

CAMP FIRE YARN NO. 18

HEALTH-GIVING HABITS
Keep Clean - Don't Smoke -
Don't Drink
Keep Pure - Rise Early Smile



All the great peace scouts who have succeeded in exploring or hunting expeditions in wild countries have only been able to get on by knowing how to keep themselves and others healthy. They had to, because diseases, accidents, and wounds might be suffered by them or their men, and they couldn't find doctors in the jungles to cure them. A Scout who does not know something about taking care of himself would never get on at all; he might just as well stay at home for all the good he will be.

Therefore practice keeping healthy yourself, and then you will be able to show others how to keep themselves healthy too. In this way you can do many good turns.

Also, if you know how to look after yourself you need never have to pay for medicines. The great English poet, Dryden, in his poem, *Cymon and Iphigenia*, wrote that it was better to trust to fresh air and exercise than to pay doctors' bills to keep yourself healthy:

*"Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught:
The wise, for cure, on exercise depend;
God never made his work for man to mend."*

Keep Yourself Clean

If you cut your hand when it is dirty, it is very likely to fester, and to become very sore. But if your hand is quite clean and freshly washed, no harm will come of it—it heals quickly.

Cleaning your skin helps to clean your blood. Doctors say that half the good of exercise is lost if you do not have a bath immediately after it.

It may not be always possible for you to get a bath every day, but you can at any rate rub yourself over with a wet towel, or scrub yourself with a dry one, and you ought not to miss a single day in doing this if you want to keep fit and well.

You should also keep clean in your clothing—your underclothing as well as that which shows.

And to be healthy and strong, you *must* keep your blood healthy and clean inside you. This is done by breathing in lot of pure, fresh air, by deep breathing, and by clearing out all dirty matter from inside your stomach, which is done by having a “rear” daily, without fail; many people are the better for having it twice a day. If there is any difficulty about it one day drink plenty of good water, especially before and just after breakfast, and practise body-twisting exercises, and all should be well. Never start work in the morning without some sort of food inside you.

Smoking

Every Scout knows the Scout Law. But there is an extra point to that Law which is not written but is understood by every Scout. It is this: “A Scout is not a fool”, and that is why Scouts do not smoke while they are still growing boys.



TOMMY THE TENDERFOOT No. 9

TOMMY TRIES SMOKING

Tommy thought smoking would give him some fun.
But he quickly wished he had never begun.

Any boy can smoke—it is not such a very wonderful thing to do. But a Scout will not do it because he is not such a fool. He knows that when a lad smokes before he is fully grown up it may weaken his heart, and the heart is the most important organ in a lad’s body. It pumps the blood all over him to form flesh, bone, and muscle. If the heart does not do its work the boy cannot grow to be healthy. Any Scout knows that smoking spoils his sense of smell, which is of greatest importance to him for scouting on active service.

A large number of the best sportsmen, soldiers, sailors, and others, do not smoke—they find they can do better without it.

No boy ever began smoking because he liked it, but generally because either he feared being chaffed by the other boys as afraid to smoke, or because he thought that by smoking he would look like a great man—when all the time he only looks like a little ass.

So just make up your mind for yourself that you don’t mean to smoke till you are grown up, and stick to it. That will show you to be a man much more than any slobbering about with a half-smoked cigarette between your lips. The other fellows will in the end respect you much more, and will probably in many cases secretly follow your lead.

Drinking

A soldierly-looking man came up to me one night and brought out his discharge certificates, showing that he had served with me in South Africa. He said he could get no work, and he was starving—every man's hand was against him, apparently because he was a soldier. My nose and eyes told me in a moment another tale, and that was the real cause of his distress.

A stale smell of tobacco and beer hung about his clothes, his finger-tips were yellow with cigarette smoke, he had even taken some kind of scented lozenge to try to hide the whisky smell in his breath. No wonder nobody would employ him, or give him more money to drink with, for that was all that he would do with money if he got it.

Much of the poverty and distress in the world is brought about by men getting into the habit of wasting their money and time on drink. And a great deal of crime, and also of illness, and even madness, is due to the habit of drinking too much.

The old saying, "Strong drink makes weak men", is a very true one.

It would be simply impossible for a man who drinks to be a Scout. Keep off liquor from the very first, and make up your mind to have nothing to do with it. Water, tea, or coffee are quite good enough drinks for quenching your thirst or for picking you up at any time, or, if it is very hot, lemonade or a squeeze of lemon are much better refreshment.

On the Hike

A good Scout trains himself pretty well to do without liquid. It is very much a matter of habit. If you keep your mouth shut when walking or running, or keep a pebble in your mouth (which also makes you keep your mouth shut), you do not get thirsty as you do when you go along with your mouth open, sucking in the air and dry dust. But you must also be in good hard condition. If you are fat from want of exercise, you are sure to get thirsty and want to drink every mile. If you do not let yourself drink, the thirst wears off after a short time. If you keep drinking water on the line of march, or while playing games, it helps to tire you and spoils your wind.

