Self-education

CONCENTRATION in education can only be obtained when the work to be done is suited to the tastes and abilities of the learner.

The natural instinct of the infant is to develop itself by exercise which we call "Play." It has an inherent desire to accomplish; the young child wants to *do* things and to overcome difficulties to its own satisfaction.

Dr. Montessori has proved that by encouraging a child in its natural desires, instead of instructing it in what you think it ought to do, you can educate it on a much more solid and far-reaching basis. It is only tradition and custom that ordain that education should be a labour, and that as such it is good training for the child in discipline and application.

One of the original objects of Scouting for Boys was to break through this tradition and to show that, by giving attractive pursuits to the young, one could lead them to develop for themselves the essentials of character, health, and handiness.

It is maintained by many interested in education that concentration on the part of the child is most essential to its successful education, but is most difficult to obtain in school.

I don't know what happens in school, but I know that it is most easy to get concentration outside the school if you only give a child its own task to do in its own way.

The thing is to study the child and see what interests it. Look at a youngster making sand castles on the beach, how he will go at it hour after hour until he overcomes his difficulties and builds up his castle to his satisfaction. He concentrates the whole of his thought and the whole of his physical energy upon it. If you adapt such whole-hearted keenness to educational ends, there is no difficulty about obtaining the concentration desired.

This is exactly what happens in the Scout Movement -- on a step higher than the castles in the sand -- but the success in results is entirely the outcome of study of the child, and of utilising his bent -- whatever it may be -- for his own development.

Does the school teacher get his certificate for knowledge of the child or for knowledge of the three R's?

The main step to success is to develop, not to repress, the child's character, and at the same time, above all, not to nurse him. He wants to be *doing* things, therefore encourage him to do them in the right direction, and let him do them in his own way. Let him make his mistakes; it is by these that he learns experience.

Education must be positive, not negative -- active, not passive. For example, the Scout Law in each of its details says: "A Scout does" -- his, that, or the other.

Authorities have come along to improve the Scout Law, and not recognising the active side of it, have changed it to the reverse -- a series of "Don'ts." "Don't," of course, is the distinguishing feature and motto of the old-fashioned system of repression, and is a red rag to a boy. It is a challenge to him to do wrong.

Sought knowledge lasts, unsought does not.

Every boy is different in ability, temperament, and mind, and yet we try to teach them all in a heap the same things. One will come out top of his class because a subject happens to suit him, but he does not at the top in life.

We have been criticised in the Scout Movement for offering such a large number of badges for proficiency in different lines. The object of this was, not that each by should try to win all these badges, but to try to meet the enormous variety of characters among boys, and to give each one his chance by selecting his own subject. We so not perpetuate the school

custom, thereby abilities may be equally good but unfortunately not in one of the subjects which come into the school curriculum.

The aim of the Proficiency Badge is to encourage self-education on the part of the boy in a subject which interests him.

January, 1916.

Ridiculous Troops

THE Wolf Cubs have been instituted in order to provide training for boys of eight to eleven, to help Scoutmasters to keep their Troops composed of boys over that age.

I saw recently once again a "ridiculous Troop," largely composed of little chaps in big hats and baggy shorts grasping staffs twice as tall as themselves. "Why?" I asked the Scoutmaster. : Can't get bigger boys to stay in the Troop," was the reply.

I thought it was very unlikely he would be able to do so if he continued to try to mix big lads with "kiddies." I had hoped that, with the institution of the Wolf Cubs for this very purpose. We should have seen the last of these unfortunate attempts to make up numbers with youngsters who cannot do the work nor maintain the prestige of Scouts.

However, the Wolf Cubs are going ahead now, and will, I hope, before long take in all the small boys and that " ridiculous Troops" of Scouts, as they have been described will be no more seen.

October, 1916.

Retention of the Elder Scout

AT the age of fourteen out boys finish their schooling in three R's, and are then supposed to be sufficiently grounded educationally to specialise for a particular line in life and, after making their choices, to take up the required form of training in the continuation or the technical school.

But how many of them do this? Less than half.

The remainder take up some occupation that gives them immediate pay, without regards to what it is going to hive them later on.

This is not economising out country's future man-power or mind-power, nor does it help the boys' personal prospects and happiness later on in life. If we are going to win the war after the war we have got to put into practice the strictest economy in the prevention of human waste.

Through the Scout Movement we can do a powerful good in this direction. As matters stand, we lead a boy on in progressive stages from his early years, and through Proficiency Badges we encourage him to try his hand at various hobbies till he eventually finds one beyond others at which he proves him good.

The suggestion now is that he should be further given ambition to develop this particular gift on to a higher standard so that it may help him directly in his career.

This encouragement might be given through badges of a higher grade than the existing ones, such, for instance, as he could work for through a continuation school, or in technical classes, or by corresponding instruction.

This higher grade of badge, however, would not of itself be a sufficient incentive to some boys to stay on without other more personal inducements, and therefore it is possible

that a distinctive form that of Scout uniform would also be desirable, differing from that of the younger boy and placing the senior boy on a distinct footing of his own.

Retaining the Scout shirt, he might war a smart cap in lieu of the hat, and knee breeches where he preferred them to shorts.

The Senior Scouts in a Troop, that is those of, say, sixteen who hold a First-class Badge, could form a special Patrol, and would be given supervisory duties as Assistants to the Scoutmaster in his work in cases where thy cannot continue as Patrol Leaders.

