

THE SCOUTMASTER

By

JOHN TILLEY

This sketch is one of eighteen similar pieces written by John Tilley and published in the book "MONOLOGUES" by Samuel French Ltd in 1936.

BUFFALOES . . . buffaloes . . . buffaloes. Rally . . . rally . . . rally. To me, boys ... to me. Boys . . . rally ... to me. Extraordinary, no buffaloes. Rally . . . rally . . . rally. Boys . . . buffaloes. Ladies and gentlemen, I am very sorry, but I am afraid I have lost my scoop of trouts. My trout scoop seems to have entirely disappeared. That's the worst of a Hyde Park Rally - once you give the dismiss you never know where the little devils will get to. They're such capital little chaps, you know - hot as mustard and keen as cress. I'm so afraid they may have run into Hitler and got dissolved. After all, the Nazis have been so awfully unkind to we scouts - you wouldn't really think so, because, after all, the Nazis' salute is more of a request than a threat - isn't it? I'll just give them one more call. Buffaloes . . . Rally ... to me . . . boys . . . rally . . . Not a sign of them. It is so awkward - we were going to give a little display in woodcraft and knotting. I don't know what to do now. The only thing I can suggest is that I carry on with the woodcraft and knotting myself. It is so confusing for you - I am so awfully sorry. I'll just give one more call. Buffaloes . . . buffaloes . . . rally . . . Not a sign of them. Of course, the great thing about woodcraft is to learn to be crafty on going into a wood. That is the great thing. You see, the average person just enters the wood in the ordinary way and they find trees all round them; they then say, "Oh, here we are in a wood." Not so the Scout. No. The Scout always enters the wood heavily disguised. Then he proceeds in a series of short rushes from tree to tree. Like this. Thus he avoids being peeped at. If there is one thing I hate it is being peeped at. Of course, Lady Godiva suffered awfully from that sort of thing in Coventry, and people get sent to Coventry on the slightest pretext. And they may be, they may be . . . and the may be - of course the May bee actually comes out of the hive in April. That's Mother Nature's way of telling us that it takes more than one early worm to make a summer. Of course, the May bee is different from the ordinary sort of bee, because the May bee doesn't store honey in the hive at all. No ... it stores jam. According to what it feeds on

so the jam. If it feeds on onions you have onion jam ... Bananas, you have banana jam ... Cotton wool and train oil, and you have the full fruit standard. But that's rather more expensive, and apiarists generally . . . Oh, and talking of apes and aping, I had a most painful experience the other day. I was out on a little private tracking walk on my own, I was tracking down a country lane quite quietly-just tracking here and tracking there, when an old gentleman came up to me and said, "Are you a Scout?" and I said, " Yes," and he said, " Fancy that." And then he said, "'Are you interested in birds?" So I said, "I told you I was a Scout." So he said, "Would you like to see the biggest swallow in England?" Of course, I was frightfully keen in a minute, and he rushed me over to the local inn . . . Do you know it cost me eighteen pints before I realised I was being mocked. Oh, and talking of mocking, I had a very painful experience only yesterday. I went over a mock turtle factory. I don't know whether you have ever been over a mock turtle factory, but it's a big factory with a huge room with the turtles seated comfortably all round the room. Then in came the chief mocker-and the things he said to those turtles. I mean cruel things, personal things. Oh, I was livid. There was one awfully nice little turtle, a very shy, retiring little turtle. He was very sensitive about his shell, he had some malformation of the shell, and this brute of a chief mocker came up and cracked all the petrol jokes over it, sort of, " That is a good shell, that was." Of course, the poor thing was almost soup before I left. You see, that is what they do. That is the way they make their soup. Oh, I was so annoyed. Well, I must just see where my troop has got to. I must find them if I can. Buffaloes . . . buffaloes. Rally . . . rally . . . rally . . . Boys . . . rally . . . Not a sign . . . Ah, there they are . . . Boys . . . come here. Boys . . . where have you been ? Where have you been ? . . . Oh, I see I

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