

**THE JACK OF ALL
TRADES: FAIR
WEATHER IDEAS**

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The Jack of All Trades: Fair Weather Ideas by D. C. Beard

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D. C. BEARD

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FAIR WEATHER IDEAS

BY
D. C. BEARD

ILLUSTRATED

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The Jack of All Trades.

FAIR WEATHER IDEAS

CHAPTER I.

TREE-TOP CLUB HOUSES.

It is now over thirty years since the writer was first initiated into the delights of a boys' club-house in the tree-tops, and it happened in this way:

The war of the Rebellion was over; for four years the fathers, big brothers, teachers, and policemen of the border States had had so much serious fighting on their own hands that little or no attention was paid to the growing generation of boys, and they were left to fight their own battles in their own way.

For four eventful years these boys were under practically no other restraint than the little their poor half-distracted mothers could enforce. The boys, however, did not appear to miss the discipline, nor desire it, and, as far as their physical health was concerned, they thrived and developed into lusty lads, though many of them recognized no law but that of physical force.

Gangs of young toughs, under the leadership of local bullies, frequented the play-grounds and roamed along the river-fronts, where they hunted down, pillaged, and beat every unprotected lad they could catch out of sight of his own home.

In spite of the fact that the river-fronts were the favorite resorts of the lawless element, those places presented so many attractions to the juvenile mind that they were the popular play-grounds of all the boys living within reach of their muddy banks and turbid waters.

About this time three boys of a Kentucky town, who were devoted to boating and bathing, put their curly heads together to devise a plan by which they might enjoy their favorite pastimes, and at the same time secure a safe place of refuge where they could hide when the enemy approached in numbers too strong for the three boys to resist.

After many conferences, and references to "Robinson Crusoe," "Swiss Family Robinson," "The Coral Islands," and other undoubted authorities, they decided to build an underground house,* and armed with spades and shovels, they immediately began work right in the heart of the enemy's country.

They worked, as only boys can when they think their work is fun, and soon excavated a great hole in the river-bank. Not far off were the remains of a flat-boat, and to the heavy pieces of timber the boys harnessed themselves and hauled the lumber over the top of their cave to serve for a roof.

With spade and shovel they carefully concealed the timber by a thick layer of earth, leaving only a square hole with a trap-door as an entrance and exit. The dirt was then smoothed down, and drift-wood, dried weeds, and other rubbish scattered over in such a manner that no one, without careful inspection, would suspect that the bank had been tampered with.

But the enemy was alert, and spies had been stealthily

* Chapter VIII. of this book tells how to build an underground club-house.