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# THE BRAVES ABROAD

BY

"SOMEBODY."



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LOVEDALE.  
1921

P2073

Chas. A. Gibson

TO  
C. A. P.  
A PRINCE OF TROOP  
LEADERS.

## PREFACE.

This very small booklet makes no pretence to being a serious contribution to literature. It was written for the pleasure the writing of it gave, to wile away a passing moment, and to put on record that once, for at least a short time, twelve young souls were happy. If some reflection of their joy should find a place in the heart of some friend of mine of other days who is now facing the realities of life elsewhere, then will the writer be amply repaid. R.L.S. truly says: "There is no fun in this grown-up business," as by this time some of you have found out.

My pen-name, "Somebody," used for this leaflet only, was bestowed upon me by Googoo to suit the rhythm of one of his songs.

Another version, written by "Quiet Night," appears at the back of these pages, through the kindness of the Editor of "The Sanc." In perusing his account I have had the pleasure of the master who sees in his apprentice one who may ultimately go beyond him. One or two sentences I have inserted, so that future Braves with an inclination to the methods of the "Higher Critics" may have the pleasure of picking them out.

"SOMEBODY."

*Tom Atkinson*

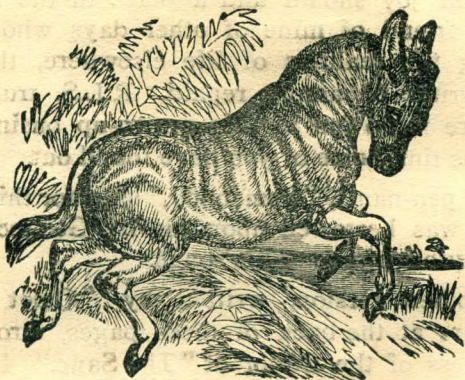
PREFACE

This is a small book, but it is no less important than many a large one. It is a book that will be read by all who are interested in the history of the United States. It is a book that will be read by all who are interested in the history of the United States.

The author has endeavored to give a full and complete account of the history of the United States. He has endeavored to give a full and complete account of the history of the United States.

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## EDITORIAL NOTE FROM "THE CHRISTIAN EXPRESS."

On another page will be found an article under the title of "The Braves Abroad." It will, be hope, be of interest to those of our readers who still feel young enough to enter into the spirit of irresponsible youth. It should appeal more especially to those who have recently passed through training institutions. In explanation of the "Braves" it may be said that during recent years there has been a big increase in the number of town boys entering Institutions at ages that would once have been considered very young, i.e. 15, 14, 13 and even younger. Many of these youngsters have had the benefit of a Christian up-bringing on European lines. They have in some cases been through good schools and had the advantage of contact with social workers and organisations at work in the towns for the uplift of the Native and Coloured peoples. These boys talk much of scouting, of Indians, of cowboys and the like, and eagerly read the cheap literature provided for their kind.

\* \* \*

It was with an idea of turning this natural trend of things to good purposes that a troop of "Pathfinders" was started at Lovedale some years ago. Out of this beginning the "Braves" have

evolved. The movement was taken up by a number of young boarders and it has proved very beneficial. It is supervised by a European enthusiast and has a valuable discipline of its own. It has its code of honour. Every effort has been put forth to prevent injury being done to the European Boy Scout movement in South Africa, which we recognise is doing much good work; we should be very loath to see a cheap imitation of the real thing. We hope that from "The Pathfinders" or "The Braves" will in time be evolved an organisation that will meet the needs of the youth of South Africa's many-coloured humanity, as Scouting does for the European boy. There are those who object even to this. To these we would point out that Native missions have not weakened the European churches of South Africa; that the Good Templars have lost nothing by the establishment of Native Lodges; and the "Braves" will do no injury to the Scouts. Maybe they will help them. To the true Scout who may read these lines we would say: "Here is a mission for you, an open door, a labour of love that will bring its own reward. Come in and help."

