

CHAPTER IX OUR DUTIES AS CITIZENS

CAMP FIRE YARN NO. 26

CITIZENSHIP

Duties of Scouts as Citizens - Citizens of the World

Every scout ought to prepare himself to be a good citizen of his country and of the World.

For this you must begin, as boys, to look on all boys as your friends. Remember, whether rich or poor, from town or from country, you have to stand shoulder to shoulder for your country. If you are divided among yourselves you are doing harm to your country. You must sink your differences.

If you despise other boys because they belong to a poorer home than yourself you are a snob. If you hate other boys because they happen to be born richer than you, you are a fool.

We must, each one of us, take our place as we find it in this world and make the best of it, and pull together with the others around us.

We are very much like bricks in a wall, we each have our place, though it may seem a small one in so big a wall. But if one brick crumbles or slips out of place, it begins to throw an undue strain on others, cracks appear, and the wall totters.

Don't be too anxious to push yourself on. You will get disappointments without end if you start that way.

Work for the good of your country, or of the business in which you are employed, and you will find that as you do this you will be getting all the promotion and all the success that you want.

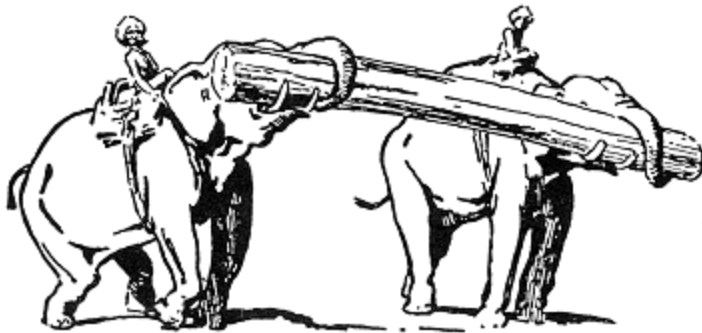
Try and prepare yourself for this by seriously taking up the subjects they teach you at school, not because it amuses you, but because it is your duty to your country to improve yourself. Take up your mathematics, your history, and your language learning in that spirit, and you'll get on.

Don't think of yourself, but think of your country and the good that your work is going to do to other people.

When You Grow Up

Then, when you grow up, you will become a voter and have a share in governing your country.

And you will, many of you, be inclined to belong automatically to the political party your father or friends belong to. I should not, if I were you. I should hear what each party has to say. If you listen to one party you will certainly agree that that is the only right one, the rest must all be



The elephants of Burma can teach a lesson to the nations of the world. By working together they can carry their heaviest load.

wrong. But if you go and listen to another you may find that after all that one is quite right, and the first one wrong.

The thing is to listen to them all, and don't be persuaded by any particular one. And then be a man, make up your mind and decide for yourself which you think is best for the whole country—not for some little local question—and vote for that one so long as it works the right way, namely, for the good of the country.

Many people get led away by some new politician with some new extreme idea. Never believe in one man's idea till it has been well considered from all points of view. Extreme ideas are seldom much good; if you look them up in history you will see almost always that they have been tried before somewhere and have failed.

Your forefathers worked hard, fought hard, and died hard, to make your country for you. Don't let them look down from heaven and see you loafing about with your hands in your pockets, doing nothing to keep it up.

Play up! Each man in his place, and play the game!

“A Friend of All the World”

Remember, too, that a Scout is not only a friend to the people round him, but “a friend of all the world.” Friends don't fight each other. If we make friends with our neighbours across the sea in foreign countries, and if they keep friends with us, we shan't want to fight. And that is by far the best way of preventing future wars and of making sure of lasting peace.

One thing which brings about wars is the fact that people of the different countries know very little about each other personally, but are told by their governments that the right thing is to fight. So they fight and are all jolly sorry for it afterwards.

If they had been good friends in peace time they would have understood each other better and would never have come to blows.

Nowadays travelling has become so much easier and distances have become so much smaller through motor transport, aeroplanes, and radio that people of different countries have a better chance of getting to know each other more closely.

