

THE SCOUTER'S BOOKS – No. 3

THE MAN AND THE BOY

BY
J. DUDLEY PANK

"Scouting is a boy's game but a man's job."

Lord Rowallan, February 1945

THE BOY SCOUTS ASSOCIATION
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Editor's Note:

The reader is reminded that these texts have been written a long time ago. Consequently, they may use some terms or express sentiments which were current at the time, regardless of what we may think of them at the beginning of the 21st century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

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THE MAN AND THE BOY

Firstly, I want to talk to you about discipline, as applied both to the Troop *en masse* as well as to the individuals who go to make up the Troop.

In these so-called enlightened days you will find many people who profess not to believe in discipline: people who will tell you that the restraints imposed by it will show themselves in later life by abnormalities of behaviour. Don't you believe it. At one time or another I have listened to many of these advocates of "free expression" – and have seen the products of their methods – and I am more than ever convinced that those of us who believe in the old-fashioned methods of child-upbringing are the sane and normal people.

In any organisation discipline is essential, otherwise it ceases to be an organisation and becomes a chaotic rabble. Scouting is a team game, not only amongst the boys but amongst the Scouters as well, and it is primarily the Group Scoutmaster, working through the Group Council, who should ensure that a satisfactory standard of discipline is maintained in each section. If the Cub Pack is an unruly mob, then the work of the Troop Scouters will be increased enormously by the need to "tame" each Cub after his going-up. Alternatively, if the Pack discipline is good, then Troop Scouters are throwing away years of effort and training if they accept any lesser standard.

And what of the Scouter himself? Regrettably, there are always some men who consider that rules are just the thing for other people but that they themselves are exempt from all restrictions. A Scouter with this outlook undermines the very foundations on which Scouting is built. Healthy discipline cannot be maintained on a basis of "do as I say and not as I do". If the boys are to benefit from discipline and not to regard it as petty tyranny, then they must see that their Scouters are a disciplined body, willingly and cheerfully subjecting themselves to rules and standards of conduct.



If the Cub Pack is an unruly mob . . .

Apart from any other consideration, in a Scout Troop in particular, a lack of discipline can be the greatest time-waster imaginable. The average meetings last, perhaps, an hour and a half to two hours, and in many Troops there's a frightening total of wasted minutes while a Scouter is waiting for silence to instruct on some point, waiting to explain a game, waiting to give notices, waiting for the boys to fall in. In some Troops almost half the evening is spent with everybody waiting for everybody else.

I need hardly stress how wrong this is. Troop discipline must be rigid and demanding. You must be able to show your casual or official visitor that the Movement is not a rabble, and that when occasion necessitates, its members can be properly behaved and self-controlled.

Boys like to belong to a well-disciplined body. Believe me, you'll lose far more boys by having too little discipline than you ever will by having too much.

In a Troop where discipline has been neglected, it should not be introduced gradually, in small doses, but by shock tactics. The maintenance of good order and discipline in the Troop is one of the chief responsibilities of the Court of Honour, so get your PLs in the plan and then go to it. Demand a hundred per cent, standard. For example: at Inspection, never carry on inspecting a Patrol if members of another one are messing about – to stand still for five minutes won't hurt the boys in the slightest. When you're talking to them, pipe down immediately if one so much as whispers to his neighbour: apart from the question of discipline, the boys are supposed to know the meaning of the 5th Law, and it's difficult to imagine anything more discourteous than for boys to yap while their Scouter is speaking to them.

Some Scoutmasters even continue to give out notices when the boys are openly talking – how futile this is! Notices are read because they are something the boys should know: just how much will they know if it's a case of who can shout the louder, they or their Scouters?

Incidentally, while on the subject of notices, may I suggest that you keep them to a minimum? For the boys, it's the most boring part of the evening, and after the first minute or two they cease to attend. I was present, recently, when a Scoutmaster gave out a series of notices that lasted more than five minutes. Later in the evening he asked if I would run an activity: I gave a Kim's game on his notices – the result rather shook him!