\* \* \*

A few weeks ago at the foot of the Amatola mountains where the "Pathfinders" were so happy, a party of semi-heathen boys and youths paid a night visit to some youths of a near-by village. In the course of the night the almost inevitable quarrelling and stickfighting began. In the dark one poor youth became separated from his friends

and he was found dead next morning—battered to death. The following day about twenty dirty, wild, unkempt youths were arrested and taken to jail. Two were charged with murder, and all with public violence. What a tragic picture of sordid life, of pitiful waste of human possibilities, they presented. It is possible that the stickfight was the highest that life seemed to offer them—they were expressing themselves in action as best they knew how. The midnight brawl was perhaps in keeping with the rest of their lives. As one looks on the wholesome happiness of the "Pathfinder" brought up under Christian influences, which he takes without questioning as his natural right, and contrasts this picture with that of the degraded and lawless youths of semi-heathendom, one is surprised at the gulf that lies between. One gets a glimpse of the immensity and the reality of the work of Christ, and the difference between Heathendom and the Christianity by which we hope it will ultimately be replaced.

T. A.





## "THE BRAVES" ABROAD

If you ask what are the Braves I shall have difficulty in giving you a concise answer. They are not what we used to call Brigade Boys, neither are they Boy Scouts, for they are of different shades of colour, nor yet are they Cowboys or Red Indians, though they are all of these in their own vivid imaginations. They are a company of the best kind of boys and youths that can be found in South Africa's missionary institutions to-day, a type quite different from the students of only a few years ago. Since the war, khaki clothing has been cheap and its colour therefore predominates in their dress, so much so that outside people call them Scouts, "Coloured Scouts." We who know better call them "The Pathfinders," for this was the designation given them at their baptism some years ago; however, the appeal which the race of the Mohicans makes to the youth of the world has been too strong for us and they call themselves "The Braves." What sort of chap is a Brave? Well, in our case he may be a youth of colour from the Western Province, a Zulu from Natal, the offspring of a Transkeian chief, or the son of a White man. The psychology of educated boys does not vary so very much the world over as was illustrated by the great Jamboree held last year in England, at which almost all races were represented—Scout lore, Cowboy heroisms and Indian "wigwamry" will have their devotees

everywhere, and the Braves have drunk deep at all these wells of boyhood's pilgrimages.

Now the Braves had often been out for all-day tramps but never had been able to fulfil their hearts desire, which was to go camping, until recently the opportunity of a holiday in the Amatola Mountains offered itself, and for a few weeks the pure and perfect joy of anticipation was theirs. There is no joy like unto this of anticipation. Oh! the preparations; alas for the straying thoughts in classrooms! What bedtime stories of leopards and lions and baboons, as every conceivable kind of conflict between man (that is a Brave) and the wild beasts flitted like flashlight pictures before their eager minds!

To buy and kill a sheep was one of our intentions and every Brave had a different idea as to the way in which that sheep should meet its end. It died many weird deaths, for it ran away and fell over a precipice after it had been stolen by a tiger and killed and eaten by wild dogs. It also figured as the Company's mascot (changed to a goat), and someone with a kind heart adopted it as a pet lamb. Finally it turned out that we did not need it and therefore did not buy it, so it was never really ours, excepting in imagination.

The eventful day arrived and our trek to the happy hunting ground began. The Chief Brave, sometimes called "Farmer," was in charge of the whip and the wagon (he was more than a little proud), and "Dordrecht," the smallest "Bravecub" (are there such?) led the oxen. Ten other Braves

there were, twelve in all, varying in age from 14 to young manhood. When we had gone a mile or two it was discovered that one had not turned up. It is sometimes distressing to see how quickly a dead man's estate is divided up; and that missing Brave's estate, which happened to be in the wagon, consisting of blankets and other outfit, was being allotted with unseemly haste to other Braves, when from out of the bush the missing one appeared. He was received gladly.

