails that they did not know where they were. But they did not realize this for some time.

They looked eagerly about for a sign of any of Joe’s missing animals, and though once Lola was sure she saw a monkey peering down at her from a tree, Janet said it was only a squirrel.

After a while the girls became tired, having had no luck at all, and at last Janet suggested that they turn about and go home.

“Finding animals isn’t as easy as I thought it was,” she said.

“No,” agreed Lola. “I’m ready to go home.”

So they started on what they thought was the back trail, but, after wandering for half an hour and not seeing the clearing or the bungalows, Jan at last sat down on a stump with a weary sigh and said:

“Do you know what I think, Lola?”

“No. What?”

“I think we’re lost.”

“Lost?”

“Yes, lost! We’re lost in the woods!”

At these words Lola, with a little gasp, drew nearer to her chum and looked around at the trees and bushes.

“How—how can we be lost?” faltered Lola.

“I don’t know,” answered Jan. “But that’s what we are. Do you know which way the bungalows are?”

“No. Don’t you?”

“I don’t! And we’re lost—that’s all there is to it!”

CHAPTER XXV

THE LOG CABIN

JANET and Lola sat on tree stumps, one close beside the other, and the girls looked around them. Lola was now ready to agree with her chum that they were lost.

Sitting on the stumps and looking about them, Janet and Lola saw several paths leading off in different directions through the woods. Some of the paths were very faint, as though they were not used often. Others were well worn, and the girls rightly guessed that many feet had tramped over these.

Lola looked along the path by which they had come to the little clearing where they were now resting, and said:

“Well, there’s no use going along that path. We know it doesn’t lead to the bungalows.”

“That’s right,” assented her chum. “But there are lots of other paths to choose. It’s like a game, isn’t it?”

“Not a very funny game,” Lola answered. “It would be more fun if we knew we could go straight home after playing the game. But we may not find the way.”

“Oh, I think we shall,” said Janet. “Anyhow, maybe our daddies will come for us.”

“How can they come when they don’t know where we are?” asked Lola.

“Well, maybe Ted and Tom will come. They often walk all around the woods after they get through fishing, especially if they haven’t caught much. Of course, if they have a lot of fish they’ll go home; but if they didn’t they may come along up here and then they’d find us and show us the way home. Ted always knows the way to go home, especially when it gets time to eat.”

“Tom got lost once,” Lola informed her chum, as she got up to start looking for the right path. She did not have much faith in Janet’s plan.

“Oh, so did Ted, when he was smaller. But he doesn’t get lost often now, and I haven’t been lost before for a long while. But I’m not afraid; we’ll get

found.”

“Well, Jan, if you think the boys might be coming, let’s call so they’ll know where to look for us.”

This seemed like a good idea, and the girls were soon standing together on top of a flat stump, their arms about each other’s waists so they would not topple off. Then they raised their voices in shrill shouts and calls.

Anxiously they waited for answers, but none came except the echoes of their own voices. So they climbed down, somewhat disappointed but not a bit discouraged. Janet and Lola felt sure that if they, themselves, did not soon find the way home, their parents would start searching for them.

“Though if we don’t know how to find the way home, how can they find us?” Lola asked when Janet spoke of this.

“I don’t know,” the Curlytop girl answered. But with an air of great faith in her parents she added: “Didn’t they find Ted when he was lost and caught under a tree?”

“That’s so,” agreed Lola. “And we’re luckier than he was, for we aren’t caught. Well, let’s try some of these paths. I guess the boys are too far off to hear us yell.”

With this Janet agreed, and then the girls counted out to decide which path they would try first, avoiding, of course, the one by which they had come into the clearing. They counted out by this means: Janet pointed her finger first at one path and then at another, meanwhile saying, and moving her finger at each word:

“Eenie, meenie, minie mo. Show me down which path to go.”

As there were eleven words, and only five paths, some were counted twice, of course, and at the last word Janet’s finger was pointing to the faintest of all the trails.

“That doesn’t look like a very good one,” suggested Lola doubtfully.

“No,” agreed her chum. “But it came that way, and we’ll have to take it or else we won’t have any luck.”

“I s’pose so,” sighed Lola, so they set off down that path. It led through a dense part of the woods and did not seem to have been used for a long time, or at least not very often, for there was grass growing in the middle of it.

After walking along it for perhaps five minutes, Janet said:

“I don’t believe this path is the right one. It’s getting deeper and deeper

into the woods, and I can't see the lake or the bungalows. Let's go back."

"And try another path," added Lola eagerly. "We can say the eenie meenie over again."

They were soon back in the clearing, for they took care not to get off the path, faint as it was. Then Lola counted out with the little charm, and she had the luck to end with her finger pointing at a well-worn path.

"I'm sure this is the right one!" she exclaimed.

