



# YARNS on SCOUT PROMISE and LAW

*By*  
GILCRAFT

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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 21<sup>st</sup> century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

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## THE PROMISE AND LAW

I HAVE been asked to write a series of short, straight talks on the subject of the Scout Promise and the Scout Law. It is a very difficult job to do, because the Promise and Law represent the foundations of all our Scouting, and I am very doubtful if I have the ability to convey to you all just what they should mean to each one of us.

The foundations of a house are underground and hidden from view, yet the whole stability of the house depends on them. If each one of you is to build his own Scouting so that it will be strong and will last right through his lifetime, he must first of all satisfy himself that he understands our Promise and Law, and then determine that these are to be the foundations on which he himself is going to build.

Just as foundations are not seen, so we do not talk about our Promise and Law very much; to some of us they mean too much to be spoken of lightly. Others perhaps have forgotten about them, and wonder why it is that they are losing interest in the game of Scouting. There are still the good old games to play; there is still the camping; there are still the cheery gatherings of Patrol and Troop; there are still the odds and ends of competitions; there is still more knowledge to acquire of Scouting and the open air; but something is missing.

I would be bold and say that that something missing is the WILL to follow the Promise and Law.

Most of you, and all of you who are Christians, are familiar with the words of the Great Teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, who lived two thousand years ago:

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

“And everyone who heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

It is for you who read this to decide whether you are going to build your Scouting on the rock of the Promise and the Law, or on the sand of thoughtlessness and selfishness. If you go to Palestine today you will see the same houses as Jesus saw. You will see, as He did, that some have stood fast for many years, because they were built on rock, because their foundations were sound. In the same village, perhaps, you will see a crumbling heap of earth and bricks: the ruins of a house that had been built on sand, whose foundations were weak. We have seen things like that happen in this country, too: we have even seen huts and bridges that we ourselves have built as Scouts collapse because they could not stand the strain of their own weight, because we had not built them up properly in the beginning. In the talks that follow I will do my best to explain the various points of the Promise and the Law to you: but first I want you to believe that these things matter to YOU, that YOU YOURSELF are the builder of your own Scouting and of your own life. Many people are helping you in the building – your parents, your teachers, your pastors, your friends, your brother Scouts, your Patrol Leaders, and your Scoutmasters; but they can do next to nothing if you have not the WILL to build for yourself.

In the midst of all the joy and happiness of Scouting, do not be afraid or ashamed to be serious and thoughtful now and then about the things that matter – love of God, love of Country, love of our Fellow-men. By thinking of these things, and by carrying your thoughts

into action – however small the way – you will increase your own joy and happiness and will have a store of it to give out to others.

*With all my heart I wish you Good Scouting on this new Adventure – an Adventure which, though new to us, is as old as the World.*

### THE SCOUT PROMISE

**Y**OU know how the Scout Promise runs: “On my honour I promise that I will do my best –  
TO DO MY DUTY TO GOD AND THE KING,  
TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES,  
TO OBEY THE SCOUT LAW.”

A promise is something which binds one at all times and under all circumstances, unless and until it is deliberately set aside by the person who made it. Should this happen, his word has proved false, and he has been false to himself as well as to others.

In former years the Arabs used to clench every bargain with the expression in Arabic, “The word of an Englishman.” The same expression, in Spanish, was used in South America. The pronouncement of these words meant that the bargain was completed and that both parties would be true to it, whatever happened. It is a proud thought that those of our race who lived before us were able to set the seal of their character on so many different peoples so that the memory of their honesty was handed down from father to son. Our promise should be something like that. It should remain strong and unbroken as long as we live.

I have taken this Promise, just as you have, but it would be wrong of me to let you imagine that I have always observed it faithfully in every detail. Like you, perhaps, I have fallen away from its high standard now and then. What are we to do when that happens? I will tell you. The promise is not gone for ever; it still remains; it has been weakened; perhaps we have found sand where rock should have been. We have to strengthen the weak place; we have to build it whole again. We said when we took the promise that we were going to *do our best*. Our best has not been good enough; we have to make it still better. Does not that just mean that we have to go on trying harder than ever? We must never give in.