*... continue to give out notices when the boys
are openly talking ...*

May I suggest that you never use prolonged, irresponsible blasts on an ear-piercing whistle in an attempt to produce silence at indoor meetings? With boys, noise always begets noise. Teach your boys to react to “TROOP”: it can be a verbal order, a note on a birdcall, or something of your own devising, but see that it really does mean immediate and absolute silence.

In order to bring the correct atmosphere to Prayers, Flag Down and Dismissal, tone down your programme towards the end of the evening. Don't expect the boys to be in a quiet, attentive or religious mood immediately after playing some energetic game, or you'll be a disappointed man.



... stop them doing .. things they want to do ...

If your casual or official visitor sees you carrying out the more serious parts of your programme under conditions of which you're obviously the master, he goes away impressed. If he sees you fighting like mad to obtain even the vaguest semblance of order, he forms a rather different impression.

So much for some of the collective discipline that every Scouter who wishes to be thought competent must be able to put over, but how about the discipline that has to be meted out to the individual boy in his Troop work, his games, his spare time activities, at camp? In the course of your career as a Scouter, you'll have to make boys do all sorts of things they don't want to do, and you'll have to stop them doing all sorts of things they do want to do. How can this be done with a minimum of heartbreak both to yourself and to the boy?

For it to be possible, one must emphasise an essential truism—a Scouter must *know* his boys, not just their names and addresses, but intimately and personally. He must know their likes and dislikes; their interests; their hobbies; their parents; their home conditions; their character, in all its detailed lights and shades. By observation, he must learn each boy's reaction to any set of circumstances; his reaction to orders, direct and indirect; his possession or lack of self-discipline; his understanding or otherwise of what Scouting stands for. All this sounds like hard work, but the man who fails to understand his boys will never even get to first base. Actually, he'll soon find that the ability to weigh-up a boy becomes an instinctive faculty, and he'll then derive far more enjoyment from his Scouting—boys are infinitely more interesting when you know what makes them tick.

For convenience, I am dividing boys into the fifteen types that are commonest amongst the little horrors, but it must be clearly understood that it is a rare thing to find a boy who falls solely into one category. More often than not, he is a mixture of two or more, though usually one characteristic is predominant. I am making suggestions for coping with each type, but these must be modified, intensified or combined according to the make-up of the individual.



*... infinitely more interesting when you know
what makes them tick.*

No. 1. The "SHY" boy . . . he blushes when the limelight falls on him; he's quiet and self-contained; he's slow to take part in anything, but when he does he usually makes a good showing.

You should take no especial notice of him and make no attempt to draw him out. It's quite impossible for a boy to be a member of a Scout Troop and to remain shy for long. He'll soon find his level and will then, probably, surprise you.

I well remember a boy called Tim who joined a Troop of which I was GSM. During his first three months I don't think anyone heard him speak above a whisper – and then we had a weekend camp. The first morning he awoke at five; for a wonder everyone else was asleep. It was a

gloriously sunny morning, and Tim sat up in his sleeping bag and awoke the whole camp with a stupendous shout: "Throw wide the golden gates and let in the morning sun!". From that time he never looked back, and soon acquired the rather doubtful honour of being Troop humorist. His middle-aged parents spoke very truly when they told me that Scouting seemed to have "done something" for Tim. He won the D.F.C. in the war, by the way.



... "Throw wide the golden gates!" ...

No. 2. The "BOOKISH" boy . . . he's usually an introvert; intelligent; quiet; non-athletic; occasionally moody. He has no great liking for rough games – largely because he doesn't shine at them and is sensitive about making a fool of himself. Often he's lacking in self-confidence, particularly where the practical things of life are concerned.

Encourage him to acquire self-confidence by giving him a leading part in any activity requiring "intellect". When the other boys know that he can beat them hands-down at what they consider the "brainy" things, they'll quite forget to rib him if he makes a poor showing at "British Bulldog".



... two or three others who want to be excused ...

His "bookishness" can be turned to good account by making him Troop Scribe: he really does come into his own when at a Troop meeting in the middle of winter he reads to the others about some of those stirring incidents that happened at summer camp. His Log serves the additional

purpose of keeping your Troop alive for posterity: without some such record who, in twenty years time, will know what happened in it to-day?

