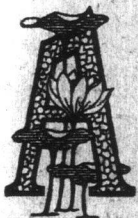


Scouts and Scouting—A Fascinating Sport



CORRESPONDENT of the London Times contributes the following article to that paper:

The true scout, like the poet, is both born and made (nascitur, necnon fit), experience setting an edge for his innate faculty. He has, for example, the capacity of remembering everything he sees on journey—the same capacity which was possessed by Captain Cook, the famous circumnavigator, who would take a walk through the streets of London and remember the names above all the many shops he passed without the least consciousness of effort. Similarly a Red Indian who takes a journey will remember everything he passes—every tree, open space, stream, etc.—on the whole length of the trail. In some cases an even more remarkable instinct for pathfinding is revealed. Thus Colonel S. B. Steele, who commanded Strathcona's Horse in South Africa and has known all the famous Western scouts and prairie detectives, once told me that a Blackfoot halfbreed employed years ago by the Northwest Mounted Police was the best guide he had ever met, possessing as he did an almost uncanny sense of locality and direction. Others could guide travelers through country they had visited before. But this man, who was made chief of his "nation" or tribe, could take a party from place to place by the quickest route, through country altogether unknown to him, without a compass and without a sight of the stars. Unlike other guides, he never talked with others when he was at work. He would ride on ahead by himself, keeping his mind fixed on the mysterious business of finding the way. He was never able to give any clear explanation of his method; no doubt his gift was largely the result of heredity. But he had traveled in his youth for huge distances from points in Western Canada to points in the Western States before there were any railways, and that early experience certainly counted for much. Again and again he found shorter routes across country unknown to him than those used by men who knew the land by heart. He had not been there before, but his Indian ancestors had—probably that is the true explanation of his weird ability. Furthermore, he possessed the white man's reasoning power in addition to the Blackfoot's ancestral memory of a thousand journeys achieved, a thousand campfires kindled and extinguished. His name was Jerry Potts.

How far can the faculty of observation, which is the necessary part of a scout's intellectual equipment, be acquired by training? It is a question worth asking, not easily answered. Nearly all Canadians and other dwellers in the Empire's open spaces must know how to find their way through blind forests and unfenced plains, and this knowledge of pathfinding, whether inborn or acquired, is the groundwork of scoutcraft. All the writer can say, speaking from personal experience, is that a few Englishmen possess this knowledge—as an heirloom, no doubt—but the majority do not. One remembers men who were good traveling companions, good in camp, good at finding and shooting game, and yet invariably got lost the moment they were left to depend on their own

powers of observation. Skill in co-operative games such as cricket, which always meant a certain fineness of vision and alacrity of action in a swift emergency, had nothing to do with the ability to find the way from camp to camp or with the lack of that ability. It would seem to follow that the compulsory games now played at public schools do not supply the requisite training for developing that sense of locality without which a scout is rather worse than useless. That is the chief argument for the work of Lieutenant-General R. S. S. Baden-Powell, Mr. E. Thompson-Seton, the Canadian naturalist and sportsman, and others experienced in the ways of the wilderness, who are attempting to establish scouting as a schoolboy's sport. So far as it has proceeded, the experiment has been very successful. At one time or other in his boyhood every man has played at being a Red Indian and conceived the desire of escaping from civilization and leading the life of a hunter or backwoodsman, and so universal is this pathetic wish for renewed contact with the wilderness and its wild life that even the New York gamins—the most Cockney of Cockneys—delights in the attempt to teach him the rudiments of scoutcraft. Such teaching has been tried by Mr. Thompson-Seton in the great summer camps of New York boys, and his pupils have gladly abandoned baseball and other familiar pastimes in order to play the new game. Indeed, they chose it in preference to all others when left to themselves, and continue to practice what they have been taught, when the holidays end and they return to the abbreviated streets of the most overcrowded capital city in the world. There is every reason to believe that the attempt to popularize scouting as a sport will be equally successful—perhaps more so—on this side of the Atlantic. Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell, though his work of propaganda is only just beginning, has received innumerable requests for information and for lectures from all sorts and conditions of teachers, and a number of schools have already made preparations for carrying out his suggestions. The parts of his "Scouting for Boys" (published by Horace Cox) which have already appeared are read, as the writer knows, with the keenest interest by those to whom they are addressed, and should be equally interesting to every grownup sportsman. The author sees that it is useless for a boy to specialize on military scouting until he has had a general education in the many and manifold arts of open-air living. Like all who have seen how readily many Englishmen, though born and brought up in a small densely-populated countryside, adapt themselves to the conditions of life in wide unsettled lands, he believes that a very large percentage of English boys are capable of assimilating such teaching. He quotes the remarks of an old Boer who, after the South African war, took service with the Germans in South-west Africa in preference to living with the English. After a few months he returned, saying that he preferred the company of his former enemies. One of his reasons for disliking the English was that when they arrived in the country they were invariably ston—i.e., too stupid to look after themselves when on the veldt out of reach of the provided comforts of civilization. But when he went to the Germans he

