



CHAPTER VII

CHIVALRY OF THE KNIGHTS

CAMP FIRE YARN NO. 20

CHIVALRY TO OTHERS

**Knights Errant - Helpfulness to Others
Courtesy to Women**

HINTS TO INSTRUCTORS

One aim of the Boy Scouts scheme is to revive amongst us, if possible, some of the rules of the knights of old, which did so much for the moral tone of our race. Unfortunately, chivalry with us has, to a large extent, been allowed to die out, whereas in Japan, for instance, it is taught to the children, so that it becomes with them a practice of their life, and it is also taught to children in other countries with the best results. Our effort is not so much to discipline the boys as to teach them to discipline themselves.

It is impossible in so short a space as I have at my disposal to do more than touch upon subjects which the instructor may elaborate for himself. The different qualities which the Knight's Code demanded are grouped under the three heads:—

- 1.—Chivalry to Others.*
- 2.—Discipline of Self.*
- 3.—Self-improvement.*

In days of old, when knights were bold," it must have been a fine sight to see one of these steel-clad horsemen come riding through the dark green woods in his shining armour, with shield and lance and waving plumes, bestriding his gallant warhorse, strong to bear its load, and full of fire to charge upon an enemy. And near him rode his squire—a young man, his assistant and companion, who would some day become a knight.

Behind him rode his group, or patrol of men-at-arms— stout, hearty warriors, ready to follow their knight to the gates of death if need be. They were the tough yeomen of the old days, who won so many fine fights for their country through their pluck and loyal devotion to their knights.

In peace time, when there was no fighting to be done, the knight would daily ride about looking for a chance of doing a good turn to any needing help, especially a woman or child who might be in distress. When engaged in thus doing good turns, he was called a "Knight Errant." The men of his patrol naturally acted in the same way as their leader,

and a man-at-arms was always equally ready to help the distressed with his strong right arm.

The knights of old were the Patrol Leaders, and the men-at-arms were the Scouts.

You Patrol Leaders and Scouts are therefore very like the knights and their retainers, especially if you keep your honour ever before you, and do your best to help other people who are in trouble or who want assistance. Your motto is, “Be Prepared” to do this, and the motto of the knights was a similar one, “Be Always Ready.”

Chivalry

Chivalry—that is, the order of the knights—was started in England some 1500 years ago by King Arthur.

On the death of his father, King Uther Pendragon, he was living with his uncle, and nobody knew who was to be King. He did not himself know that he was the son of the late King.

Then a great stone was found in the churchyard, into which a sword was sticking, and on the stone was written:

“Whosoever pulleth this sword out of this stone is the rightwise King born of all England.”

All the chief lords had a try at pulling it out, but none could move it.

That day there was a tournament at which Arthur’s cousin was to fight, but when he got to the ground he found he had left his sword at home, and he sent Arthur to fetch it. Arthur could not find it, but remembering the sword in the churchyard he went there and pulled at it. It came out of the stone at once, and he took it to his cousin. After the sports he put it back again into the stone; and then they all tried to pull it out, but could not move it. But when Arthur tried he drew it out quite easily. So he was proclaimed King.

He afterwards got together a number of knights, and used to sit with them at a great round table, and so they were called the “Knights of the Round Table.”

St. George

They had as their patron saint St. George, because he was the only one of all the saints who was a horseman. He is the Patron Saint of cavalry and a special saint of England.

He is also the Patron Saint of Boy Scouts everywhere. Therefore, all Scouts should know his story.

St. George was born in Cappadocia in the year AD 303. He enlisted as a cavalry soldier when he was seventeen, and soon became renowned for his bravery.

On one occasion he came to a city named Selem, near which lived a dragon who had to be fed daily with one of the citizens, drawn by lot.

The day St. George came there, the lot had fallen upon the king’s daughter, Cleolinda. St. George resolved that she should not die, and so he went out and attacked the dragon, who lived in a swamp close by, and killed him.



Prepared and alert a Scout follows the lead of our Patron Saint George and his spirited steed.

St. George was typical of what a Scout should be:

When he was faced by a difficulty or danger, however great it appeared — even in the shape of a dragon — he did not avoid it or fear it, but went at it with all the power he could put into himself and his horse. Although inadequately armed for such an encounter, having merely a spear, he charged in, did his best, and finally succeeded in overcoming a difficulty which nobody had dared to tackle.