"I hope so," said Janet. "It's getting dark."

The girls looked up at the patch of sky showing through the trees, and Janet, seeing some clouds drifting along, exclaimed:

"It's going to rain!"

"Oh, I hope not!" cried Lola. But they had not gone far along the second path before there was a pattering on the leaves of the trees and bushes, some drops splashed on the faces of the girls, and then the rain came down.

"Oh, this isn't any fun at all!" sighed Janet.

"Keep going! Keep going!" cried Lola, who was behind her chum. "Maybe this path is right and we'll get home before it rains very hard."

But the shower grew harder very quickly, and the girls would soon have been drenched had they not been under thick trees. As it was, they got pretty wet and they wished they had not come out to look for Animal Joe's pets.

Lola was just going to say that perhaps it would be a good thing to try to find the lake, as that was bigger and easier to look for than two bungalows, and she was going to add that they could follow the lake shore around until they got to the camp, when Janet gave a sudden, glad cry.

"What is it?" asked Lola.

"I see the bungalows!" replied Janet. But when she ran forward, followed by her chum, into a place where the bushes and trees had been cut away, leaving a cleared place, the girls saw that they had come upon a log cabin, but it was neither of their bungalows.

"Oh, this isn't the place at all!" sighed Lola.

"Never mind!" consoled Janet. "It's a place where we can go in, and I guess the folks will keep us until after the rain and maybe they will take us home."

It was now pouring harder than ever, and, being out in the open, the girls

were getting thoroughly wet. Janet started to walk toward the cabin, but Lola held back, murmuring:

“It doesn’t look as if any one lived there.”

“Well, maybe not,” agreed Janet. “But we can go in and keep dry, anyhow. It’s got two doors,” went on Janet, looking at the log cabin, which did, indeed, have two front entrances.

“It’s like a double house,” Lola said. “We can take either door we like. Come on if we’re going, I’m getting soaked!”

She ran across the clearing, followed by her chum. Lola tried the left-hand door, but it did not open. Then she tried the right, and as that swung back she hurried in, Janet following, glad enough to get out of the pelting rain. The girls found themselves in one half the log cabin, which was a sort of double house with a wooden partition through the middle.

In their half there was nothing but some old boxes. What was in the other half, they did not know. There seemed to be two rooms to the half of the log cabin into which Lola and Janet had entered. The girls were in the front room, but they could look through a partly opened door into another room, which Janet thought might be the kitchen. There was also a ladder leading through a square hole in the ceiling to a loft above.

“Well, anyhow, we’re in out of the rain,” said Janet, with a sigh of contentment.

“Yes,” agreed Lola. “But I wonder, Jan, if—”

She stopped suddenly. She and her chum heard a noise in the other half of the log cabin. The girls drew close together, and Janet whispered:

“Somebody’s in there!”

She pointed to the dividing wall.

“Yes,” agreed Lola. “Maybe it’s the boys,” she added.

CHAPTER XXVI

CHICKO AND HIS CHUMS

THIS thought made the two lost girls feel so happy that they forgot all about being wet and tired from their tramp through the woods. The sounds in the other side of the log cabin increased. It was like one or more persons walking around. Then Lola pointed to the ceiling.

“They’re up in the loft,” she said.

“Ted! Ted!” called Janet. “We know you’re there! Come on down!”

“Hurry, Tom!” shouted Lola. “We’ve been lost and maybe mother will worry about us. Come on down and show us the way home.”

“Did you get any fish?” asked Janet.

But there came a sudden silence in the log cabin as the girls stopped speaking. It was a strange silence. But Lola and her chum thought they knew how to account for this.

“They’re trying to fool us!” whispered Lola.

“Yes,” agreed Janet. “Making believe they aren’t there at all. Oh, come on down, Ted!” she went on in a louder voice. “We know you’re up there!” for now some faint sounds were heard over the girls’ heads.

Still there were no answers in boyish voices, and Lola was just going to say something sharp to her brother for teasing her so, when Janet pointed to the opening in the ceiling through which the ladder extended and whispered:

“Look!”

Lola saw a pair of legs, clad in stockings, but with no shoes on, descending the ladder. Then she caught sight of a pair of knicker-bocker trousers above the stockings.

“Those are Tom’s pants!” Lola whispered. “I remember that patch. I sewed it on for him, and I didn’t get it straight. That’s Tom!”

“But how thin his legs are, and how funny!” murmured Janet.

Then a second pair of stockings and a second set of knickers came down

the ladder a little way behind the first ones.

“Oh, Ted! Now I see you!” Janet exclaimed. “Those are Ted’s pants!” she went on. “I remember that hole in one leg.”

The next moment both girls screamed, for two faces bent down, one on either side of the ladder, and looked at them. But they were not the faces of Ted and Tom. They were queer, wizened, hairy faces, and at the sight of them Janet cried:

“They’re monkeys!”