Such Senior Patrol would form a standing team for public services, such as fire-brigade duties, work as special constables, accident first-aiders, emergency signallers, coast-watcher, etc., according to their locality.

I have grouped under headings are these: Commercial, Naval, Intellectual, Manufacturing, Agricultural, Military, Trade, and Pioneering, each having at least six alternative subjects for study. The practice of these would tend to make the boys efficient and fit for careers, while expanding their minds and tastes in the human direction as well. They would thus still be retained in their Troops without throwing any extra work on the Scoutmaster or requiring new organisation.

Whether they had the name or not they would be veritable "Cadets," Cadets of citizenhood, of commerce and industry, but as such far more valuable to the nation for the war that is coming than merely military cadets.

December, 1916.

Shorts

A CERTAIN slackness has crept in during the war in some Troops, as regards wearing shorts, which suggests a possible deficiency in the Scout spirit.

It would be an interesting study to find out why each boy who is a Scout first joined the Scouts. It would also be equally interesting to ascertain why each ex-Scout left the Scouts.

So far as I have gone in such investigation on my own account the conclusion that suggests itself is briefly this: Wan of adventure brought the boy in -- lack of adventure took him out.

By "lack of adventure" I mean too much drill or too much school method and too little scoutcraft, backwoodsmanship and camping, with a consequent absence of the Scout spirit.

Signs of this occur in the suggestions which crop up from time to time for a different hat, the giving up of staffs, and the substitution of breeches of shorts.

The boys originally joined the Movement with their eyes open, knowing that shorts were part of the uniform which they wee expected to adopt, so that where there is any tendency to object to them it gives the Scoutmaster a good opportunity of teaching a lesson which is very much needed just now in the rising generation, namely, that it is breaking faith to go back on the understanding under which they joined; a good fellow will stick to this word even though it may gall him.

As a matter of fact where elder boys complain that shorts are "kids' clothing" it gives one a very good hint that their training in Scoutcraft has scarcely been all that might be desired.

The material answer could of course be given that our athletes, footballers, and oarsmen, all wear shorts, as do our light infantry and scouts in the Army.

But it is the spirit of the thing that is the more important reason.

However, in any case, we do not lose many boys over it and we lose none who are true Scouts.

June, 1917.

The Camping Season

LOTS of Woodcraft and Nature Study should be our Aim.

Autumn is already upon us again. How suddenly it comes, and how it catches us if we haven't laid our plans, in time! I am glad, however, to feel that Commissioners and Scoutmasters generally appear to have Been Preparing for it with their camping schemes and fixtures.

Preliminary week-end camps for Scoutmasters arranged by Commissioners are of most especial value. Where it is possible to get a few outsiders to come and taste the joys of these and learn the ropes of Scouting, it often is the surest way of recruiting the ranks of officers.

Instruction camps or tramps for Patrol Leaders should also have their place in every programme. But above all, let's hope that not a Troop will miss its outing in the autumn holidays: it is worth the whole of the rest of the year's training in the club.

Most Troops seem to have arranged their work for helping " on the land," and no better aim could they have just now. But to Scoutmasters in charge I would say -- give your boys all you can of woodcrraft and Nature study; of pioneering and pathfinding actually in practice. The Nature study should be a real close touch with Nature, far beyond the academic dipping into the subject which passes under the name in school. Collecting, whether of plaints or "bugs," and investigation, whether of beasts or birds, are all-absorbing studies for the boy and mighty good for him.

Don't let your camping be the idle boring picnic that it can become when carried out on military lines. Scouting and backwoodsmanship is what we're out for, and what the boys most want. Let them have it good and strong.

It is in camp that the Scoutmaster has his opportunity for inculcating under pleasing means the four main points of training. Character, service for others, skills, and bodily health. But beside all it is his golden chance to bring the boy to God through the direct appeal of Nature and her store of wonders.

*July,*1917.

The Scout's Staff

I HAVE noticed a slackness in one or two centres lately in the matter of Scouts being allowed to parade without their staffs, which for several reasons is regrettable.

The Scout's staff is a distinctive feature about his equipment, and it has its moral as well as its practical uses.

The essential point is that this should be realised and appreciated by the Scoutmaster and Commissioner.

I remember when, in pre-war days, I was attending a review of the German cavalry, the Emperor asked me what I thought of their lances. I ventured to express the opinion that they were too long to be effective in war, and that a shorter lance, such as we use for pigsticking in India, would be more practical. He smiled and explained, "That is true -- but in peace time

we are breeding the *spirit* in our men. I find that with every inch that you put on to a man's lance you give him an extra foot of self-esteem."

Well, although the idea is "made in Germany," there is something in it. The Scout's staff had, as a matter of fact, been in the hands of the Scouts before that conversation, and I had already realised its value in the direction of giving smartness to a body of Scouts and a completeness to the individual which distinguished him from other boys and gave him the esprit de corps which is so effective a step to efficiency.

There are historical associations connected with it which give the staff a sentimental value if we look back to the first British Boy Scouts of a Cuhulain armed with staffs, the pilgrims or "good turn trampers," with their cockle-shells and staffs, the 'prentice bands of London with their cloth yards and their staffs, the merry men of Robin Hood with bows and quarter staffs, down to the present-day mountaineers, war-scouts, and explorers; these all afford a precedent which should have its romance and meaning to the boy if properly applied.