In a certain Cub Pack at the present time there is a boy of the “bookish” type who is an Instructor. Apart from the normal duties performed by these invaluable aides, he has taken over – under proper supervision, of course – the Attendance Register and the subscription accounts, together with the keeping up to date of the Pack Record Cards. He answers such questions as: “Please, when do I get my first year star?”; he sees that a Pack Birthday Card is sent to each Cub; he fills in the Certificates that they take with them when going for a Badge test. There are plenty of clerical jobs in the Troop that can be handed over to a boy of this type thereby giving the Scouters extra time for the duties that only they can perform.

Incidentally, never allow him – or any other physically fit boy – to dodge rough games: that sort of attitude is catching, and if one gets away with it you’ll soon have two or three others who want to be excused.



No. 3. The “ATHLETIC” boy . . . he’s usually an extrovert; occasionally he’s bad at school work, and is then a special problem because his parents consider that his Scouting and his School work conflict. In such cases there’s scope for the tactful Scouter to expound on “all work and no play”.

In himself, the athletic boy is usually easy to handle. In the secret places of his mind he tends to identify himself with famous sportsmen, and an appeal to his sporting instincts can generally be relied upon to produce results.

I remember a delightful boy of thirteen who came into the “athletic” category. His hero was Stanley Matthews. Micky was not an easy boy to deal with – he had something of the rebel in him – but when you wanted him to fall into line with the rest of the Troop, you had only to take him on one side and say: “Come on, Micky! What’d Stanley Matthews do?”, and he was your whole-hearted supporter.

Just a word of warning: if your athletic boy is in one of his School teams, never grudge him time off from Scouting to take part in a match, or you may well lose him. It may play havoc

with your programme but that's why you're a Scouter – for people to play havoc with your programmes.

No. 4. The “NUISANCE,” boy . . . more often than not he's well-behaved at home; if so, this is a warning to you that his home discipline is strict, while yours . . . ? He's noticeable in the Scout room by his propensity for wandering around interfering with everybody and everything, a sort of human spanner in the works.

The way in which you treat him must depend largely upon your assessment of his home discipline. Where it is good, a casual remark such as: “ I must try to remember to tell your parents what a thundering nuisance you are “, will sometimes produce the most amazing results.

When the home discipline is poor and the boy just acting true to type; he should be in the charge of your strictest PL: this will do a lot towards cutting down his nuisance value. Ride him on a tight rein; it will increase his respect for you, and when this type of boy respects anyone he has a wish to please him. By the way, he's usually far from sensitive, so don't choose your words too carefully, but please, please don't make use of sarcasm. There are two things that a boy will never forgive in an adult, one is sarcasm, the other deceitfulness. A boy can be brutally knocked about, unfairly treated, wrongfully accused, savagely punished, and such is the nature of the little beast that he can find it in his heart to forgive you; but treat him to regular doses of sarcasm, or give him reason to think you're deceitful, and you'll rapidly lose both his affection and his respect.

There are several reasons for a boy becoming a general nuisance. The first, obviously, is that he's never been made to do what he's told, and here the example of the other boys in the Troop can be of inestimable value. If the young potential pest sees other, older boys obeying orders promptly and being helpful, he tends to follow suit instinctively. Both good and bad behaviour are contagious, but unfortunately the germ of good behaviour is so much less potent than that of bad that it has to be present in much greater strength to be catching. However good your Troop discipline may be your nuisance will not give up without a struggle: he's going to try you out from time to time to see how much he can get away with. Those are the occasions on which to tread him firmly back into his hole.

On the other hand, a nuisance characteristic may be a quite unconscious form of psychological revolt that will disappear as soon as its stimulus is removed. I once had a pleasant boy of twelve called Tony. He was one of the “keen” types with whom I shall be dealing later. His behaviour never left anything to be desired; he was the sort of boy that every Scouter would like to have in his Troop. Because they were out each time I called, I didn't meet his parents until a Troop Social evening, nearly two months after he joined. Immediately after our introduction, his mother said anxiously: “I do hope Tony behaves himself?” I assured her that he was one of our best-behaved boys and she looked at me almost in disbelief: “But we can't do a thing with him at home!”. I found later that his parents were always out; most of his waking hours at home Tony spent in an empty house – no wonder he took it out of his parents yet responded readily when anyone took a real interest in him.