You will remember some time when you tried to climb a tree or jump a ditch that you fell out of the one because you could not get a proper grip of a branch over your head, and fell into the other because you could not jump far enough, or because you funkyed it just as you were taking off. If you have any grit in you, you said to yourself, “That wasn’t good enough, I’ll have another shot.” Eventually, after several tries, you succeeded. You will remember what an achievement you felt it to be at the time, how it seemed to make you feel bigger. So it is with the promise, perhaps we slip and fall, but when we have picked ourselves up again, and tried again until we won, we have felt a real pride that made us feel bigger inside – in character and spirit.

Taking it as a whole, the promise means that we are going to do our Duty to God; to do our Duty to our King and our Country; to do our Duty to our neighbours; to do our Duty to ourselves. Duty is something that we owe, something that we are bound to pay, something that we feel in honour bound to give.

Most of you will remember about Saint Peter, the most natural and most lovable of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. He was quick-tempered, like I am; he did his best to get

over it; I'm not too sure that I have done that yet. In time, after many falls, he gave himself completely to his Master, as you and I may hope to do. Peter, like the others of Jesus' immediate followers, used to write to those with whom he had stayed and talked on his journeys when he carried to others the message his Lord had given.

In one of his letters Peter wrote, "Honour all men. Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King." He asked them to obey the promise which we have taken. I tell you that because I want you to see that many others before you have tried to live up to this high standard. You will see that again when I come to talk to you about the Scout Law. Others before us have embarked on the same kind of Adventure as we are trying; and have won through.

There is one word in Peter's message that I want to explain. He writes, "Fear God." That word "fear" really means "reverence" and "respect"; it does not mean that we should be afraid of God.

The feeling we should have for Him is love, and so I want you to put out of your heads now any idea of God as someone of whom one should be afraid. He is someone who expects the very best of us, and Whom we do not want to disappoint by our failure to live up to the high standard that our Promise sets in front of us.

Keep on trying, therefore, ALWAYS.

### **DUTY TO GOD**

**D**UTY to God is the first thing that a Scout promises. In "Scouting for Boys" (p. 187 of the Boy's Edition) our Founder says, "No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys His laws. So every Scout should have a religion. Religion seems a very simple thing:

"1st. – Love and serve God.

"2nd. – Love and serve your neighbour.

In doing your duty to God always be grateful to Him. Whenever you enjoy a pleasure or a good game, or succeed in doing a good thing, thank Him for it, if only with a word or two, just as you say grace after a meal. In doing your duty towards man be helpful and generous, and also always be grateful for any kindness done to you, and be careful to show that you are grateful."

In most of our minds religion is connected only with going to Church, or Chapel, or Synagogue, or Temple, or Mosque. Church-going, if I may use the expression to cover all the different kinds of religious belief, has a very great value, but it is not the whole of religion, and not the only way in which we can express our Duty to God. In this country, I am glad to say, the habit of Church-going is becoming much stronger again, and many boys are beginning to realise that they gain strength and character by having the courage to show everyone that they believe in God and are willing to give Him some of their time and attention. We all like to give presents from time to time to those whom we love. When we return home from camp we like to be able to bring mother a souvenir. In our Church-going we can give the present of thanks and praise and prayer to God our Creator. In our Church-going we can give a present to Scouting, because we can show to others that Scouting is founded on Duty to God. Many of the public do not realise this, and when they

see us going out camping at weekends and paying no attention to the worship of God it is natural that they should imagine that Scouting is just a God-less, selfish, pleasure-loving movement.

So we have a very definite duty in this matter of Church-going; but Duty to God does not stop there. Unfortunately there are people who go to Church, but who do not by their lives show that they love God. They may even use their Church-going to camouflage, or hide, their real nature and conduct. No Scout would ever make his Church-going a pretence and a mockery. It is one of the outward and visible signs of his inward feelings. These feelings are a deep love for his Creator, for His work as shown in all the beauties of the open-air, and for His gifts in the shape of health and strength and cheerfulness. As our Founder says, "And so it is with peace Scouts to-day, that wherever they go they love the woodlands, the mountains, and the prairies, and they like to watch and know about the animals that inhabit them, and the wonders of the flowers and plants."

We do our Duty to God by helping to protect the wonders of His countryside, by being kind to His birds and other animals, by doing good turns to His people.

