

**THE BOY SCOUTS
AS FOREST FIRE
FIGHTERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760579555

The Boy Scouts as Forest Fire Fighters by Robert Shaler

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ROBERT SHALER

**THE BOY SCOUTS
AS FOREST FIRE
FIGHTERS**

THE BOY SCOUTS AS FOREST FIRE FIGHTERS

BY
SCOUT MASTER ROBERT SHALER

AUTHOR OF "BOY SCOUTS OF THE SIGNAL CORPS," "BOY SCOUTS OF
PIONEER CAMP," "BOY SCOUTS OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY," "BOY
SCOUTS OF THE LIFE SAVING CORPS," "BOY SCOUTS ON PICKET
DUTY," "BOY SCOUTS OF THE FLYING SQUADRON," "BOY
SCOUTS AND THE PRIZE PENNANT," "BOY SCOUTS OF
THE NAVAL RESERVE," "BOY SCOUTS IN THE SADDLE,"
"BOY SCOUTS FOR CITY IMPROVEMENT," "BOY
SCOUTS IN THE GREAT FLOOD," "BOY SCOUTS
OF THE FIELD HOSPITAL," "BOY SCOUTS
WITH THE RED-CROSS," "BOY SCOUTS
AS COUNTY FAIR GUIDES," ETC.

NEW YORK
HURST & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

juv 1915.34

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
SHELDON FUND
JULY 10, 1940

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The Boy Scouts as Forest Fire Fighters.

CHAPTER I.

OAKVALE'S ONE WISE MAN.

"Don't believe in it, I tell you! All a humbug! No boy of mine will ever fool away his time strutting around and wearing soldiers' clothes when he ought to be doing his chores at home! Take that from me, young fellow!"

"But Mr. Prentice, if you care to ask any one of the best citizens of Oakvale——"

"Foolish of them to be so blind, I tell you, boy!"

"There's Mr. Hayward, the minister, sir!"

"A good man, but an easy mark all the same!"

"And Judge Marshall!"

"Surprised to hear that a long-headed man

like the judge should allow his name to be used in connection with such utter foolishness. If he had boys of his own instead of three girls he might see things in a different light."

"There's Dr. Kane, and—well, the father of every one of the thirty boys in the troop. In fact, Mr. Prentice, I think you're almost the only prominent man in or around Oakvale who hasn't enthusiastically endorsed the local scout troop, which they believe has made good."

Perhaps this little shaft of flattery told. At any rate the man called Mr. Prentice allowed a glimmer of a grim smile to flit across his stern face as he observed:

"All I can say then, Hugh, is that the prominent men of this section are a short-sighted lot when they allow themselves to be so easily led by the nose, and humbugged by a parcel of prank-loving boys!"

Billy Worth nudged the leader of the Wolf Patrol, Hugh Hardin, in the side. He acted as though it might be on the tip of his tongue to say something saucy; but for fear he might thus injure the cause Hugh was so manfully representing, Billy managed to remain silent.

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Hugh made a final appeal, as he saw the man was about to leave them.

"But surely, Mr. Prentice, you must have heard *some* good things said about the scouts, haven't you?" he asked, with one of his most persuasive smiles; which, however, in this case, seemed to be wasted on the one-idea man.

"Oh! yes," carelessly replied the other, gathering up his lines preparatory to starting his horse, "a lot of *wonderful* stories have come floating over to my house, but I set most of them down as exaggerations. When I was a boy I read the 'Arabian Nights,' 'Baron Munchausen,' 'Sindbad the Sailor,' and 'Gulliver's Travels.' I know how proud fathers like to boast of their smart sons. I've had my eye-teeth cut, Hugh. You're a clever lad, I know, but if you talked until doomsday you couldn't change *my* mind about the folly of this Boy Scout game."

He spoke to his horse, and the two boys saw him go down the road in a cloud of dust, for it was the driest fall ever known about Oakvale.

Billy Worth—who was a pretty ample sort of a boy—a good-natured expression on his