Later in life, his nuisance value was put to good use. He was in the French Resistance Movement during the war and was one of the biggest menaces ever launched against the Germans.

No 5. The “PERSISTENT HUMORIST”. . . who can sometimes be classified with No. 6, The “PRECOCIOUS” boy . . . he's well-known at Troop meetings, he always has a “bright” remark to make or an “improvement” to suggest.

Where the boy concerned is not too popular with the others, the solution is straightforward. Enter into a conspiracy with your PL's, and through them with their Patrols, so that every exhibition of wit is received in stony silence. I recently saw a Scouter applying this method most effectively. The victim had already had two weeks treatment, but on the night I was there he

revived slightly: I imagine in an attempt to impress me. His first interruption was received in complete silence and then the Scoutmaster, without even looking at him, continued; “. . . as I was saying, before I was interrupted . . .”. On the second occasion I came the heavy DC: “Did I hear someone actually interrupting while your Skipper was speaking?”. I understand that the young man in question is rapidly becoming bearable.



Should your humorist be popular with the Troop, the above treatment is unlikely to work, and then he becomes a cross that must be borne – may I ask you not to be weak-minded and get rid of him? Bear with him patiently; sometimes the mere fact that you bear him at all sows a better seed than you realise at the time.

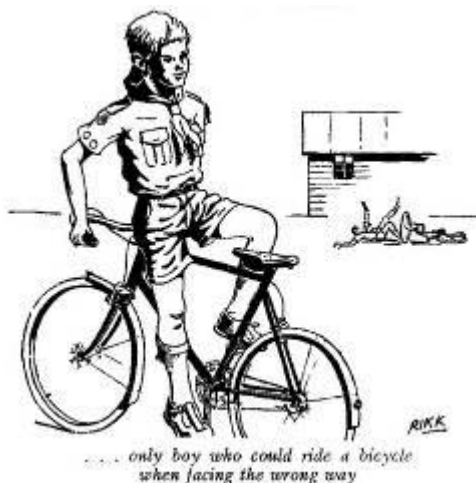
Some years ago there was a Cornish boy called Freddie who was not only precocious and a worrying humorist, but added sarcasm to his endearing traits. With difficulty his Scoutmaster put up with him throughout Freddie's Scout life, but it was not until nearly a decade later, eight years after the Scoutmaster had left Cornwall, that he heard quite by chance of his reward. There had been some talk in the village pub about the old days, and one of those present had spoken slightly of the erstwhile Scoutmaster. It was Freddie, then in his late twenties, who sprang to his defence: “If you're not looking for trouble you'd better pipe down! He was one of the best so-and-so's I ever met!”

No. 7. The “UNTRUTHFUL” boy . . . he lies deliberately, consistently, for no apparent reason; you see him doing something and a moment later he'll deny it; he'll tell you something that's quite untrue even though he knows you're bound to discover it's a lie.

You must try to find out the reason for his untruthfulness. Is he lying in attempted self-defence because at home he's used to “a word, a blow” treatment, and is trying to find the most palatable version for you? Is he one of those boys with a vivid imagination who likes to colour the truth to make it more “exciting”? Does he lie in an attempt to boost his self-esteem because of an inferiority complex?

Whatever his reason he's a most difficult gentleman to deal with, and it's impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules for your treatment of him, it depends entirely upon your assessment of his reason for lying. If he's afraid you'll hit him, then tell him that that's an

unforgive-able crime in Scouting and that you're no criminal; if he likes to make the truth more "exciting", then point out the difference between pardonable exaggeration and downright lying; if he has an inferiority complex, then try to smooth it out or compensate it by helping him to find traits in his character, or abilities that he possesses, that are superior to those of other boys with whom he comes into contact. One of the most abject inferiority complexes I have ever encountered disappeared overnight because its possessor found that he was the only boy in the Troop who could ride a bicycle when facing the wrong way.