Realisation is not always equal to anticipation and so it was this day, for the weather was very hot and windy, the road was long, and *we had forgotten to fill our water bottles*. Such are the ways of the young of mankind. From two o'clock to five we tramped on uncomplainingly, up the winding road ascending the mountain. Then we came to the dwelling of a kindly storekeeper, who gave us all we needed.

The place where we intended to outspan was still several miles away, high up in the mountains, so we were soon on the road again. As we draw near to the mountains the views from the road became very interesting, and the young and somewhat tired Braves brightened up. It was certainly a new Africa they found awaiting them. The shadows of night fell as we were still on the road, but about 8 p.m. we reached the bend where the lilies grow, and where we were to outspan for the night. Soon the oxen were tied up, camp fires were ablaze, but for the second time that day we were in need of water. The spring where travellers

are wont to drink, the friend of many a previous journey, was dry, quite, quite dry. A Council was held, but none volunteered to tramp the four miles back to the last stream, nor yet to tread the five or six miles forward to the next. They resolved rather to be cheerful on a dry supper. Cheerful they were though the bread was dry, and soon a stream of mirth and song flowed forth where the streams of water had dried up. Camp fire yarns of the usual order next came forth, after which twelve tired yet happy Braves turned in to blankets, if not into bed.

They slept, but not so one lying comfortably on a camp stretcher, to whom sleep does not easily come. How clear and bright are the stars, how gentle the evening breeze, how peaceful is the forest, how strong are the mountains, and how good is the eternal God. Lines of Coleridge come to the mind:—

“ A sense o'er all my soul imprest  
That I am weak, yet not unblest,  
Since in me, round me, everywhere  
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.”

By three o'clock the moon was up and so was he of the sleepless eyes, and it was not long before the company was on the road again. Four a.m. found us lying with our faces in a stream taking in much-needed supplies of water, and by five o'clock the Braves had reached their destination and had gone into camp. The oxen were turned out to graze, cooking operations begun without loss of time, mugs of steaming coffee were soon being

handed round, and a little after six all were filled to repletion. By eight o'clock the routine of camp life had begun. Two lads went to a farm over the hills for milk, two others to a store a mile or two away, another two to another farm about three miles away from which we afterwards obtained a plentiful supply of milk. Others engaged in arranging the camp; one was set to work to prepare the inevitable cricket pitch. Needless to say the lads took to camping as young ducks take to water.

Unrecorded must go the story of the many cricket matches played. The number of bats made in one day would have done credit to a factory; one whom we call "The Completer" (clumsy fellow), broke almost enough to keep the pots boiling; but when the first day was still young every ball we possessed had been ruined, and the great game had perforce to come to an end. Climbing and exploration were next indulged in until sunset, by which time the Kettlespout Waterfall and some of the forests had been visited. On the beauties of Hogsback scenery I must not dilate here; but those twelve Braves found it truly wonderful and had much to talk about that night when they gathered at the camp fire.

Very different are the faces and personalities around the fire. There is "Googoo," of the Western Province, whose heart is as light as his feet, and his song as unceasing as the mountain stream and good to listen to. He speaks only English and Dutch, but parrots Zulu and Kafir songs to perfection. What a repertoire! In four days singing he

did not repeat himself! He is a mimic of no mean order, and the idiosyncracies of certain professors were served up nightly for the amusement of his comrades. A rare gift of imagination is his, and many happy hours he spends making centuries for England against Australia or knocking down wickets in county cricket. Ariel was not more blithe than he, though he is black as the night, black but comely. Next to Googoo is "He without the Tooth," son of the Transkei, restless, wildeyed, talkative, playful, happy, of a totally different origin to his neighbour and obviously pursuing a totally different destiny. His mind runs on oxen and stick fights, *lobola* and Magistrates, racing horses at his father's place, and his mother's things. Love of home and the things of home are his outstanding notes. His heroes are the tribal ones. Next again is another quite different to both, a youth of a good report, but not nearly so easily described. He does not sing nor does he talk overmuch, but he yet makes his presence felt. He grins and smiles, but rarely laughs outright—"Quiet Night" I call him; something about him there is that calls to mind old friends, peaceful and serene rivers of East England, whose depths you never reach. Yet I am wrong, for his touch of colour comes from a yellow race; it is the mystery of the desert that is his.