Yet we must not forget that we can also do our Duty to God by taking care of ourselves, by looking after our own bodies and minds, that He has given us, by growing into strong, clean, honest men.

Whatever our own particular beliefs may be, we can all agree with the thought expressed in this verse of "The Cowboy's Prayer":

"Let me be easy on the man that's down,  
And make me square and generous with all;  
I'm careless, Lord, when I'm in town,  
But never let them say I'm mean or small.  
Make me as big and open as the plains,  
As honest as the horse between my knees,  
Clean as the wind that blows behind the rains,  
Free as the hawk that circles down the breeze."

Christian Scouts have a means of interpreting their Duty to God by studying the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. He has been described to me by a Hindu Brahmin in India as "the first Scout in the world." The story of His life is full of Scout activities; the stories He told show clearly His love for the countryside and His love for His fellow-men. He is the Leader for us to follow.

Many of you will have seen Carlos' picture of "The Pathfinder." It shows a Patrol Leader who has been studying a map preparatory to setting out on a journey. He has looked up to think, perhaps to pray. Behind him with His hand on the Scout's shoulder, is the shadowy figure of Jesus Christ.

So may God Himself help us to keep our promise.

## DUTY TO THE KING

ROLAND PHILIPPS, whose *Letters to a Patrol Leader* and *The Patrol System* I hope some of you have read, says in the former book, "We honour and respect the King as the representative head of our country and of the great British Empire; and as Scouts we not only honour and respect, but also love him, believing that he is earnestly striving for the good of his people, and that he is setting the highest standard of what we mean by 'an English gentleman.'" The Scout Promise of Loyalty to the King means loyalty to the constituted authority of the State. It is impossible to explain in detail all the machinery of government that exists in this country.

Ours is a democratic country and the State and Government exist in order to promote the well-being of *its members as a whole*.

The actual government in being for the time is elected by the majority of the people, and is liable to change according to the wishes of the majority. The King remains the one constant factor and is above all party political considerations.

The three recognised political parties in this country are at one in acknowledging their allegiance to him. This is a fact that we must all understand, because there is a lot of dishonest talk about it.

Again we must understand the wonderful power possessed by the King as a person as well as a hereditary ruler to link the whole of the British Empire together. Don't let us be misled by the few misguided people who say that our Empire was built up by selfish greed and unfair methods.

It is not true, and even if it were true it ill becomes us to sit in judgment on our own fathers who, as history shows, were as good men as we are.

The British Empire exists; it can be a wonderful power for good; it is our job to see that its peoples are guided by high ideals of conduct and life. It is our job, as Scouts, to be loyal to all its people, especially to our own neighbours.

That is what the promise of Duty to the King means. He is the Leader of our Country; we are his Followers. In olden times the people were regarded as the servants of the King; now it can more truly be said that the King is the servant of the people. He gives all his time, all his energy, all his thoughts to their welfare.

The first Duty we owe our King and Country is to do what we can to make ourselves into decent citizens, honest, hard-working, cheerful men who are intent on helping others to live decently, too. You may say, "but what can I, a mere boy, do to bring this about?" By yourself you can do very little, but in company with your brother Scouts and with other decent boys in your schools, in clubs and in Brigades you can, together, do a very great deal to keep the name of our Country respected by other peoples. You will remember in a previous yarn I alluded to the Arab saying "the word of an Englishman."

Our fathers handed down to us a tradition for honesty and straight dealing; it is for us to see that that tradition is carried on untarnished.

We honour our Country's flag because it is the sign of our unity, the badge of our Country, and our Empire, as a whole.

We honour the brave men who have gone before us in the past, not only soldiers and sailors, such as Roberts and Nelson, but also Explorers and Missionaries, such as Livingstone, Scott, Shackleton, and a host of others right up to the present day.

With them we honour the women of our race who have shown equal bravery and equal loyalty, who have frequently had the harder part to bear in keeping their homes together.

All these and more are bound up in this promise of Duty to the King. Do not let us ever forget that, or allow ourselves to be led down the dark paths of selfishness, disunity and disloyalty that appear too often on the map of the present-day world.

During the Great War half a dozen Indian cavalry were sent out under their own N.C.O. on outpost duty to guard the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. They were told to return the next day shortly after sunrise. Unfortunately on their way back to the Canal they were enveloped in a terrific sandstorm, lost their bearings, and were captured by the Turks. They were promised employment and promotion in the Turkish Army, if they joined their fellow Mohammedans and disclosed the strength and position of the British Forces.