That is exactly the way in which a Scout should face a difficulty or danger, no matter how great or terrifying it may appear to him or how ill-equipped he may be for the struggle.

He should go at it boldly and confidently, using every power that he can to try to overcome it, and the probability is that he will succeed.

St. George's Day is April 23rd. On that day all good Scouts make a special point of thinking about the Promise and the Scout Law. Remember this on the next 23rd April and send greetings to Brother Scouts around the world.

The Knights' Code

The laws of the knights were these:

“Be Always Ready, with your armour on, except when you are taking your rest at night.

At whatever you are working try to win honour and a name for honesty.

Defend the poor and weak.

Help them that cannot defend themselves.

Do nothing to hurt or offend anyone else.

Be prepared to fight in the defence of their country.

Work for honour rather than profit.

Never break your promise.

Maintain the honour of your country with your life.

Rather die honest than live shamelessly.

Chivalry requireth that youth should be trained to perform the most laborious and humble offices with cheerfulness and grace; and to do good unto others.”

These are the first rules with which the old knights started, and from which the Scout Law of today comes.

A knight (or Scout) is at all times a gentleman. So many people seem to think that a gentleman must have lots of money. Money does not make a gentleman. A gentleman is anyone who carries out the rules of chivalry of the knights.

Unselfishness

Captain John Smith, the old English adventurer of three hundred years ago, was a pretty tough customer to deal with, as he had fought in every part of the world and had been wounded over and over again; but he also had a good, kind heart within him.

He was as good a type of scout as you could find anywhere. One of his favourite expressions was, "We were born, not for ourselves, but to do good to others", and he carried this out very much in his life, for he was the most unselfish of men.

Self-Sacrifice

One of the finest examples of self-sacrifice was the action of Captain Lawrence Oates, who was on Scott's Last Expedition to the South Pole.

The little party of men had reached the Pole on January 18th, 1912, to find to their bitter disappointment that the Norwegian explorer, Roald Amundsen, had been there ahead of them, only a few weeks before.



Captain Lawrence Oates proved himself a man of great courage on Scott's Last Expedition to the South Pole. He sacrificed himself so that his comrades might live.

On the return journey the party suffered great hardships from intense cold and terrible weather. The men became weaker and weaker. One of them, Petty Officer Evans, died.

Then Oates became badly frost-bitten in hands and feet. He bore intense sufferings without complaint, but realized more and more that he was becoming a burden to the others. He knew that even if he could struggle on he would only delay his comrades. If he dropped out it would be one less mouth to feed, and the others might just have a chance of reaching the next depot.

So one morning he crept from their little tent into the blinding blizzard outside—and dropped out. He was never seen again. He gave his life that his comrades might live.

Unfortunately Oates' heroic self-sacrifice did not after all save his comrades. Starved and frozen they all died together. There they were found some months later by a search party, all lying as if asleep in their tent.

Boys, too, can show just the same spirit.

A lad of eighteen named Currie saw a little girl playing on a railway line at Clydebank in front of an approaching train. He tried to rescue her, but he was lame from an injury he had suffered at football, and it delayed him in getting her clear. The train knocked both of them over, and both were killed.

But Currie's gallant attempt is a true example of chivalry. It was sacrifice of himself in the attempt to save a child.

Thousands of cases of gallantry in saving life by Scouts have occurred.

Kindness

"Kindness and gentleness are great virtues", says an old Spanish proverb. And another says, "Oblige without regarding whom you oblige", which means be kind to anyone, great or small, rich or poor.



A Scout does everything he can to help others, especially old people and children. He does at least one Good Turn a day.

The great point about a knight was that he was always doing kindnesses or good turns to people. His idea was that everyone must die, but you should make up your mind that before your time comes you will do something good. Therefore do it at once, for you never know when you may be going off.

So, with the Scouts, it has been made one of our promises that we help other people at all times. It does not matter how small that good turn may be, if it only be to help an old woman lift her bundle, or to guide a child across a crowded street, or to put a coin in the poor-box.

Something good ought to be done each day of your life. Start today to carry out this rule, and never forget it during the remaining days of your life. Remember the knot in your neckerchief and on your Scout Badge—they are reminders to you to do a Good Turn. And do your good turn not only to your friends, but to strangers as well.

Generosity

Some people are fond of hoarding their money and never spending it. It is well to be thrifty, but it is also well to give away money where it is needed—in fact, that is part of the object of saving up your money.