There are two "MUSTS": firstly, never let him think for one moment that you are taken in when he tells you a palpable untruth; secondly, when you want an answer to a direct question that gives him a chance to lie, see that he has ample time to consider what he's going to say.

No. 8. The "GRUMBLING" boy . . . nothing is ever right; there's a fly in every jerry-can of ointment – even in Scouting we meet him-from time to time.

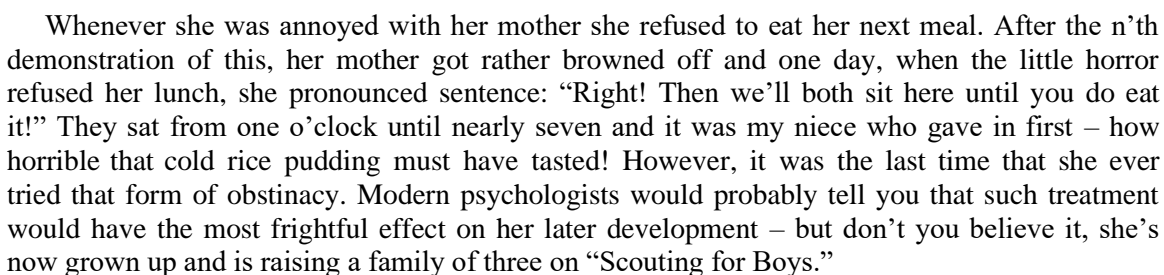
It's worth trying another conspiracy with the Troop – to make all his grumblings a subject of humour. The professional grumbler always likes his grievances to be taken seriously, otherwise they lose their point. You'll have one big advantage in your favour – a grumbler is rarely popular with other boys.

A certain Scoutmaster devised a very effective method of dealing with a boy of this sort. Jimmy always wanted a different activity to the one that was scheduled to take place – you know the type: "O that! Can't we do so-and-so?" One evening his SM followed each announcement of the next part of the programme by saying: "There'll be a ten second interval for Jimmy to grumble". Long before the end of the evening Jimmy had retired into discreet silence, and on future occasions when he showed signs of reverting to his former habit, his SM had only to say: "Want a ten second interval, Jimmy?", to stop a grumble before it got properly off the mark.

Of course there are times when this sort of treatment can blow up in your face as the SM found at summer camp. He slipped on a weed-covered rock, sat heavily in a pool of water, and became rather vocal. It was Jimmy who enquired sweetly: "Want a ten second interval, Skip?"

No. 9. The "OBSTINATE" boy . . . he dislikes a direct order; he'll oppose a course of action just because everyone else is in favour of it; the real professional will cut off his nose to spite his face.

Sometimes he'll respond to leadership, sometimes to toughness, sometimes to suggestion – particularly if you can make him think that "he thought of it first". It's useful to remember



Another way of dealing with the obstinate type is to find out some particular weakness, like or dislike, and to make use of it to its best advantage. During the latter part of last year there was a young man who was unwise enough to qualify for professional attention from the public hangman. We'll call him "Topper" – chiefly because it isn't his name. Ten years ago I was Supervision Officer at the Approved School where Topper was an inmate. He was a most difficult gentleman: to any direct order he went as near defiance as he could get away with; to threaten to put him on a charge of to deduct good-conduct marks was a waste of breath. His attitude was: "They've got to let me go when my time's up, so, to blazes with them!" However, he had one great passion – table tennis. If he was being difficult, one had only to say: "Are you hoping to play table tennis this evening, Topper?" and he would at once become amenable, sometimes even apologise. It took six months to find this Achilles heel, but it made the succeeding two years a lot easier than they would otherwise have been.

No. 10. The “REBEL” boy . . . he is a more pronounced type than the purely obstinate. Obstnacy is usually passive whereas rebellion is active – the donkey is obstinate and does little about it, the mule is obstinate and rebellious and does plenty.