The ceremony of enrolment of the Scout can and should be made a moment of impressive feeling for the boy when he is invested with the hat and staff that mark the Scout, and which equip him for his pilgrimage on that path where he "turns up right and keeps straight on." The officer who fails to use such opportunity is missing one of the most important chances in the Scout life of his boy.

He should expect of the boy a reverence and affection for his staff -- such as the swordsman has for his sword, or the hunter for his rifle. Let the Scout individualise his own staff, even to decorate it in his own way if he likes, but let him keep to his staff. To jumble all staffs into a bundle and put them away in a corner after parade, or, worse, to let them get lost and thus excuse their appearance on parade, is to neglect a valuable help to the moral training of the lad.

All this, of course, is quite apart from the actual practical uses of the staff.

August, 1917.

Decentralisation

OUR principle of decentralisation is the accepted method for the administration of the Boy Scout Movement.

Scoutmasters are given a free hand in the management and training of their Troops under the general supervision of the representative of Headquarters, viz. the Commissioner, whose business it is to see that the lines of policy on which our charter was granted are not departed from.

These Commissioners also act as the representatives to Headquarters of local needs.

For committees we substitute individuals as responsible heads of the different departments of administration. Then the Local Association gives the necessary backing and help that may be needed by the Scoutmasters in their work.

Thus these officers are not bothered with committee or office work, as is so often the drawback in other societies, but are free to devote the whole of their spare time and energy to the main work, namely, the training of the boy.

Frequent conferences of officers give full ventilation to the various questions requiring it, and supply all with a better understanding of what is going on and of what is needed in the Movement.

If and when they find this method does not work satisfactorily, it is open to officers -- indeed it is their duty to the Movement -- to represent the fact to their Commissioner.

The system has been arrived at after very full consideration and after much experience -- sometimes bitterly bought. The point is that officers come into the Movement with their eyes open and that this is the form of administration which they accept in doing so, and to which they further bind themselves where they take the promise to carry out, *inter alia*, the Law of Loyalty.

Every horseman knows that the only successful method for managing a spirited horse is to be on good terms with him, through the rider having a firm seat and giving him his head with a light hand on the guiding rein.

I am certain that it is through our use of this same principle in the form of local government under a light-handed supervision on a well-defined policy that our brotherhood has already shown such splendid corporate energy coupled with that united spirit which is the driving force behind it.

November, 1917.

The Religion of the Backwoods

THE man who has been knocking about the world, the man who has tasted danger and faced death, the man, in fact, who has seen life in the better sense of the phrase, is generally deeply religious. But his religion would not be recognised by some; it is unorthodox -- it has not been formulated by man, but is the natural outcome of his constant communing with Nature.

He probably could not define it himself, because it has no doctrine, no ritual.

He has come to appreciate the vastness approaching to infinity in Nature with nevertheless a regular law underlying it all, and he has come to realise that even the small things, down to the microscopic germs, have each their part and responsibility in the working of the whole.

He has thus learnt his own comparative insignificance, and at the same time his own duty in life. He is conscious of progressive stages to higher things, to fuller happiness? from the seed to the flower, from the flower to the fruit; and that with man these stages are helped by his active effort towards progress as much as by his passive receptance of the inevitable.

He realises that happiness is gained by surmounting difficulties, but that life is barren and unsatisfactory where the effort is solely for self; that service for others brings the greatest reward.

When St. George overcame the dragon it was not merely for the triumph of defeating the beast that he strove, but for the greater satisfaction of helping the lady in distress.

Some may object that the religion of the Backwoods is also a religion of the backward; and to some extent it is so. It is going back to the primitive, to the elemental, but at the same time it is to the common ground on which most forms of religion are based -- namely, the appreciation of God and service to one's neighbour.

But in many cases form has so overclothed the original simple faith of Nature that it is hardly recognisable. We have come to judge a religion very much as we do a person -- if we are snobbish -- by its dress.

Anyone who does not wear the orthodox dress, and who reverts to the natural, is apt to be looked upon as indecent, or at the least eccentric, although he is, after all, merely displaying the form in which all are moulded by Nature -- by God.

Yet the natural form in religion is so simple that a child can understand it; a boy can understand it, a Boy Scout can understand it. It comes from within, from conscience, from observation, from love, for use in all that he does. It is not a formality or a dogmatic dressing donned from outside, put on for Sunday wear. It is, therefore, a true part of his character, a development of soul, and not a veneer that may peel off.

Once the true body is there it can be dressed in the clothing best suited to it, but clothing without the body is a mere scarecrow -- camouflage.

I do not mean by this that we want to divert a boy from the faith of his fathers; far from it.

The aim is to give him the better foundation for that faith by encouraging in him perceptions which are understandable by him.

Too often we forget when presenting religion to the boy that he sees it all from a very different point of view from that of the grown-up. Nor can true religion be taught as a lesson to a class in school.

It is appalling to think what a vast proportion of our boys have turned out either prigs or unbelievers through misconception of these points on the part of their teachers.

April, 1918.

The Responsibilities of Citizenhood

As nearly every man will now have political voting power, one of the aims of education should be to prepare the young citizen for his responsibilities in this line.

This is a matter, however, that cannot be taught by class instruction in "civics."

Then how are you to do it in the school training? Well, that question has proved a puzzler; it is therefore discreetly left alone by education with the pious hope that the teachings of history will incline the boys' minds in the right direction.

A fat lot of -- -- . Well, to my mind, something much more practical is needed in view of the unprecedented political evolution that is going on. Formerly the young man took up the same line of politics as his father had done before him -- just as he did in the question of religion -- not from his own convictions, but from tradition.