“That’s right!” agreed Lola. “They’re monkeys dressed up in the boys’ clothes. Oh, Janet, do you s’pose—?”

She did not finish her question, for just then one of the monkeys wrapped his tail, which stuck out of a hole in Ted’s trousers, around a rung of the ladder, and, turning a flop, swung there looking at the girls upside down. Then the other monkey, wearing Tom’s stockings and knickerbockers, did the same thing.

This was more than Janet and Lola could stand. True, they had started out to round up animals, but they did not count on having them appear in clothes, hanging upside down by their tails from a ladder in a log cabin.

“Come on out!” yelled Janet, making a dash for the door.

“I’m coming!” cried Lola.

The monkeys chattered as the girls left, either asking, in animal talk, the visitors to close the door after them, or perhaps to stay to tea. Neither Janet nor her chum stopped to find out what it was.

They fled from the log cabin, out into the rain, and they did not know what to do next when Janet, with a joyful cry, pointed toward the forest. On the edge of it appeared two boys, each one carrying a string of fish and a pole.

“Look! Look!” fairly screamed Janet. “There’s Ted!”

“And Tom!” added Lola. “Hurry, Tom, hurry!” she begged. “We’ve found ’em!”

“What’s the matter? What have you found?” asked Ted Martin, running up.

“And what are you two girls doing out here in the rain?” Tom wanted to know.

“We got lost and we went in there to keep dry,” explained Janet.

“And we found Animal Joe’s lost pets in there!” shouted Lola. “Anyhow,

there are two monkeys in there.”

“And one has on your pants, Ted!” exclaimed Janet.

“The other one has on your clothes, Tom! And they’re hanging by their tails from a ladder, and oh—oh—” She was out of breath and could only gasp. Janet, too, was much excited.

“Animal Joe’s pets!” cried Ted, with shining eyes. It was raining hard now, but none of them seemed to care.

“We’ll get the reward!” shouted Tom, dropping his string of fish and the pole and making a dash for the log cabin. Ted followed, and the girls, not wanting to be left out of things and being no longer afraid, now that Ted and Tom were there, trailed along.

“That door’s locked!” Lola said to her brother, as he tried to open the one she had been unable to move. Tom lost no time in pushing back the other door, which had swung shut, and as he entered he gave a shout of delight.

“Here they are! Here they are!” cried Ted, as he entered a second behind his chum. “All Animal Joe’s lost pets! Four monkeys, a dog and two cats!”

“I wonder where the pony is?” remarked Tom.

Just then, from back of the cabin, there sounded a whinny which told where the Shetland animal was keeping itself.

The girls went into the cabin after the boys. They saw a strange sight. There were four monkeys, Chicko, who had first escaped, and the three that had gotten out of their cages in the storm. In one corner was a beautiful dog that, at sight of the children, sat up in begging fashion. In another corner three Persian cats were curled up.

“They weren’t here when we first went in,” said Lola, pointing at the cats and dog. “And there were only two monkeys.”

“They must have been either up in the loft,” decided Ted, “or else out in the back room. Anyhow, we’ve found Animal Joe’s pets and now we’ll all get the reward,” he added.

“The girls really found ’em,” said Tom, in a low voice. Hearing which his sister exclaimed:

“We’ll share the reward with you boys—that is, if we get any.”

“Oh, Animal Joe will pay!” declared Ted. “He’ll be glad to get his pets back. I wonder how they got here?”

“I guess they came in out of the rain, same as we did,” suggested Janet, and, there being no way of finding out for certain, this idea was as good as any.

“But how did you girls get here?” asked Ted, as the pets sat looking at the children. Chicko, the largest monkey, began taking off Ted’s knickerbockers and stockings, and the other monkey, whose name the boys and girls did not know, followed the example.

Then Janet and Lola told of getting lost and how, after trying different paths, they had happened upon the one that had brought them to the log cabin into which they had run for shelter from the rain.

“Were you lost, too?” Janet asked her brother.

“Lost? No! We were fishing and we knew where this cabin was. We’ve been in here before. Nobody lives in it now. We came to stay until the rain was over. But we didn’t ever see any animals in here until now, and we didn’t expect to find any now. It just happened so.”

“Well, I’m glad it did,” sighed Lola. “Are we many miles from the bungalows?”

“They aren’t far off,” Ted announced. “We’ll go there as soon as it stops raining. You girls weren’t really lost at all. You were close to the clearing all the while.”

“Well, we couldn’t find it,” said Janet. “I thought it was miles and miles away.”

“So did I!” echoed her playmate.

“I tell you what we’d better do,” suggested Ted, when it was noticed that the rain was slackening a bit. “One of us had better go and tell the folks about finding these animals, and the others can stay here to see that the pets don’t run away again.”