found them even more ston than the English, with the additional difference that they remained stupid and devoid of adaptability, however long they remained in the country. He said they were stupid until they died, and they often died through blundering about at the more efficient end of a mule. The writer has heard Western oldtimers draw much the same distinction between the average English immigrant and settlers from the continent of Europe. The former lacked "horse sense" (the common sense which enables a horse to dig for natural hay under snow instead of starving for want of it like a sheep) and acquired it laboriously; the latter, more often than not, never acquired it at all.

General Baden-Powell insists that the scout must always be a "handy-man," willing and able to do any kind of work in an emergency, from mending his boots to building a bridge. His little books form an encyclopaedia of the practical information required by boys who wish to follow the example of the true frontiersman. People talk of "roughing it" in camp. But the man who knows the life of the high prairies, or of the back veldt, or of the Australian bush has a hundred devices for making himself comfortable. For example, there is the question of bedding. Cut grass or straw or bracken make an easy mattress—not so good as the spring bed constructed by Canadian backwoodsmen out of the tops of fir tree branches planted upright like the bristles in a brush—but what is to be done if you cannot get these luxuries? No boy, however ingenious, can answer that question by the light of nature. In the first place, the secret of keeping warm is to have as many blankets underneath as above you. Secondly, lest the hardness of the ground enter into your soul, before lying down make a small hole about the size of a teacup in which the hip joint will rest when you have turned on your side; this means all the difference between comfortably to sleep and no sleep at all, with a dull ache in the morning the whole length of one side. If blankets be lacking, newspapers placed under the waistcoat—be careful to cover the small of the back—are an excellent substitute. Supposing one possesses the luxury of a tent, camp candlesticks may be constructed in several ways—by bending a bit of wire into a spiral, or using a cleft stick stuck into the tent pole, or knocking off the bottom of a bottle and placing it upside down in the ground with a candle stuck in the neck. The bottom of the bottle may be neatly cut off by filling it with water an inch or an inch and a half in depth and standing it in the embers of the fire, when it will crack at the water level as neatly as possible. A thousand and one devices of the kind are known to those who have acquired the science and art of camping out comfortably, but not five per cent of them could be thought out by the inexperienced. Again, let the making of fires be considered. Boys in holiday camps invariably forget the necessity of "ring burning"—i.e., clearing a circular space about the fire of all dry bracken, heather, etc.—and the proper method of covering the blaze with ashes, so that it will smoulder all night without wasting fuel, has not been revealed to them. Yet, in thinking out such problems, it has been the writer's experience that the average human boy is infinitely

more intelligent than the grownup Englishman, who has become hopelessly dependent on servants and the mechanical inventions of modern civilization. General Baden-Powell knows the advantages of a knowledge of detail, and it is clear that he has reinforced experience by many experiments. How many people in this country, where fuel is often hard to come by, have discovered that old boots make excellent firing? Experiment must have supplied this master of scouting with that precious hint (which should be useful to the wife of an ill-paid dustman, since many old boots live in dustheaps), but the following hints on drying one's clothes are the outcome of experience:

"You will often get wet through on service, and you will see recruits remaining in their wet clothes until they get dry again; no old scout would do so, as that is the way to catch fever and get ill. When you are wet, take the first opportunity of getting your wet clothes off and drying them, even though you may not have other clothes to put on, as happened to me many a time. I have sat naked under a wagon while my one suit of clothes was drying over a fire. The way to dry clothes over a fire is to make one of hot ashes, and then build a small beehive-shaped cage of sticks over the fire and hang your clothes over this cage, and they will very quickly dry. Also, in hot weather, it is dangerous to sit in your clothes when they have got wet from perspiration. On the West Coast of Africa I always carried a spare shirt, hanging down my back, with the sleeves tied round my neck; so soon as I halted I would take off the wet shirt I was wearing and put on the dry, which had been hanging out in the sun on my back. By these means I never got fever when almost everyone else went down with it."

Carefulness in such matters would have saved the lives not only of hundreds of soldiers campaigning beyond the frontiers of civilization, but also of many who have made colonization their profession—a learned profession, though it does not demand book-learning, or, at any rate, not much of it.

On the great subject of cooking in camp or on bivouac, General Baden-Powell is full of excellent matter. An army travels on its belly—and, if the belly be not well looked after, the pace will be slow and many will fall out by the way. If all English boys were compelled to learn all he tells us about the thrilling mystery of open-air cooking—there is no sauce so piquant as the breeze that blows into one's open-air hearth—the military efficiency of the nation would be vastly increased in the next generation. There is no reason in the world why the schoolboy scout, even though his training is carried out in this crowded peewy country, should not be put through all the object lessons suggested and so become an expert in this all-important branch of the scout's general education. In South Africa bad cooking was, next to the drinking of bad water, the chief cause of the wastage of the British forces in the field. The Canadian and Australian volunteers, however, were like the Boers and suffered nothing on this score; as a former member of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police told the writer: "When we got a piece of bull-beef or a handful of flour we knew just what to do with it; but

your men from the towns usually wasted the stuff." Lack of cleanliness in open-air cooking is the great fault of the Englishman traveling in the wilderness or camped there. He thinks a little dirt does not matter, forgetting that matter out of place on his cooking outfit means the presence of microbes, and that an accumulation of refuse in and about his camp attracts flies, which carry the seeds of malaria and typhoid with them. Formerly, as the writer well remembers, cleanliness was shockingly neglected in the lumber camps and railway construction gangs of Canada. The result was that there were constant visitations of typhoid and sometimes cerebral meningitis (the "come-and-get-us" of the Western placer miner), and the contractors suffered great losses from the wastage of their labor force. Today these outlying camps are kept clean—often much to the disgust of the workers, who are not commonly votaries of the cold tub—and generally have a clean bill of health. There is little or no disease in the great construction camps of the Grand Trunk Pacific. But in the old days the armies of workers that were engaged in lettering Western Canada with the ball-and-chain of the first transatlantic railway (the ball was the setting sun, towards which they built the line) were decimated with dirt-diseases.

In these booklets will be found innumerable suggestions for scouting games to be practiced when the rudiments of living decently in camp have been acquired. Here, as an example, is an exercise in despatch running. One of the boy scouts is given a despatch to take to the headquarters of a besieged town, which may be a real place (village, farm, or house), and he must return with a receipt for it. He must wear a colored rag 2 feet long pinned on his shoulder. He must start at least four miles away from the supposed headquarters. Besiegers who have to spot him can place themselves where they like, but must not go nearer than 300 yards to the headquarters' building. Any one found within that limit by the umpire will be ruled out as shot by the defenders. The despatch runner can use any ruse he likes (except dressing up as a woman), but he must always wear the red rag. To catch him the enemy must get his badge from him. Ten hours may be allowed as the limit of time by which the bearer of the despatch should get his message to headquarters and get back again to the starting point with the receipt. This game may also be made a life-and-death venture, in which case any scout who volunteers to risk his life (i.e., his scout's badge) in getting through with a despatch gains a decoration "For Merit" if he succeeds; if he fails, he loses his badge and cannot get it again, though he may still remain a member of the corps. For him to win a badge of merit there must be at least two patrols out against him.