When possible, the rebel should be put in a position of authority: he then has to subdue rebellion which spikes his guns.

At the same Approved School that Topper graced with his presence was a young man known to his intimates as “Spider”. He rebelled against anything and everything; the mere mention of a rule was enough to trigger him into devising a method of breaking it; he staged three successful

escapes and on the last one laid out a policemen who tried to arrest him; he threw away so many good-conduct marks that he lost any chance of a remission of sentence – quite some headache was our Spider. Then, as an experiment, he was made up into a Squad Leader, and changed overnight. He became a martinet, and threw such a scare into his followers that they became the crack squad within a month. It is interesting to note that Spider's rebellious nature has mellowed with the years; he now lives a placid law-abiding life with his wife and two children in a north London suburb, and his elder son will be on my Annual Census Return for 1958.

The last two examples that I have cited are extreme cases and I have mentioned them deliberately because methods that work with the extremists work equally well with the "moderates". Fortunately, the average Scouter rarely has to deal with really virulent types, but when he is faced with the problem of a difficult boy, it may encourage him to know that even the "Toppers" and "Spiders" of this life can be tamed, if only one can find the right approach.

No. 11. The "DELINQUENT" boy ... I'm often asked whether or not there is a place in Scouting for the delinquent, and the answer is definitely "yes". We all know the saying about the one sinner who repents.



Scouting has far more to offer the delinquent than it has to the boy who comes from a well-ordered home, and whose conduct matches that of Caesar's wife. In addition, we have a definite obligation to accept and to do our best for the difficult and unruly boy as well as for his more easily-managed brother. Training in good citizenship is one of the primary objects of Scouting, and the more a boy needs that training the greater challenge he is to the Movement. While a Troop of nicely-mannered little gentlemen may be a source of great satisfaction to its Scoutmaster and his assistants, such a Troop is quite lacking the missionary outlook if it is not employing its example and tradition for the benefit of boys who are in need of some such steadying influence.

There are two objections that Scoutmasters sometimes raise when asked to make room in their Troops for a boy who has been through the Courts, or who is on licence from an Approved School. The first is that such a one will very soon wreck his Troop – the answer to that is that if his Troop is so easily wrecked then the sooner it's closed down the better. The second is that the parents of his "nice" boys will object to their sons mixing with a delinquent. With tact, this difficulty can be overcome. See the objecting parents, point out to them that as a well-brought-up boy their son is most unlikely to be "contaminated", and that what the delinquent needs is just the sort of steadying influence that their son can supply. That's not blarney, you know,

every word of it is true. Should the parents of the “nice” boy threaten to withdraw their son from the Troop . . . well, that’s your problem; in favour of which boy would you decide – the one who really needs your help but may not be much of a credit to your Troop, or the one who will probably be no worse off even if he does leave?

I am not trying to suggest that every Troop can absorb an unlimited number of delinquents, very far from it. The acceptance of even one depends on two factors. Firstly, the ability of the Scouters to tackle boys of this type – it is not given to every man to train the difficult and unruly; secondly, on the general tone and the soundness of tradition of the Troop concerned. A small Troop of wild, undisciplined boys could ill-afford one such addition to its numbers: a strong Troop, well-disciplined and run by understanding Scouters, could absorb two or possibly three without bringing about any lowering of its standards.

Before any move is made, the whole question should be discussed thoroughly by the Group Council. If the decision is that the Troop can help with the social reclamation of boys who have been “in trouble” invite the Probation Officer along to a Council meeting and discuss the position with him frankly. He’s doing a wonderful job of work under far greater difficulties than most Scouters ever encounter, and he’ll certainly be able to advise on which of his clients might benefit from Scouting.

No. 12. The “UNRELIABLE” boy . . . he says he’ll turn up for some activity and then doesn’t; he’s irregular at Troop meetings; he’ll undertake to do a job and then forget it.

Try to find out the cause of his unreliability. Is it due to the genuine forgetfulness of an untidy mind; to a lack of “stickability”; to a division of interests? Whatever the cause, be most particular yourself in setting him an example of reliability – how about that test you promised to give him a fortnight ago and haven’t got round to yet, or that badge you’ve kept meaning to order for the past ten days?