That was decided to be a good plan, and Ted volunteered to hurry back to the bungalows, with his string of fish and Tom’s, and give the news.

“It isn’t far, and I’ll soon be back,” Ted said, as he started off on the run. It would soon be night and he wanted Animal Joe to capture his pets before dark.

Left in the cabin with the monkeys, the dog, and the cats, Janet, Lola and Tom soon made friends with them. Two of the monkeys were a bit shy, but Chicko and the other one that had worn the boys’ garments were quite tame and allowed themselves to be petted. The Persian cats, too, purred contentedly when stroked and the trick dog nearly wagged his tail off when Tom spoke to

him. The pony was outside, and was a bit too fat to squeeze through the back door. But it was eating grass under the trees and seemed contented.

In what seemed a short time Ted came back with his father, Mr. Taylor, and Animal Joe; and that the pet man was glad to get back his monkeys and other creatures may well be believed.

“I will pay you each a reward of five dollars,” he said to the Curlytops and their two friends. “Never was I so glad as I am to get these pets back. They were among my best.”

The animals seemed happy to see their master again, and as he and the two men had come in a wagon, along one of the woodland roads, the beasts were soon put in it ready to be taken back to the animal farm, where new cages were ready.

“We guessed right about a monkey taking our clothes,” said Ted to Tom when, on searching the cabin the next day, the boys’ shoes were found. But the garments were of little value, so they were thrown away, the mothers not wanting their sons to wear them after the monkeys had been in them.

“I wonder if my chocolate dish is anywhere around,” said Lola.

Though it was not found, it was decided that Chicko was the one that had taken the sweet stuff, probably dropping the bowl in the woods after he had licked it clean.

“I wonder how all the animals gathered in the log cabin?” said Janet a few days later when they were on a visit to Animal Joe’s place, which he had started to rebuild bigger and better than before.

“Well, I guess Chicko must have rounded the others up after they escaped during the storm,” replied Animal Joe. “Chicko is a smart monkey. He can do everything but talk, and he can do that in his own way. He had been roaming the woods for some time, you know. He must have taken the boys’ clothes and hidden them in the cabin. Then, when the other monkeys got loose, he told them where to come to find shelter, and he got out the clothes, dressing himself up in some. The other monkey just imitated Chicko. Monkeys are great imitators.”

“And I guess,” said Janet, “that the monkeys told the pony and the dog and the cats about the cabin, and they always went there when it rained.”

“I guess so,” agreed Animal Joe. “Well, I am glad to have them back,” and he paid the rewards as he had promised.

As it was summer, the pets had suffered no harm by being out in the woods

night after night. They had managed to get something to eat and so did not starve. On none of the occasions when Ted and Tom had visited the cabin, though, did they see any pets there.

“It was our good luck,” said Janet, with a smile, as she looked at the five dollar bill Animal Joe had given her.

“Well, now that we don’t have to think about catching monkeys, we can do better fishing,” said Ted one bright, sunny day.

“Sure!” agreed the other boy. “Let’s go now!”

Janet and Lola were down by the water playing with a turtle they had caught and had succeeded in keeping in a little inlet across which they had built a dam of mud and sticks.

As Ted and Tom started for the lake with their fishing poles and bait can, Mrs. Martin asked Ted:

“Couldn’t you take Trouble with you just this once? Janet has had to look after him too often. He’s crying so hard.”

“What’s he crying about?” asked Ted, as he heard his little brother’s sobs. Trouble, who was out on the porch, heard the question and gasped his answer:

“I—I’m cryin’ ’cause—now—’cause I can’t ever shoot a monkey with my pop-gun. All the monkeys is caught! Oh, dear!”

“Well, you come with us,” said Tom, with a laugh, “and maybe you can shoot a fish!”

“Oh, can I?” cried Trouble, brushing away his tears.

“Yes, come along,” said Ted, and the little fellow was happy.

There were many more happy times for the children in the summer camp. They had some strange adventures, but as this book is quite well filled I must save something for another volume. In the next, to be called “The Curlytops Growing Up,” I will tell you of other things that happened to Teddy and Janet and Trouble.

“Will you ever forget,” said Janet to Lola one day, as they put their dolls to sleep under a pine tree, “how funny those monkeys looked coming down the ladder in the boys’ clothes?”

“I’ll never forget it as long as I live!” answered Lola, with a laugh. “We’ve had lots of fun up here on Lake Rimon, haven’t we?”

“I should say we’ve had!” was the response.

Just then Trouble's laugh echoed from the woods as he trudged along with his brother and Tom on the way to the fishing hole. Tom and Ted, as they thought of the good times they were having in the summer camp, whistled merrily.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *The Curlytops in a Summer Camp* by Howard R. Garis]