The "Farmer" is head man of the company. A big and burly fellow is he, son of a Scotchman, graceful in nothing, but good natured and industrious in everything. He is in charge of the commissariat, and all day he works in camp without

+ a Zulu  
mother

grousing. Sometimes the more playful youngsters may play too long after orders have been given and then he may assert himself, but usually he prefers the easy-going way of good natured and unselfish folk. By destiny he seems fitted to live out his existence on a quiet farm about a hundred miles from a railway station. An outstanding feature of the Farmer is his prodigious appetite—he has, according to an eloquent comrade, “an extremely capacious capacity.” His bosom friend, slender Karroo Boy, is very weak in this vital region.

Literature of a kind has incredible power over the minds of some youths. Here we have around us the stuff out of which some such literature is conjured: lonely mountains, dark forests, narrow trails, wind in the trees, running waters, jackals barking, the dogs answering, and every shadow might have its unknown adventure. Here we have the campfire, the lit-up faces, boisterous laughter, campfire yarns, and overhead the bright but ever-silent stars; yet here, in the midst of all this, one of our Braves strains his eyes trying to read the badly printed pages of a “Penny Deadwood!” Oh Likhasha! grasping at the shadows, letting the realities go by!

Space does not allow of mentioning all the members of the company, the smaller units of which were looking decidedly sleepy. The day had been so full that it was hard to think back past all the things that had been done, but the fact was asserting itself that the Braves were up at three that morning and had been doing and daring the whole

day. Prayers and the pleasure of shaking down in bed were all that was left.

Two Braves elected to stay by the fire, he of the capacious capacity and he of the weak digestion. Between them was a big tin of porridge, which they said they were going to "smash." One wonders where students get these terms. Fancy speaking of "Smashing porridge!"

As we grow older we are more prone to recognise the inevitables of life, but youth is constantly bumping up against the limitations by which we are beset, and thus it came about that, of the heroes of this "smashing" episode, one of them, he of the weak digestion, was troubled with severe pains in the night and early the next morning we had to requisition the nearest storekeeper's castor oil bottle. The porridge, the cold and sober porridge, had done the smashing.

The proprietor of the hotel and store was a good Samaritan, and helped us out wherever he could. One thing we lacked which he had not for sale and that was a ball, but he hunted the gutterings of his buildings, and, lo and behold, there was one. Life again took on harmonious tints. There was a great cricket match that morning. They of the short trousers had been very boastful and had even challenged their seniors of the longer garments, but after a hard and strenuous game of two innings each, we beat them, *by one run*. Sweet is the taste of victory.

The afternoon was spent exploring and "path-finding." Some of the waterfalls, including the hidden Tyumie Falls, were visited. Afterwards



we climbed out of the valley by a way which I think few, if any, ever trod before. It was a hard and difficult piece of work, worthy of being recorded in the annals of the tribe. Very thankful were the Braves to get back to camp just as darkness was closing in, and it was not long before they were enjoying supper. Round the fire they sat until late. Googoo, the chief singer, was in splendid form, and the Quiet Knight and the Completer and Somebody all had stories to tell. That night sleep was disturbed by dreams of precipices and the scaling of giddy heights.

Sunday was the next day and, though different from the other days, it also was a day to remember. After breakfast we had a short Service, and then the boys wandered, each wherever he would. It was a perfect morning, and the whole of that wonderful scene seemed to speak, nay rather to sing, of the great Creator. It was springtime, the trees were filled with singing birds, and Nature told us again in her own sweet way the stories of the Creation and the Resurrection.

"O happy, happy living things,  
No tongue their beauty can declare."