When he undertakes to do a particular job, see that he’s constantly reminded of it. When he’s required for some activity, arrange for another boy to call for him.

If his unreliability is confined solely to irregular attendance, ask yourself a very pertinent question – are your activities and meetings worth attending?

Where a boy has divided interests, it is not always easy to advise him regarding the one he should follow. I attended a Senior Troop meeting recently where a sixteen-year-old Second Class Scout was pleading lack of time to take part in many items of their summer programme. Nearly a year ago he went for his First Class Journey but failed to submit a log, he had been “too busy” to complete it. A chat with him brought to light the fact that in addition to his Troop he belonged to a social club, a youth club, two cycling clubs, a swimming club and a photographic society. He agreed readily with my suggestion that he should give up some of his interests, but when it came to deciding which, it was a hopeless proposition. He was loath to leave the Troop because “he always had been in the Scouts”, and if he left he’d only join the Army Cadets, anyway! He could not give up the social club because he was some sort of secretary; each cycling club was a must – he had a boy friend in one and a girl friend in the other; the swimming club was essential because he was just learning to do the crawl properly; the photographic society was vital because he “ might take up photography “.

These young men with butterfly minds are not easy for a Scouter to deal with and where a boy will be but little worse off without Scouting, I always recommend a parting of the ways.

No. 13. The “UNTIDY” boy . . . he’s untidy in his uniform; he never puts anything away; he never knows where anything is; he’s the despair of his PL at camp.

His development is usually the result of untidiness being condoned at home, and tidiness must be forced upon him. Give him a minute or two before Inspection to get himself and his uniform into shape; insist on him clearing up after himself; give him some definite responsibility

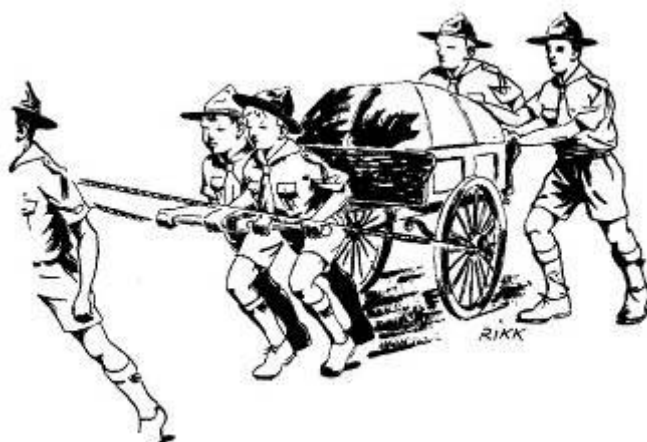
such as keeping the Patrol box or store room tidy. Chase him at camp, and encourage his PL to make full use of the “scrub bag”.



That tidiness can be forced on him until it becomes a habit was shown in the case of Roger: his onetime counterpart may be seen in many Troops to-day. His shoes were never properly cleaned, his stockings spent most of their time around his ankles, his garter tabs were always lost, his shorts invariably appeared to be on the verge of a catastrophic descent while his belt buckle lived three inches above the top of them, at brief intervals his shirt tails escaped from their proper quarters and flapped in the breeze, the point of his neckerchief climbed nimbly up his back until it rested on one shoulder, his hat brim drooped and flopped around his ears. His person seemed to exercise a magnetic attraction for every variety of dirt; his efforts at washing always seemed to produce patches. At his home nothing was ever put away; each member of the family dropped whatever they were using in the place where they were last using it.

During the early part of his Scout life, Roger was chased unmercifully, and at a later stage was made responsible for the tidiness of two younger boys of his own type. By the time he became a PL there was no smarter boy in the Troop, and he is now an SM whose inspections

overlook no detail.