In being charitable, be careful that you do not fall into the mistake of false charity. That is to say, it is very easy and comforting to you to give a penny to a beggar in the street, but you ought not to do it. That beggar in ninety-nine times out of a hundred is an arrant old fraud, and by giving your penny you are encouraging him and others to go on with that trade. There may be, probably are, hundreds of really poor and miserable people hiding away, whom you never see and to whom that penny would be a godsend. The charity organizations know where they are, and who they are, and if you give your penny to them they will put it into the right hands for you.

You need not be rich to be charitable. Many of the knights were poor men. At one time some of them wore, as their crest, two knights riding on one horse, which meant they were too poor to afford a horse apiece.

Tips

Then “tips” are a bad thing.

Wherever you go, people want to be “tipped” for doing the slightest thing which they ought to do out of common good feeling. A Scout will never accept a “tip”, unless it is to pay for work done. It is often difficult to refuse, when it is offered, but for a Scout it is easy. He has only to say, “Thank you very much, but I am a Scout, and our rules don’t allow us to accept anything for doing a good turn”.

“Tips” put you on a wrong footing with everyone.

You cannot work in a friendly way with a man if you are thinking how much “tip” you are going to get out of him, or he is thinking how much he’ll have to “tip” you. And all Scout’s work for another ought to be done in a friendly way.

Here is an example of what refusing a tip for a good turn may mean:

The Boy Scouts of America now number over three million Scouts. That’s a big lot, and it was started by the action of one English Boy Scout in London in 1909. This Scout offered to show the way to a gentleman as his good turn for the day.

When the stranger offered to pay for his trouble, of course the

Scout said: “No, thank you, sir. I am a Scout.”

“A *Scout!* What is that?” The gentleman had never heard of Scouts. He questioned the boy, and finally paid a visit to Scout Headquarters in London and learned all there was to know about Scouts.

He was an American. He went back to America with his tale of the wonderful Brotherhood of Scouts, who were ready to do good turns to anyone needing help, but he would take no reward for doing them.

The idea caught on quickly in America, and Troops sprang up all over the States. Now there are almost as many Scouts there as there are in the rest of the world put together.

That was the result of helping without thinking of a tip.

I have had a number of letters of admiration for the Scouts on account of their doing good acts and then declining to be tipped for them. I am very glad to hear it, Scouts.

Of course, proper pay that is earned by your work is another thing, and you will be right to accept it.

Friendliness

The great difference between an outdoorsman and a city-dweller is, that the first is in shirt-sleeves while the other is buttoned up in his coat. The outdoorsman is open and cheery with everybody at once, while the city person is rather inclined to shut himself up from his neighbours inside his coat, and takes a deal of drawing out before he becomes friendly. The free, open-air, shirt-sleeve habits of the man of the woods or the open spaces do away with this, and life becomes much more pleasant to everybody all round.

A Boy Scout should remember that he is like Kim, the “friend of all the world”. But don’t let your friendliness lead you into the foolery of throwing away your hard-earned savings in standing treat to your friends.

Our Scout Law says: “A Scout is a brother to every other Scout”. This has shown itself very much when our Jamborees have brought thousands of Scouts together from forty different foreign countries. The boys have found out that though they come from different nations, they are after all very much alike in their tastes and amusements and that they can be jolly good friends with each other.

I want you Scouts to keep up that friendship and to make it wider and stronger. You can do this by writing to your Brother Scouts abroad and visiting them or by getting them to visit you in camp.

It will be fun for you and fun for them. But better than that it will be making friendship between you, so that if difficulties should arise later on between the different countries they will not at once want to go to war, but will talk things over as friends and see how to come to agreement without the cruel and unfair test of fighting.



A Scout is a “friend of all the world” and “a brother to every other Scout”. “The way to have a friend is to be one.”

Politeness

One of the stories that the knights used to tell as an example of politeness was about Julius Caesar. Once when he was entertained for supper by a poor peasant, the man gave him a dish of pickles to eat, thinking that they were the sort of vegetables that a highborn officer would like. Caesar showed his politeness by eating the whole dish of pickles and pretended to like them, although they burnt his mouth and disagreed with his considerably.

In Spain, you ask a man the way—he does not merely point it out, but takes off his hat, bows, and says that it will be a great pleasure to him to show it, and walks with you till he has set you properly upon it. He will take no reward.

A Frenchman will take off his hat when he addresses a stranger, even when he asks a policeman the way.