Then the Boy Scout and Girl Guide (Girl Scout) Movements have spread among the nations. As Scouts we can visit about fifty different countries about the world and find Brother Scouts in each of them, all acting under the same Law and Promise and doing the same Scout work as ourselves. Already thousands of Scouts of different nations are making trips to each other's countries regularly to interchange visits. In this way they have the fun of seeing what other countries are like, and what is more important, they are getting to know one another as friends and not as mere "foreigners."

The World Brotherhood of Scouting

As a Scout you join a great host of boys of many nationalities and you will have friends in every continent.

This Brotherhood of Scouting is in many respects similar to a Crusade. Scouts from all parts of the world are ambassadors of good will, making friends, breaking down barriers of color, of creed, and of class. That surely is a great Crusade. I advise you to do your best in that work, for soon you will be a man, and if quarrels should arise between any nations it is upon you that the burden of responsibility will fall.



The Scout Movement is a world-wide brotherhood. You may have a chance some time, at a Jamboree, to meet Scouts from many nations.

Wars have taught us that if one nation tries to impose its particular will upon others, cruel reaction is bound to follow. A series of Scout World Jamborees and other meetings of Scouts from many countries has taught us that if we exercise mutual forbearance and give-and-take, then there is sympathy and harmony. These Jamborees have showed what a firm link the Scout Law is between boys of all nations. We can camp together, go hiking together, and enjoy all the fun of outdoor life, and so help to forge a chain of friendship.

If we are friends we will not want to be in dispute, and by cultivating these friendships such as have been cemented at our great Jamborees, we are preparing the way for solutions of international problems by discussion of a peaceful character. This will have a vital and very far-reaching effect throughout the world in the cause of peace. Therefore, let us pledge ourselves to do our absolute utmost to establish friendship among Scouts of all nations and to help to develop peace and happiness in the world and good will among men.

In all of this, it is the spirit that matters. Our Scout Law and Promise, when we really put them into practice, take away all occasion for wars and strife between nations.

Do Your Part

So let us all do our part. Those who are Scouts now should determine to be better Scouts, not only in backwoodsmanship and camping, but in sticking to the Law and carrying it out. If you are not a Scout, come along and join this happy Brotherhood. There are great times ahead, and we shall need you!

Make a special effort to study the work of the United Nations, its work for peace, its efforts to improve the lot of the world's underprivileged peoples, its endeavours to form a real "World Brotherhood".

Finally

I hope I have been able in this book to show you something of the appeal that lies in Scouting for all of us.

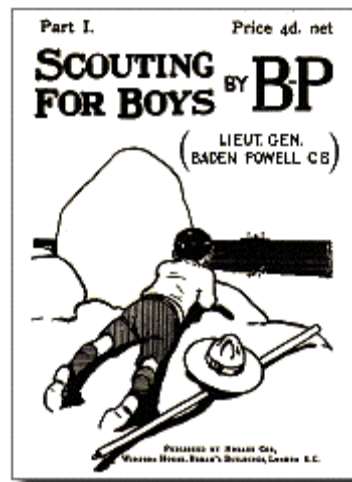
I want you to feel that you are really Scouts out in the wilds, able to work things out for yourselves, and not just Scouts in a Troop carefully looked after by Patrol Leaders and Scouters.

I know that you want to be up and doing things for yourselves; that these old explorers and frontiersmen appeal to the spirit of adventure in you; that, despite all the modern inventions, you want to get out on your own, fending for yourselves, enjoying the freedom of the open air.

I have just tried to suggest to you some ways of doing this and of helping you to become real men.

Scouting is a fine game, if we put our backs into it and tackle it well, with real enthusiasm. As with other games, too, we will find that we gain strength of body, mind, and spirit from the playing of it. But remember! it is a game for the open air, so whenever the opportunity occurs get out into the open and Good Luck and Good Camping go with you!

THE END



Cover of the first installment of the original edition in 1908