"Standing Treat"

It is often difficult to avoid taking strong drinks when you meet friends who want to treat you, but they generally like you all the better if you say you don't want anything, as then they don't have to pay for it. If they insist you can take something quite harmless. Wasters like to stand about a bar talking and sipping—generally at the other fellow's expense—but they are wasters, and it is as well to keep out of their company, if you want to get on and have a good time.

Remember that drink never yet cured a single



Men who get into the habit of drinking often ruin their own health and the happiness of themselves and their families. The old saying "Strong drink makes weak men," is a very true one.

trouble—it only makes troubles grow worse and worse the more you go on with it. It makes a man forget for a few hours what exactly his trouble is, but it also makes him forget everything else. If he has wife and children, it makes him forget that his duty is to work and help them out of their difficulties, instead of making himself all the more unfit to work.

Some men drink because they like the feeling of getting half stupid, but they are fools, because once they take to drink no employer will trust them, and they soon become unemployed and easily get ill. There is nothing manly about getting drunk. Once a man gives way to drink it ruins his health, his career, and his happiness, as well as that of his family. There is only one cure for this disease, and that is—never to get it.

Continence

Smoking and drinking are things that tempt some fellows and not others, but there is one temptation that is pretty sure to come to you at one time or another, and I want just to warn you against it.



A Scout is “clean in thought, word and deed.”
He knows what to do to the fellow who talks smut.

You would probably be surprised if you knew how many boys have written to me thanking me for what I have written on this subject, so I expect there are more who will be glad of a word of advice against the secret vice which gets hold of so many fellows. Smoking and drinking and gambling are men’s vices and therefore attract some boys, but this secret vice is not a man’s vice—men have nothing but contempt for a fellow who gives way to it.

Some boys, like those who start smoking, think it is a very fine and manly thing to tell or listen to dirty stories, but it only shows them to be little fools.

Yet such talk and the reading of trashy books or looking at lewd pictures are very apt to lead a thoughtless boy into the temptation of self-abuse. This is a most dangerous thing for him, for, should it become a habit, it tends to lower both health and spirits.

But if you have any manliness in you, you will throw off such temptation at once. You will stop looking at the books and listening to the stories, and will give yourself something else to think about.

Sometimes the desire is brought on by indigestion, or from eating too rich food, or from constipation or from sleeping in too warm a bed with too many blankets. It can therefore be cured by correcting these, and by bathing at once in cold water, or by exercising the upper part of the body by arm exercises, boxing, etc.

It may seem difficult to overcome the temptation the first time, but when you have done so once it will be easier afterwards.

If you still have trouble about it, do not make a secret of it, but go to your father, or your Scoutmaster, and talk it over with him, and all will come right.

Early Rising

The Scout's time for being most active is in the early morning, because that is the time when wild animals do their feeding and moving about.

So a Scout trains himself to the habit of getting up early. When once he is in the habit it is no trouble at all to him, as it is to some fat fellows who lie asleep after the daylight has come.

The Duke of Wellington, who preferred to sleep on a little camp bed, used to say, "When it is time to turn over in bed it is time to turn out".

Many men who manage to get through more work than others in a day, do so by getting up an hour or two earlier. By getting up early you also can get more time for play.

If you get up one hour earlier than other people, you get thirty hours a month more of life than they do. While they have twelve months in the year, you get 365 extra daylight hours, or thirty more days—that is, thirteen months to their twelve.

The old rhyme has a lot of truth in it when it says—

*"Early to bed and early to rise,
makes a man healthy, and wealthy, and wise."*

Smile

Want of laughter means want of health. Laugh as much as you can—it does you good. So whenever you can get a good laugh, laugh on. And make other people laugh, too, when possible, as it does them good.

If you are in pain or trouble, make yourself smile at it. If you remember to do this, and force yourself, you will find it really does make a difference.

If you read about great scouts like Captain John Smith, the "Pathfinder", and others, you will generally find that they were pretty cheery old fellows.

The ordinary boy is apt to frown when working hard at physical exercises, but the Boy Scout is required to smile all the time. He drops a mark off his score whenever he frowns.

GAMES

Relay Race

One Patrol pitted against another to see who can get a message sent a long distance in shortest time by means of relays of runners (or cyclists). The Patrol is ordered out to send in three successive notes or tokens (such as sprigs of certain plants), from a point, say two miles distant or more.

The leader in taking his Patrol out to the spots, drop Scouts at convenient distances, who will then act as runners from one post to the next and back.

If relays are posted in pairs, messages can be passed both ways.

Throwing the Assegai

Target, a thin sack, lightly stuffed with straw, or a sheet or cardboard, or canvas stretched on a frame.

Assegais (spears) to be made of wands, with weighted ends pointed, or with iron arrow-heads on them.



Throwing the assegai, or a simple spear, gives good exercise for the arms. The native of Australia uses a piece of wood as an extension to his arm, to send off the spear with greater force.