The Dutch fishermen, big and brawny as they are, take up the whole street when walking down it. But when strangers come along they stand to one side, and smilingly take off their caps as he passes.

A lady told me that when in one of the far west Canadian townships she met a group of wild-looking cowboys walking down the street, she felt quite alarmed. But as they got near they stood to one side, and took off their hats with the greatest respect, and made way for her.

Courtesy to Women

The knights of old were particularly attentive in respect and courtesy to women.

Sir Nigel Loring in *The White Company* is a type of chivalrous knight of the old times. Although very small, and half blind from some lime which an enemy had thrown in his eyes very early in his career, he was an exceedingly brave man, and at the same time very humble, and very helpful to others.

But, above all things, he revered women. He had a plain lady as his wife, but he always upheld her beauty and virtue, and was ready to fight anybody who doubted him. Then with poor women, old or young, he was always courteous and helpful. And that is how a Scout should act.

King Arthur, who made the rules of chivalry, was himself chivalrous to women. One day a girl rushed into his hall crying for help. Her hair was streaming and smeared with mud, her arms were torn with brambles, and she was dressed in rags. She had been ill-treated by a band of robbers who roved the country, doing all the harm they could. When he heard her tale, King Arthur sprang to his horse and rode off himself to the robbers' cave, and, even at the risk of his own life, he fought and defeated them, so that they could no more trouble his people.

When walking with a lady or child, a Scout should always have her on his left side, so that his right is free to protect her. This rule is altered when walking in the streets—then a man will walk on the side of her nearest to the traffic, to protect her against accident or mud-splashes, etc.

In meeting a woman or a child a man should, as a matter of course, always make way for her, even if he has to step off the pavement into the gutter.

So also in riding in a crowded bus or railway carriage, no man worthy of the name will allow a woman to stand up if he has a seat. He will at once give it up to the woman and stand himself. As a Scout, you should set an example in this by being the first man in the carriage to do it. And in doing so do it cheerfully, with a smile, so that she may not think you are annoyed at having to do it.

When in the street, always be on the look-out to help women and children. A good opportunity is when they want to cross a street, or to find the way, or to call a cab or bus. If you see them, go and help them at once—and don't accept any reward.

The other day I saw a boy help a lady out of a carriage, and as he shut the door after her she turned to give him some money, but he touched his cap and smilingly said, "No,

thank you, ma'am; it s my duty", and walked off. So I shook hands with him, for I felt that although he had not been taught, he was a Scout by nature.

This is the kind of courtesy one wants to see more amongst boys.

Of course, in accidents men and boys will always see that the women and children are safely out of danger before they think of going themselves. In shipwrecks, it is very noticeable how carefully arrangements are made for saving the women and children and old people before men are rescued.

You should carry on your courtesy to ladies at all times. If you are sitting down and a lady comes into the room, stand up, and see if you can help her in any way before you sit down.

Don't spend time on a girl whom you would not like your mother or sister to see you with. Don't make love to any girl unless you mean to marry her. Don't marry a girl unless you are in a position to support her and to support some children.

Thanks!

And, look here! Here is a very important bit of courtesy that is too often forgotten, but which a true Scout will never omit, and that is to *thank* for any kindness you receive. *A present is not yours till you have thanked for it.* You have not finished your camp, even if you have packed up your kit and cleaned up the ground, until you have thanked the owner for use of it and have thanked God for giving you a good time.

PATROL PRACTICES IN CHIVALRY

The Patrol Leader can do much to encourage the Good Turn by referring to it at opportune moments (don't overdo it!), and by occasionally asking the Scouts what Good Turns they have done lately. When out with his Patrol, he can suggest opportunities for individuals and Patrol Good Turns. But remember: IT IS THE PATROL LEADER'S OWN EXAMPLE THAT COUNTS MOST.

Make each Scout tie a knot in his neckerchief every morning as a reminder to carry out his idea of doing a good turn every day, till it becomes a habit with him.

Talk over some of the many good turns a boy can do in his daily life:

Sprinkle sand on a frozen road where someone is liable to slip—remove orange or banana skins from the pavement, as they are apt to throw people down—help old people—help to keep the streets clean by removing scraps of paper—provide meals for poor children. THEN DO SOME OF THEM!

Have a Scout bring in a boy who is a total stranger, as his guest for the evening to play in games, hear camp stories, and so on.