There is still much to relate but the homeward trail is calling. Youth, as you are probably aware, is an affair of extremes—it fluctuates from one pole to another. If we were very dry on the journey up it was abundantly plain when our wagon had gone only a few yards that we were to be very wet on the journey down. As the wagon jolted over the uneven road every kettle, pot, can, jug, mug or pan began spluttering forth

a surplusage of water. The whole collection had been filled to their brims by some thoughtful Brave; the big, black, fifteen-gallon kettle was as full as was the corpulent Falstaff when he came up from the bottom of the Thames. The wagon was trough-shaped, and a miniature tidal wave soon swept it from end to end. The outfit floated or sank, according to its buoyancy. We had gone less than twenty yards when we stopped to bale out. Bale out is a good term to use, for the wagon now looked like a leaky old "dredger-boat" just pulled out of the sea—only the smell of fish was missing. We soon got back to the other extreme for the water was emptied out, *none was saved*, and there was nothing to drink when we reached Lily Bend again.

My space is done; I must end this tale. Night-time saw us safely back again, and supper, prepared by The Good Giant of our home, awaited us at the dear old Mission. To most it was good to get back as it had been good to be away. Looking back the sojourn of the "Braves" seems to have been very short, but its memories, they say, will last for long, for very long.

## QUIET NIGHT'S VERSION

It was on a typical South African day that we started on our long journey to the Hogsback mountains. Yet what mattered the wind and heat and what cared we for the dusty road, for had not the keen joy of expectation got us in its grip?

The shouts and merry laughter of the twelve Braves as they trudged along by the wagon and oxen brought all the people to the doors as we passed their huts. Owing to a delay in starting the sun sank before we were even near the outspan, halfway up the mountain, and there was a discussion as to whether we should proceed or outspan. To the horror of the footsore juniors it was decided to push on.

The cool breeze and the fresh exhilarating mountain air, after the hot and dusty roads below, made a welcome change indeed. After some hard climbing—our oxen came to a stop several times—we reached our destination for the night, Lily Bend.

And now for a hearty supper! But, alas for parched throats, not a drop of water could be found.

"Dry supper boys," said "Cook," sometimes called "Farmer," a tall, strapping young fellow who never wastes time where food is concerned. And a dry supper we had.

"Oh!" exclaimed a boastful youth, rising from his seat next to the roaring fire, "Oh, for a tiger

to appear that I may show you"—he funks a frog—"how brave I am!" Nevertheless even with such a Brave for a protector we would have feared the onslaught of a tiger.

That night we slept with the sky for a roof and the trees protecting us from the wind. Judging from the many groans and the continual movement few had restful sleep. We arose, loaded the wagon and were on the march by three o'clock next morning. So cold was it that we resorted to wrapping blankets about us. After a swift march, for the way was mostly downhill with the exception of a few hard climbs, we reached the camping place.

Soon the welcome cups of steaming coffee were passed round and a hearty breakfast was made. In a short time the camp was in order and the various camp duties were performed. We were now free and cricket was immediately commenced.

One youth, who was the cause of many a laugh, having seen some wild turkeys settle amongst some bushes, silently slipped away to try his hand at stalking. Like a panther he crept noiselessly to within a short distance of the birds. A truly terrifying spectacle he must have been as with open mouth and wild eyes he made a flying leap at the nearest bird. His dream of turkey pie was shattered by the bird escaping, and with a glum countenance he returned to camp to tell us about his wonderful stalking powers.

Meanwhile Cook had his powers tested to the utmost to invent some dish to serve at dinner, and

at last he had to ask for advice. With his usual energy he had dinner ready in time and beamed to see how the food was appreciated.

After dinner an exploring party with Cook at the head left for the Kettlespout, a waterfall higher up. Rather than take the path we decided to go straight through the forest. After a hard and strenuous climb we reached the top. The Kettlespout is a small stream falling sheer over a high precipice and one had to gather up courage to gaze over the cliff. The return journey was swift. With a rush and a roar Cook stamped down the steep hill, dodging in and out of the trees, and crashing through the bushes. The troop straggled out behind him.