Nowadays, with the rapid social developments and changes, what his father thought is out of date and behind the times for the modern young patriot.

We in the Scout Movement are non-political as far as party politics go, and I hope it will not be thought that in speaking thus I am advocating any particular party ideas, for I have no such thing in my mind. As a matter of fact I am so little impressed by any of the present political factions in Parliament that I have so far never exercised my own voting power for any one or other of them.

A writer recently stated how he was once authorised to invite me to stand for Parliament, and though I declined he does not know to this day what party I favour.

Nor do I.

So I have no party intentions in my remarks, nor should any Scout officer have it in his mind when preparing his lads for their political responsibilities.

It is statesmanship rather than party politics for which we want to prepare them.

We, in the Scout Movement, are credited with supplying for the boy, who has not had the same chance as one brought up in a public school, an equivalent character training, especially in the directions of responsibility and discipline.

The practice of responsible authority and obedience to it among the boys is carried out in the Scout Movement through the Patrol system. But it is on lines rather more in accordance with the spirit of the age than the prefect system of the public school.

We have to realise there are two forms of discipline: *one is the expression of loyalty through action, the other submission to orders through fear of punishment.*

In the prefect system authority is deputed by the masters to the head boys. It is merely the delegation of autocratic rule and, while it puts the junior boy in his place (not a bad thing at times), it is in no sense democratic. It does not give the boy freedom of action, except at the risk of punishment if he takes the line that does not please his superior. Whereas in the patrol system, where properly carried out, the Leader is responsible for the success of his Patrol, whether in its games or in its efficiency, and the Scouts are impelled to carry out the Leader's instructions through their desire for their Patrol to excel. It is the expression of their keenness and *esprit de corps* by doing. In other words it is "playing the game."

The Leader realises on his part that to gain success he has to foster this spirit by tact and discrimination and by appealing to the human side.

In the Court of Honour (again if properly run) the voice of the boys is heard, and the rules are made for their own guidance by the boys themselves.

Similarly in the Patrol Leaders' Conference (again where properly managed) the ideals and aims of the Movement are considered and the steps to them discussed among the boys themselves, so that they become possessed of a wider and less selfish outlook in realising the "cons" as well as the "pros" of the question which previously may have had but one side to them.

Thus the Patrol becomes a practical school of self-government.

It is a commonly quoted saying that "Only those can lead who have first learned to obey." Yes, but like many truisms it has its limits. I prefer also as a leader the man who has learned to lead. There used to be no greater bully in the army than the N.C.O., who had learned hard discipline himself as a private and was then promoted and given a sufficiently free hand in dealing out discipline in his turn. Nowadays he learns that consideration for his men and regard to the higher aims rather than his own individual importance give the right impulse that brings success.

So, too, I suspect that in many shops and factories the workers would work more happily and more effectively under a foreman who has tact and human sympathy and who looks beyond the bench to the results of the work, than under one whose promotion merely as a skilled hand has given him a swollen head.

Give me a foreman who has learned his job as a Patrol Leader.

These are thoughts that may well be kept in mind when our worker is at work on his Troop bench, in order that he may so fashion his Court of Honour and direct the aims of his Patrol Leaders that the Troop may form a school for training leaders among the next generation of citizens.

June, 1918.

Reconstruction

What Scouting can do towards it

THE many questions which have been put to me as to what is our attitude in the Scout Movement towards reconstruction after the war, shows what an amount of interest is already

being aroused in that direction among our officers; and this encourages the conviction that it is in our power to do a valuable work in that line.

I have often said this before, but have evidently been rather vague in defining exactly what that line is.

Well, considering the difficulty of prophesying what is likely to come after the war it is not an easy thing even to suggest, much less to lay down, a definite scheme.

But a few points are fixed and certain, and they will help us on our way.

In the first place, as someone has said lately, "If the war does not teach lessons that will so dominate those who survive it, and those who succeed them, as to make new things possible, then the war will be the greatest catastrophe . . . of which mankind has any record."

That statement no one will gainsay.

Let us think what is a main evil in our midst that ought to be remedied, and, through the light and experience of the war, possibly could be remedied for "those who succeed us," if proper steps were taken.

To my mind the condition of the lower working (I won't use the word "class." I would like to see that word abolished for ever, with all the harm that it has done), working men and women must and ought to be bettered.

One obstacle to bringing this about has been the barrier between the "classes," between Capital and Labour, etc.

And yet we are by nature all fellow-creatures, even of the same blood and family; the class boundary is an entirely artificial erection, and can, therefore, be pulled down if only we set our minds to it. This is one lesson which we may well take to heart from the war.

Indeed, the war has almost done the trick for us with its conscription of all, rich and poor without distinction, with its common sharing of hardship and danger, and its common sacrifice for a common ideal at the Front, coupled with the common sorrow and the common service of those behind the scenes at home.

Are we after the war to allow the fellow-feeling thereby engendered to be dissipated by a revival of those miserable party politics and social barriers and industrial quarrels that had brought about such bitter conditions in pre-war days? God forbid!

The war will here have helped us if only we determine to make the best use of it. Our aim should be to mingle class with class, and to bring about a happier and more human life for all, so that the poorer shall reap his share of enjoyment just as much as his more well-to-do brother; the employer should be humanised to the extent of sympathising and dealing squarely and liberally with his employees; the worker should be shown how to use his means to the best advantage in making for himself a better home and fuller life. Both parties should realise that by combination of effort they can bring about better conditions for each.