Finally they were warned that if they did not do as they were told they would be shot. They were given time to talk it over.

Next morning they were brought before the Commander, and the warning was repeated. Their N.C.O. called his small party to attention; he gave the order, "Salute." As one man they shouted out "*Badshah ki jai*" – God Save the King. That was their reply. They were taken out and shot. They were loyal to the last. They honoured a King whom they had never seen, who was not of their race.

Our Duty will not call us so far; but let us determine to answer its call in our smaller ways.

### TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE

**W**HEN I wrote about the Promise and Law I asked you not to be ashamed to think "now and then about the things that matter – love of God, love of Country, love of our Fellow-men." Later I reminded you of our Founder's definition of religion as to "love and serve God, love and serve your neighbour."

We promise, as Scouts, to help other people at all times. That is the easiest part of our promise to keep since we are all rather fond of lending someone else a hand.

The difficulty is that we do not always know *how best* we can help. It is in order that we should learn *how* that our Founder gave us the motto, "Be Prepared." We have to learn before we can do, and that is the first point for us to get into our heads.

First let us start with small things, at home rather than outside. There are all sorts of things we can do at home, like cleaning our own shoes, keeping our own bed and our own room, or the room we share with others, clean and tidy, fetching coal and water, clearing out and laying fires, running messages, minding baby, if there is one to mind, asking if there is anything we can do before going out to play football or Scouting, taking off our muddy boots, and scraping them, *outside* the door. I could fill the page with the different things we *could* do. The point is, DO we DO them? I can't answer for you, you've got to do that for yourself. Frequently it is because these are small, everyday matters that we forget about them.

We have heard of the Scout's daily good turn; our Founder tells us about it in *Scouting for Boys*: everybody has heard about it. Each one of us has to see that it is a fact and not a fable. It is not such an important part of Scouting as it used to be, yet it is a part of the



promise we have all made. Gradually we should widen the interpretation of our fellow-men and our neighbours from the home to all those with whom we come in contact at school, in work, or in play.

Of recent years I have been in Palestine and India, amongst other countries. Large numbers of the Scouts there are doing wonderful work in looking after the health and cleanliness of their villages and in organising play for the younger children. I have seen in both countries villages that have been transformed by the efforts that the Scouts have made in these two directions.

In this country most of these things are done for us, and so we do not think about them. After a big Scout Service in St. Paul's Cathedral, I went to an underground station to catch a train. The platform was invaded by a Troop of Scouts who had been at that service. They spent their pennies on chocolate from a penny-in-the-slot machine. They pulled off all the wrappers and flung them down on the platform and on the lines, until the place was littered. When I remonstrated with one of them, he looked at me astonished, but said and did nothing. I have no doubt he just thought me an interfering, silly, old man. The preacher in the Cathedral had said what a wonderful thing the Scout's Good Turn was. I found it very weird and wonderful in this instance!

Happenings like that bring discredit on Scouting, and are obviously the reverse of helpful. The so-called Scout who picks firewood from a farmer's hedge, who trespasses on someone's land, who leaves holes and mess on the ground on which he has camped is breaking his promise.

Perhaps you have not fully realised that this part of your promise demands that you should set yourself a high standard of Scouting as well as of helpfulness. Once you start to think about it you cannot fail to see the truth of what I say.

Many a man has set out to do deeds of bravery and of Knight Errantry, and has overlooked the little thing that needed doing right against his own doorstep.

In the yarns that Jesus of Nazareth told to the people who came to listen to Him, and sometimes to those who came to try and trip Him up, you will find many that refer to good turns and to the duty a man has towards his neighbour. You will readily recall the parable of the Good Samaritan to mind, but you can easily find others if you look for them in the history of His life.

So it is that the Scout's good turn, his promise of helpfulness, link up with what has been called Christ's Law:

"Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

This same law is common to all different forms of Religion; the Hindu believes in universal love; one of the ten perfections of the Buddhist is compassion; the Mohammedan reads in his holy book, the Koran, "You are the best of God's creatures, created for the good of humanity." That may help to show you how the Scout Promise and the Scout Law can help all boys, no matter what be their class, creed, or colour.