This is but one example of many scouting games, all of which, altogether apart from their value as military education, would much amuse the average boy. It is to be hoped that this new educational movement will continue to grow in favor. All further information may be obtained by writing to Lieutenant-General R. S. S. Baden-Powell at the Boys' Scout Office, Goschen Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. Boys may write there if they wish to be enrolled as scouts.

How Canada Was Saved to the British Empire

British publishers have just issued a book by Justin H. Smith, Professor of Modern History in Dartmouth College. It is entitled "Our Struggle For the Fourteenth Colony, Canada and the American Revolution." The volume is thus reviewed by the London Times:

"We have traveled in our conception of the Empire in the last few decades, and it is already with some difficulty that we remember that as late as in 1872 it was seriously proposed to cede Canada to the United States in settlement of the Alabama claims—in 'part settlement,' as a large part of the American people at the time would have had it. Still more difficult is it, perhaps, to realize by what a slender thread of accidents it was that what is now the Dominion was preserved to England a hundred years earlier. Those were days of happy-go-lucky strategy and unorganized campaigns, certainly not less in remote and thinly-settled America than elsewhere, and though the successive handfuls of invaders from the South, ill-equipped, half-clad poorly-victualled, often unpaid and destitute of money had, humanly speaking, almost insuperable difficulties to contend with, yet the forces which at the best of times Governor Carleton could oppose to them were also ridiculously meagre. The Canadian habitants themselves, moreover, were more than half inclined to the side of the revolting Colonies, and even Montreal and Quebec were from the beginning honeycombed with treachery. Feeble though the assaults were, they came perilously near to being too strong for the resistance which could be presented to them. It may be that Canada was only held for Great Britain by the discharge of that single gun from Simon Fraser's house in Quebec which killed Montgomery—the discharge aimed into the night, if history tells truly, by a half-drunken and wholly terrified gunner. At the time, even Washington believed that the possession of

Canada was essential to the success of the Colonial arms. 'To whomsoever Canada belonged, in their favor probably would the balance turn,' he wrote, and when Montreal had fallen and Arnold had reached Quebec, the patriots in the Colonies had little doubt that success would sooner or later be theirs. Even up to the conclusion of peace, though the attempt to win the territory to the North by force of arms had evidently failed, there were still many who held with Lafayette that 'if the bad luck of America makes peace without giving these provinces to the United States, I shall ever be fearful of their safety and liberty.'"

It is, then, the story of the struggle to add Canada to the thirteen Colonies already in revolt which Mr. Smith tells in these volumes—a desperate and protracted struggle in which almost incredible hardships were endured with fortitude, on either side; and the story is told in great detail and with copious illustration from contemporary sources. For the author has saturated himself with his subject, and it is difficult to find a page which does not contain quotations from the correspondence of leading actors in the drama, or other records of the day. Mr. Smith has, moreover, been at pains to familiarize himself thoroughly with the scene of the conflict, apparently to its minutest details, by which the narrative at times, as in the account of Arnold's terrible march up the 'Kennebec to Quebec, gains greatly. Having said this, one can only mourn that it is not possible to find more qualities to commend in a work which shows abundant evidence of earnest labor and intimate study of the subject.

It would evidently be vain to look for much historical dispassionateness in a writer, who, summing up the merits of the Marquis de Lafayette, says that "his chiefest honor was to be the epithet 'moodle' from that arch-traitor, arch-brigand, and arch-cut-throat Napoleon." Of Mr. Smith's literary style perhaps the following description of Governor

Carleton, taken from early in the book, will suffice as an example:

"Not precisely a drawing-room ornament was he, for an enormous nose mounted like a geological formation in the middle of his rather shapely face; nor a boudoir delight, for his well-turned lips moulded commands better than compliments, and that half-world of cleverness, manners, and meanness called 'society' could have pleased him; but little. Neither could he expect to be a popular idol, for he was by no means one to mouth his words fondly, until the tasteless concluded they must be honey; to beguile the unwary with facial movements which were outwardly smiles and inwardly chuckles; to inquire with tender unction after a mother or son, the fact of whose existence had been deftly snapped up five minutes before; to prove his title."