Education comes into the question as a key -- and mainly education in character.

Unselfishness, self-discipline, wider fellow-feeling, sense of honour and duty should be implanted, and such attributes as enable a man, *no matter what his standing*, to look beyond his own immediate ledger or bench and see the good of his work for the community, putting into his routine some service for others as well as for himself, developing also some perception of what is beautiful in Nature, in art and in literature, so that his higher interest may be aroused, and he may get enjoyment from his surroundings whatever they may be.

These are points of which we in the Scout Movement can do much to impart the elements and to lay the foundations.

September, 1918.

Standard Cloth

No need of it for Scoutmasters

I AM writing this in the train, crowded up with eleven others in the carriage; no room for luggage, no porters, or taxis at the station to carry it if I had; and I am starting off on a trip of at least a week.

I take with me my "grip," as the Americans call holding a few small necessaries but no other clothes. The Standard suit that I am wearing will suffice for all the different occasions of my trip. Besides travelling by train I expect to go into camp for a day or two. I have to attend a conference and also a rally. I hope to stay with friends for a couple of nights and possibly to get a few hours' fishing. Before the war I should have wanted a lot of luggage with me to provide the necessary mufti -- evening clothes, fishing kit, and uniform.

As it is I go in my Standard suit, which does equally well for every one of these functions -- the Scout uniform.

As our uniform has passed muster at Buckingham Palace when one of our Commissioners appeared in it recently to be decorated by the King for his work with the Scouts, it is surely good enough to be accepted anywhere else.

But -- well, I had to comment in *The Scout* the other day on the slovenly get-up of some Scouts I had seen, and I am perfectly certain in my own mind that their Scoutmaster (though I had not seen him) does not dress himself correctly or well.

Smartness in uniform and correctness in detail seems a small matter to fuss about, but has its value in the development of self-respect, and means an immense deal to the reputation of the Movement among outsiders who judge by what they see.

It is largely a matter of example. Show me a slackly-dressed Troop and I can "Sherlock" a slackly-dressed Scoutmaster. Think of it, Scoutmasters, when you are fitting on your uniform or putting that final saucy cock to your hat. You are the model to your boys and your smartness will reflect itself in them.

September, 1918.

The Tsar and the Scouts

HE may have had his faults -- the Tsar; he may have been a weak man, but at any rate he was no bloody-minded tyrant. He was merely the representative of a succession of autocratic rulers of Russia.

And though democratic self-government is a consummation devoutly to be wished for as a rule, who can say, in the light of recent history, that all Russia was yet ripe for it?

It is difficult for us in our little island to realise the strange contrast of peoples there, and how wide is the variety of different tribes, half of them Asiatic, and in many parts two hundred years behind the times. It is not, perhaps, generally realised that Nicholas himself was both sympathetic and alive to this. In him the people had a better friend than probably they knew.

One aim he had in view was to build up eventually a modem nation capable of self-government, and of developing the immense resources of the country.

But he realised that this was not a matter of a moment that as a first step education on more up-to-date lines was essential, even though traditional methods were upset in bringing it about.

He was not too proud to look abroad and see what other folk were doing.

One day he heard the story of the feckless and the persevering frogs who fell into the cream. This attracted him to read the book in which it is told -- namely, *Scouting for Boys*. Then the writer was sent for to explain the scheme.

In an ordinary quiet little study I had a long and quite informal talk with the Tsar alone. He had fully grasped the possibilities of the Scout-training for education up to date, and he saw the meaning underneath its woodcraft and activities which gave free play to the individual on the line of *self*-discipline and service for others.

He explained how the existing system in Russia was to educate the boys as military cadets. The schoolhouse was a barrack, the masters ranked as officers, the discipline was that of the Army -- and pretty stiff at that. No individuality was permitted to the boys, no games or practice that might develop their character from within; their schooling was a round of instruction imposed from without.

This, the Tsar felt, was not a way in which to bring a nation up to date nor to meet the growing instinct for liberty of thought and action. He saw a road to this in Scouting. He had, therefore, had the book translated into Russian, and had invited all the schools to try the training on their boys.

By way of encouraging this he had agreed personally to review the first school which passed its test in Scoutcraft. This happened to be one away in the Crimea, but the boys were brought up all the way to Petrograd by special train to be inspected and to receive his praise.

What a day for them!

He now invited me to visit schools and see the boys in their transition from Cadet training to that of Scouting. He felt the difficulty might be to change the spirit with the form of education, and for success this was essential. As he saw it Cadet-training was form without soul, whereas that of Scouting appeared to be the free expression of the right individual spirit on the part of the boy. He had grasped the idea himself, but whether the schoolmasters had done so was another question.

He was at any rate sufficiently impressed by the value of Scouting to make his own son take it up.

* * * * *

Visits to schools gave one a better understanding of what was in the Tsar's mind when he recommended them to adopt Scouting.

A typical case occurred at Moscow. The school staff entertained me at luncheon as a preliminary to the inspection. Needless to say they were all in uniform, wearing swords, etc. The headmaster was an ancient colonel who had been in this position for over thirty years!

Before we were through the "*zakoushka*," or *hors d' œuvre*, my hosts were hard at it endeavouring to fill me up with wine, which still remained the surest sign of Russian hospitality. It is true that by the exercise of a certain amount of camouflage I got through the ordeal safely. But the fact of the attempt speaks for itself.