After the remains of supper had been cleared away we assembled round the roaring camp fire. It was a rather quiet and subdued company and the conversation soon flagged, for we had been up and doing since three that morning.

We repaired early to our beds for the much-needed rest. It was only with the threat of serving no late breakfast that Cook managed to rout out some lazy individuals next morning. The familiar cry of "Shut out" got them up at last.

Originally we intended to scale the mountain that morning but the majority being on the casualty list we decided not to do so. Weak digestions, skinned toes, strained ankles, and splitting headaches were amongst the many complaints. All these ailments instantly vanished when it was heard that there was to be no climbing

done. Instead of climbing the greater part of us took a walk to the store to procure some provisions, Cook of course at the head.

We had been on the lookout for baboons and as we came from the shop, seeing a movement in the branches of some trees, a rush was immediately made. Sticks and stones were grabbed up in the wild rush, for we meant to give that baboon a warm time. As we neared the trees we could see the cause of the movement and the object of our rush, yes, there in the branches sat a young—boy. The dismal howl raised by the pack of disappointed Braves was indeed distressing to hear.

We next hurried to camp for we had procured a ball for cricket, and soon a match was a progress. It was only when dinner was announce that the game was stopped. Cook was in his element and this meal marked the climax of his cooking career, as was vouched for by the hungry pack. Whether it was because their appetites blinded them to his deficiencies or otherwise is a matter for contention.

About half the party now set out pathfinding, going down into the forests. At each turn of the little footpath a new and more beautiful scene came into view. It was cool under the shade of those tall trees and the sound of running water resounded through the forest. We did some exploring but were unable to find the "King of the Forest," the largest and probably oldest tree on the mountain.

There was not much water in the Tyumie so that we were able to go right to the bottom of the waterfall. Here the "Turkey Stalker" suddenly got the idea that he was to have the honour of scaling the steep and slippery rock down which the water rushed, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he was at last persuaded not to attempt it.

What a sight our Leader presented when he appeared from one of his scrambles. His clean white trousers had been badly splashed with black mud and he looked more like a miner than a leader of the Braves.

The Stalker took the lead on the return journey, our Leader urging us on from behind. With something more like instinct than good judgment "Stalker" guided us up steep cliffs and along the face of high precipices. At last with a heave and a bound he reached the top, after having led us up a kind of natural back-staircase. Had we climbed the Hogsback mountain according to programme it would have been no harder work. I am afraid our Leader tricked us by tempting us to follow him downhill.

On our return we found Cook trying to persuade the Stay-at-Home Braves to go for wood with dire threats of serving them no supper. They were persuaded.

The company that gathered round the camp fire that night was a better mood than the night before and an enjoyable time was spent. Choirs were started and an excellent imitation of the actions of a certain well-known conductor was

given by his humorous pupil amidst roars of laughter.

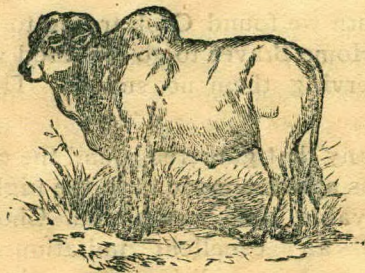
The day of our return came all too soon. By twelve o'clock we had taken dinner, loaded the wagon, and put everything in order. Then with heartfelt regrets we left the place where we had spent such happy days, and set out on the long tramp back to college.

A short rest at Lily Bend and we proceeded on the downward trail. At about two hours' march from home we outspanned and partook of supper—our last meal in the open.

On starting again those who had boarded the wagon broke out in singing and it was a supremely happy company that sighted the lights of Alice. In imagination we already saw ourselves roaming at some future date over the now familiar nooks of the Amatolas, and it was resolved to go there again at the first opportunity, for—

“A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

A BRAVE.





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