But enough has been quoted to show that it is not possible to take the author seriously as a writer on serious subjects. In his prefatory note he says that critics have complained of a former book that he had been at pains to make his subject "interesting." We should hardly have considered "interesting" the fitting word. The subject itself here is of consuming interest; but at least once in every few pages the reader finds himself baffled and bewildered by the almost inconceivable antics of the narrator. It is not merely that he loves heroics and the purple patch, and, in the delightful phrase of one Captain Gamble, a minor actor in the "struggle" quoted by Mr. Smith himself, "talks too much of that damned absurd word Liberty." Much can be forgiven to the historian when telling the story of the birth-throes of his country; though we had hoped that the present generation of American historical writers had outgrown (as most of them surely have) the faults which beset their forerunners of the middle of the last century. The trouble is that coupled with the author's love of justian is the lack of a sufficient sense of literary humor (a fault not common in his countrymen) to save him from

unfathomable bathos. Mr. Smith's talent for inept and confused metaphor must be, among historians, unique.

"(The Colonel was) possible not of the rarest porcelain, but well able to fill a large part of a somewhat narrow circle. Whether or no he was just the man for a tight pinch had not been decided yet; but he could cut a wide swath in good grass."

"After all, however, it was not mainly a question of martial qualities but a problem of politics; and the very lions of Mycenae might have vacillated while snuffing thirstily this way and that for the breath of some refreshing pool."

"More than six feet in height, with bold though genial features, well moulded and commanding in form, spare and straight as an Indian, strong as a Hercules and virile as the Dying Gaul, the American leader stood conspicuous."

"Action became the watchword. Business interests fell from Arnold's thoughts as wraps fall from an athlete when the race is called."

He threw himself with all his force into the bold undertaking, and once more he showed himself the tireless, fearless chief—Lucifer before his fall."

In accepted English we have unluckily no word which precisely fits the qualities of Mr. Smith's literary style. Charles Lamb's use of "pudder" might be serviceable; but happily the Americans have supplied the omission. When he leaves the safe ground of citation or bare narrative Mr. Smith writes sheer "poppycock."

At the news of Montgomery's death, "from every lady's eye in Philadelphia spake the eloquence of tears"; and it almost moves one to similar utterance that the fruits of so much research and such evident enthusiasm for a subject should be engulfed in a morass so dismal as, in the reading, is this story of the "Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony." In an introductory note we are informed that "the author is engaged upon a history of the war between the United States and Mexico"; wherefore we take

the liberty to beg him, before that book goes to the printers, to submit the manuscript to some friend possessing a literary instinct, with authority to use the blue pencil to his heart's content. That friend's office will be no sine-cure; the truth being, we opine, that matters may serve to enliven a classroom at Dartmouth College which are hardly equal to the sterner ordeal of criticism on the printed page.

WHERE MONEY IS USELESS

Now and then one hears of out of the way places where the conventions of life, as they are understood, do not exist. One of these is where money is useless. This is Ascension Island, in the Atlantic.

This island is the property of the British Admiralty, and is governed by a captain of the royal navy. There is no private property in land; so there are no rents, taxes, etc. The flocks and herds are public property, and the meat killed is issued in rations. So are the vegetables grown on the farms.

Here, it would seem, is real socialism. When a fisherman makes a catch, he brings it to the guard room, where it is issued by the sergeant-major. The only private property is fowls and pigeons. Even the wild donkeys are under government control. They are listed on the books of the paymaster, and are handed over at stock taking.

The population consists of a few blue-jackets, a company of marines, and some Kroos from Sierra Leone.

There a marine can do anything. The muleteer is a marine; so are the gardeners, the shepherds, the stockmen, the groomers, the masons, the carpenters, and the plumbers. Even the island trapper, who gets rewards for the tails of rats, is a marine.

The highest court of England has just decided that tips are legal and are to be considered as part of the income of any man taking them.