The parade of the Cadets was wonderful for precision of drill and smartness, the dormitories were spotless, each commanded by a non-commissioned officer from the Army.

The discipline was of the very strictest; no games were countenanced, natural tendencies were repressed in every direction, the boys were taught to fear and to obey.

Yet those lads had all the boyish go and spirit in them waiting to be utilised.

Such Cadet-training was to me like an ordinary cyclist riding a motor-bike, and arduously propelling it by the pedals from outside, when all the time the spirit that was within would have run the whole thing for him if he only liked to apply it.

The spirit was there right enough. A guard of honour of the Russian Boy Scouts was formed up at the station to see me off; rigid as stone they stood in their ranks, but one could see the life and soul of the boy blazing in those excited eyes as one walked down the line.

It struck me so much that I could not leave them with a mere glance, so I walked back, shaking hands with each. As I neared the finish their feelings became too much for them. There was a sudden cry, they broke their ranks and were all over me in a second, shaking hands, kissing my clothes, and everyone bent on giving me some sort of keepsake out of his pocket. The eager enthusiasm of boyhood was there, ready to respond even to a stranger and a foreigner.

To me it was typical, and accounted for much of what has happened since on a large scale in Russia.

Give a natural flowing stream its run in the right direction and it will serve you well. Dam it up with artificial restrictions, and some day it will burst the bonds and maybe become a raging, ruinous flood.

Imposed discipline leads to reaction; discipline from within needs none.

Moral: Don't trust to military training as the best preparation for modern citizenship. For up-to-date self-government up-to-date self-education seems the right preparatory step. For this new wine old bottles are not safe. You see the proof in Russia.

November, 1918.

The Future

OUR record in the war, and the inspiring words of the King to the nation on its successful conclusion, give us at once our line, our incentive, and our duty with the Scouts.

The fighting is over at last, and from highest to lowest the Scouts, whether from home or overseas, have distinguished themselves in noticeable proportion throughout the war. Among the highest, three out of the five Army Commanders in France are Scout Commissioners -- Sir Herbert Plumer, Sir William Birdwood, and Sir Julian Byng.

Then down through the long list of V.C.s, D.S.O.s and very many other honours won by old Scouts, we pass with heart-strung regret, yet with admiring pride, to the noble Roll of Honour of those who have given their lives for right and justice, and -- let us not forget -- for us as well

When we turn to those fine lads of ours who are coming on in the places of those heroes, we realise that they can be led by the example of those who have gone on, to uplift their aims on to a higher plane, and the achievements of the boys in minor war service for their country already gives promise of a worthy manhood.

With such promise to hearten us, and with the call of the King ringing in our ears, to "create a better Britain" the least responsive among us cannot fail to feel that now is the time for forward action.

December, 1918.

Physical Jerks

GOD didn't invent physical "jerks." The Zulu warrior, splendid specimen though he is, never went through Swedish drill. Even the ordinary well-to-do British boy, who has played football and hockey, or who has run his paper chases regularly and has kept himself fit by training exercises between whiles, seldom needs physical drill to develop him afterwards.

It is good open-air games and sport which bring to the boy health and strength in a natural and not an artificial way. Nobody will disagree with this. It is quite simple in theory, but in its practice we find some few difficulties to overcome.

Your city boy or the factory hand who is at work all day cannot get out to play games in the open. The outdoor workers and country boy should by right have a better chance since he lives more in the open air, but it is seldom that even a country boy knows how to play a game or even how to run!

When inspecting Scouts, Commissioners make a point of seeing them run in single file, when time and space allow in addition to merely walking down the line themselves to look at the boys' faces and their dress.

They do this in order to judge to what extent the lads have been physically trained by their Scoutmaster. The running tells its own tale. It is perfectly astonishing to see how few boys are able to run.

The natural easy light step comes only with the practice of running. Without it the poor boy develops either the slow heavy plod of the clod-hopper or the shuffling paddle of the city man (and what a lot of character is conveyed in the gait of a man!). The *practice* of running is best inculcated through games and sport.

Physical exercises or "jerks" are an intensive form of development where you cannot get good or frequent opportunity of games, and may well be used in addition to games, provided that:

1. They are not made entirely a drill, but something that each boy can really understand and want to practise for himself because of the good that he knows it does him.
2. The instructor has some knowledge of anatomy and the possible harm of many physical-drill movements on the young unformed body.

We should do everything to get the boy to interest himself in steadily exercising his body and limbs, and in practising difficult feats with pluck and patience until he masters them.

Then a team uniform of sorts is an attraction to the boy, promotes *esprit de corps* in his athletic work, and incidentally involves changing his clothes before and after playing, encourages a rub down -- a wash -- cleanliness.

"How to keep fit" soon becomes a subject in which the athletic boy takes a dose personal interest, and can be formed the basis of valuable instruction in self-care, food values, hygiene, continence, temperance, etc., etc. All this means physical education.

Oxygen for Ox's Strength

I saw some very smart physical drill by a Scout Troop quite recently in their club headquarters. It was very fresh and good, but, my wig, the air was not! It was to say the least, "niffy." There was no ventilation. The boys were working like engines, but actually undoing their work all the time by sucking in poison instead of strengthening their blood.

Fresh air is half the battle towards producing results in physical exercises, and it may advantageously be taken through the skin as well as through the nose when possible.

Yes -- that open air is the secret of success. It is what Scouting is for -- viz., to develop the out-of-doors habit as much as possible.