Scouters . . . always accompany the trek cart

No. 14. The “LAZY” boy . . . I have left this type until the last but one because the very great majority of boys to-day are lazy: unfortunately, laziness is now encouraged on a vast national scale. We appear to be living in an age when a man would rather lean on a shovel than use it: when far more energy is put into dodging a job than would be required to do it: when working as little as possible and demanding as much money as possible is the popular trend. A liking for work is an acquired taste and one that’s very difficult to instil into the young. Incentives can help – that’s why they give prizes at school – but the whole system of Scout training is in itself an incentive to work and additional incentives would be wrong.

By making full use of the Patrol system, many a lazy boy can be encouraged to pull his weight. Additionally, all boys have a definite desire to progress and a Scouter can make use of this ambition to prod them along the path to Second and First Class, thereby creating a tolerance for work if not a liking for it.

Physical laziness should be overcome by every spur that a Scouter can devise – provided he's not having a rest when he applies it. In these days when most boys either cycle or hop on a bus for a journey of half a mile, I always admire a tradition that flourishes in a certain Troop in my District – they pull a trek cart on every activity where this is possible; they take it to summer camp with them; Scouters – singular or plural – always accompany the trek cart.

I have heard it said in some parts of the country that when the donkey won't go, one should put a thistle under its tail. A Scout Troop with its collective pants full of thistles sounds as if it might have possibilities, but I have a mild suspicion that parents would object. I can guarantee, however, that the overwhelming majority of them will have no faults to find with verbal thistles – so whenever you encounter laziness apply your most prickly one.



No. 15. The "KEEN" boy . . . I have left him until last because he is one of the most important people in Scouting and therefore deserves special emphasis. He can, however, be a problem for two reasons. Firstly, because it's not always easy to find an outlet for his energies: secondly, because he so often demands far more from his Scoutmasters than those gentlemen are prepared to give.

A keen boy is the backbone of any Troop, and his Scouters must keep pace with this keenness or they will stifle it. Never keep a boy hanging about for a test, it can be fatal. You know the sort of thing that happens: some small infant comes up to his Scouter after a meeting and says: "You promised to test me for so-and-so to-night", and the man replies: "There wasn't time, ask me next week". One can be fairly certain that the boy will have to go on asking, not only next week but probably for many weeks to come, until he begins to think that the test is something that isn't worth bothering about.

I know full well that Scouters are busy men, but see if you can't cut out some of the non-essentials at Troop meetings and keep faith with the individual boy. In the course of the evening he probably sees you waste plenty of valuable time, five minutes of which would have sufficed for his test. *Never* promise to take a test unless you're certain beyond all reasonable doubt that you'll be able to.

Only a week or two ago I visited a Troop and saw there a boy whom I knew had belonged to another in the neighbourhood. I asked the why and wherefore, and he told me that he had transferred because in his old Troop he hadn't been able to pass anything for a couple of months. What an indictment on his one-time Scoutmaster!

Remember two things. Firstly, you'll never have a good Troop without keen boys – so see you satisfy their needs. Secondly, keenness can be catching – so whenever you encounter it nurture it to your full ability.

So much for the genus “puer” and the principal categories under which he flourishes. I feel that to even things up I now ought to find a large concourse of boys, and tell them about the types of Scoutmaster they may have in charge of them.

Although I have classified boys under fifteen headings, let me, once again stress that it is a rare thing to find a boy who fits neatly into one pigeonhole. The total possible variations of human nature are beyond computation, but more often than not some of the above characteristics predominate, and a combination of two or more of the suggestions set out may give you a partial solution to your problem if not a complete one.

I know quite well that many a Scouter will try to shoot me down in flames – he will say that he has had a boy who fitted snugly into one of my compartments and my methods didn’t work. Right, then let him find some method that does – he can’t expect me to do all his work for him!

Let me finish by stressing yet again the need for you to study the individual character of every single boy in your charge. Analyse his weaknesses and his strengths, his hopes, his fears, his ambitions. Encourage those things in his character that are worthwhile; teach him to recognise his faults and help him to overcome them.

Perhaps, in the years to come, a man who was once a boy of yours will rise head and shoulders above the ordinary run of mankind, and you will be able to say to yourself: “It was I who set his feet on that path”, and in saying it you’ll know the true reward for the job you’re doing.