I asked a Scoutmaster not long ago, in a great city, how he managed his Saturday hikes, whether in the park or in the country? He did not have them at all. Why not? Because his boys did not care about them. They preferred to come into the club room on Saturday afternoons! Of course they preferred it, poor little beggars; they are accustomed to being indoors. But that is what we are out to prevent in the Scouts -- our object is to wean them from

indoors and to make the outdoors attractive to them.

We want open-air space, grounds of our own, preferably permanent camp grounds easily accessible for the use of Scouts. As the Movement grows these should form regular institutions at all centres of Scouting.

Besides serving this great purpose such camps would have a double value. They could form centres of instruction for officers, where they could receive training in camp craft and Nature lore, and above all could imbibe the spirit of the out-of-doors -- he Brotherhood of the Backwoods.

This is the real objective of Scouting, and the key to its success.

With too much town life we are apt to undertook our aims and to revert to type.

We are not a brigade -- or a Sunday School -- but a school of the woods. We must get more into the open for the health, whether of the body or the soul, of Scout and of Scoutmaster.

January, 1919.

Nature Study

WHY is Nature Lore considered a Key Activity in Scouting? That is a question on which hangs the difference between Scout work and that of the ordinary Boys' Club or Brigade.

Nature lore, as I have probably insisted only too often gives the best means of opening out the minds and thoughts of boys, and at the same time, if the point is not lost sight of by their trainer, it gives them power of appreciating beauty in Nature, and consequently in art, such as leads them to a higher enjoyment of life.

This is in addition to what I have previously advocated in Nature study, namely the realisation of God, the Creator, through His wondrous work, and the active performance of His will in service for others.

I was in the sitting-room last week of a friend who had just died, and lying on the table amongst his abandoned pipes and tobacco pouch was a book by Richard Jefferies, *Field and Hedgerow*, in which a page was turned down which said, "The conception of moral good is not altogether satisfying. The highest form known to us at present is pure unselfishness, the doing of good, not for any reward now or hereafter, nor for the completion of any imaginary scheme. That is the best we know, but how unsatisfactory! An outlet is needed more fully satisfying to the heart's most inmost desire than is afforded by any labour of self-abnegation. It must be something in accord with the perception of beauty and of an ideal. Personal virtue is not enough. . . . Though I cannot name the ideal good, it seems to me that it will in some way be closely associated with the ideal beauty of nature."

In other words, one may suggest that happiness is a matter of inner conscience and outward sense. It is to be got where the conscience as well as the senses together are satisfied. If the above-quoted definition be true, the converse is at least equally certain -- namely, that the appreciation of beauty cannot bring happiness if your conscience is not at rest. So that if we want our boys to gain happiness in life we must put into them the practice of doing good to their neighbours and also the appreciation of the beautiful.

The shortest step to this is through Nature lore:

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Among the masses of poorer boys their eyes have never been opened, and to the Scoutmaster is given the joy of bringing about this worth-while operation.

Once the germ of woodcraft has entered into the mind of a boy, observation and deduction develop automatically and become part of his character. They remain, whatever other pursuits he may afterwards take up.

(I remember suffering from that infliction myself when, as Inspector-General of Cavalry, I was once riding down the front of a smart Lancer Regiment, minutely examining each man and horse. To the astonishment of the whole parade I suddenly turned, put spurs to my charger and dashed away across the parade ground into a field beyond. I had seen two golden plovers swoop down from the sky in that direction, and immediately a flock of other birds -- starlings, rooks, pigeons, etc., had risen in a crowd from the field. My immediate instinct was to see what had caused the disturbance. Was it a fox or a gun or the golden plovers? I looked to where they had pitched. It was the plovers swooping from the sky that had alarmed the other birds under the impression that hawks were upon them. I afterwards learned that this was not an unusual occurrence. But my action had no more to do with the inspection parade than has my story to do with this "Outlook.")

As the wonders of Nature are unfolded to the young mind, so, too, its beauties can be pointed out and gradually become recognised. When appreciation of beauty is once given a place in the mind, it grows automatically in the same way as observation, and brings joy in the greyest of surroundings.

If I may diverge again, once on a dark raw foggy day I arrived for a Scout function at the big gloomful station at Birmingham. We were hustled along in a throng of grimy workers and muddy, travel-stained soldiers. Yet as we pushed through the crowd I started and looked round, went on, looked round again and finally had a good eye-filling stare before I went on. I don't suppose my companions had realised it, but I had caught a gleam of sunshine in that murky hole such as gave a new pleasure to the day. It was just a nurse in brown uniform with gorgeous red-gold hair and a big bunch of yellow and brown chrysanthemums in her arms. Nothing very wonderful, you say. No, but for those who have eyes to see, these gleams are there even in the worst of glooms.

It is too common an idea that boys are unable to appreciate beauty and poetry; but I remember once some boys were being shown a picture of a stormy landscape of which Ruskin had written that there was only one sign of peace in the whole wind-torn scene. One of the lads readily pointed to a spot of blue peaceful sky that was apparent through a rift in the driving wrack of clouds.

Poetry also appeals in a way that it is difficult to account for, and when the beautiful begins to catch hold the young mind seems to yearn to express itself in something other than everyday prose.

Some of the best poetry can, of course, be found in prose writing, but it is more generally associated with rhythm and rhyme. Rhyme, however, is apt to become the main effort with the aspiring young poet, and so you will get the most awful doggerel thrust upon you in your efforts to encourage poetry. Switch them off doggerel if you can.

It is far too prevalent, when even our National Anthem itself amounts to it. Rhythm is a form of art which comes naturally even to the untrained mind, whether it be employed in poetry or music or in body exercises. It gives a balance and order which has its natural appeal even, and especially, among those closest to Nature -- savages. In the form of music it is of course most obvious and universal. The Zulu war song, when sung by four or five thousand warriors, is a sample of rhythm in music, poetry and bodily movement combined.

The enjoyment of rendering or of hearing music is common to all the human family. The song as a setting to words enables the soul to give itself expression which, when adequately done, brings pleasure both to the singer and to his hearer.

Through his natural love of music, the boy can be linked up with poetry and higher sentiment as by a natural and easy transition. It opens a ready means to the Scoutmaster of teaching happiness to his lads and at the same time of raising the tone of their thoughts.

February, 1919.

Camping

NOT long ago I was shown a pattern schoolboy camp where there were rows of bell-tents smartly pitched and perfectly aligned, with a fine big mess marquee and clean well-appointed cooks' quarters with a kitchen range.

There were brick paths and wooden bathing houses and latrines, etc.

It was all exceedingly well planned and put up by the contractor. The officer who organised it all merely had to pay down a certain sum and the whole thing was done. It was quite simple and businesslike.

My only complaint about it was that it wasn't *camping*. Living under canvas is a very different thing from camping. Any ass, so to speak, can live under canvas where he is one of a herd with everything done for him; but he might just as well stop at home for all the good it is likely to do him.

I hope, therefore, that when asked their advice. Scoutmasters will impress upon camp organisers that what appeals to the boys, and what keeps them occupied, and is at the same time an education for them, is real camping? that is, where they prepare their own encampment even to the extent of previously making their own tents and learning to cook their own food.

Then the pitching of tents in separate sites and selected nooks, by Patrols as far as possible, the arranging of watersupply and firewood, the preparation of bathing places, field kitchens, latrines, soak and refuse pits, etc., the use of camp expedients, and the making of camp utensils and furniture, will give a keen interest and invaluable training.

Where you have a large number of boys in a canvas town you are forced to have drill and bathing parades as a means of supplying mass occupation, whereas with a few Patrols, apart from their minor camp work, which fills up a lot of time, there is the continuous opportunity for education in Nature lore and in the development of health of body and mind through cross-country runs and hikes, and the outdoor life of the woods.

Get camp organisers to realise from the start the difference between *camping and living under canvas*, and you will have done a good turn to them and to their boys.

May, 1919.

Camping Again

THE year of Peace has been looked forward to by every man, woman, and child in the land as a release and change from the overclouding horror of war -- and nobly the weather has played its part in making it so. For us Scouts in particular it has given the very best encouragement in the direction of camping -- and I am bound to say we have not missed the opportunity.

I am trying through the goodwill of our officers to get some sort of estimate of the number or proportion of boys who have been under canvas this season.

As experts in camping it is going to be possible for Scout officers to be of real help to the education authorities under the provisions of the Fisher Act. As *experts*. But there you are; some of our men have not so far had much experience in this direction; this naturally makes them shy of taking their boys out into camp and giving themselves away; they wear their cowboy hat bravely enough in the clubroom or street, but all the time their inner self is saying, "If only I could get away quietly and learn how you really do light a fire with wet sticks, or make yourself comfortable with a blanket and a pot hook." It is the efficiency that is needed -- and Gilwell Park is there to help them.

Of course the vast majority of our men know all about it, having gone through the best of schools -- experience.

At the same time the reports of Commissioners on camps that have been held this year do show that although the majority were undeniably good, there were weak points here and there which a little knowledge or attention could easily eradicate.

For instance, I notice some of the following straws that point to want of care or experience:

Sites. -- Badly chosen where better were available for surface drainage, shade, level for games, exposure to prevailing wind, water supply, etc.

Cleanliness of ground. -- No system of keeping camps clean; paper littered about camp; food refuse not destroyed, and consequently flies and ill-health; latrines badly placed and not filled in, etc.

Cleanliness of Scouts. -- It seemed to be thought the correct thing in some instances that when in camp Scouts could go dirty, unwashed, and unkempt. When I was in Afghanistan --

but that's another story! In the meantime, camp is the Scoutmaster's opportunity for expecting cleanliness among apparently difficult conditions. He can show the example himself and insist on it in his boys -- which, as a matter of minor discipline and hygiene, is of pertinent value. A change of shoes, and flannel trousers or gym suit, should be an important part of the camper's kit. Proper washing and bathing facilities should be a first care in arranging a standing camp.

Occupation. -- A camp if it is used merely as an excuse for loafing and slackness is almost worse than no camp at all. Where you have a large camp, drill becomes necessary to keep the crowd of boys employed, unless you have enough space for endless football and other games.

Whereas in small Troop camps the varied Scout games and activities, interspersed with physical team games, can be carried on all the time without boring or tiring the lads. In too many instances camps were held without previous intimation being given to the local Scout Commissioner. This is not only contrary to the unwritten Scout Law of Courtesy, but in very many cases the Commissioner would have helped the Troop to far better sites and greater enjoyment had he known they were coming.

And -- Scoutmasters -- wouldn't you enjoin on your boys that as Scouts they are expected to differ from ordinary boys by carrying out this simple Irish camping motto:

"On breaking up camp leave two things behind you --

"1. Nothing.

"2. Your thanks."

October, 1919.