## THE SCOUT LAW

**L**ASTLY, a Scout promises to do his best “to keep the Scout Law.” Having promised to do his duty to God, to the King, to his neighbour, he now promises to do his duty to himself.

I intend to take each of the ten points of the Scout Law and talk about each in turn. Now I think it would help you most if I quote to you, from others of the Chief Scout’s books, what the laws of the Knight of Chivalry and the Red Indian were.

“Possibly,” the Chief Scout writes in *Aids to Scoutmaster ship* (p. 114-5), “one reason for the ingrained feeling of chivalry in our nation is the fact that the code of the mediaeval knights took hold of the country so long ago as A.D. 500, when King Arthur made the rules for his Knights of the Round Table, which have been the foundation for the conduct of gentlemen ever since that day. He dedicated the Order of St. George. The rules as they were re-published in the time of Henry VII are as follows: –

1. They were never to put off their armour except for the purpose of rest at night.
2. They were to search for adventures wherein to attain ‘bruyt and renown.’
3. To defend the poor and weak.
4. To give help to any who should ask it in a just quarrel.
5. Not to offend one another.
6. To fight for the defence and welfare of England.
7. To work for honour rather than profit.
8. Never to break a promise for any reason whatever.
9. To sacrifice themselves for the honour of their country.
10. ‘Sooner choose to die honestly than to fly shamefully.’”

Remember when you read that knightly code that the world was not so highly civilised as it is to-day. An appeal to force was the only known means of settling a dispute. Yet, the other points in that code are sometimes points that the highly civilised world of to-day is apt to forget.

The Woodcraft Law of the Red Indians has been set out after this fashion:

“For these things I strive –

A keen eye,

A seeing hand,

A body that fails not,

An arm that is strong and willing to serve,

A mind that yearns to understand,

A spirit that searches for the truth and that loves the silent places,

A heart that is courageous and bears goodwill to all men.”

A noble code that last; a code that any Scout should be proud to set side by side with the Scout Law in his own room at home, or in the lid of his tool chest as some Scouts have done before now.

Comparing these three other codes with our Scout Law, you can easily see that our Founder is absolutely right when he says that our Law “comes down to us from old times.”

These three were codes of conduct and behaviour, just as our Law is. If we obey the Scout Law, as we have promised, we will travel the right path through life: we will be loyal and do our duty to ourselves and so place ourselves in a position to be able to help other people and to serve our Country and our God.

### A SCOUT'S HONOUR IS TO BE TRUSTED

**H**ONOUR is a word of many meanings. If you look it up in the dictionary, you will find such meanings as – respect, esteem, reverence, reputation, glory, distinction, high rank, nobleness of mind, probity, uprightness, and many more given to it.

So far as our Promise and Law are concerned, honour is a matter of inner conscience. In the recent trial of a peer by his fellow peers in the House of Lords, each peer in turn gave his verdict, “Not guilty, on my honour,” at the same time placing his right hand over his heart to indicate the truthfulness of his decision.

A man of honour is one who is constant, faithful, true and just in all his dealings. He is trusted to do what he says, to be honest in his actions, and to be helpful to others. There is a proverb, “When the cat’s away the mice will play.” That is not true of the man of honour, for he keeps on doing his job whether there is anyone there to see if he does it or not.

Our Scout Law tells us that a Scout is a man of high character, who will always play the game and deal fairly with other people. He will not slack off when his Scoutmaster or employer are not there to see what he is doing; he carries on just as if they were; he may even do better because he feels that it is up to him to prove his worth and to justify their confidence in him.

We know that it is wrong to tell lies, to say something with the deliberate intention of deceiving someone or of conveying a false impression. It is obvious that we break trust if we tell a lie.

Sometimes we may say something which is not strictly accurate without any real intention to deceive. In fact, it pops out before we can prevent it. This is not a serious matter, but it does indicate a certain lack of self-control, and it is necessary for us to guard against this slackness becoming a kind of habit. You have heard the expression, “honour bright,” which is frequently used by boys and others to clinch a bargain, or to vouch for the complete accuracy of a certain statement.

It is a good expression, since it indicates that one’s reputation and one’s character are free from stain. If our honour is to be kept bright it needs constant looking after; we must keep watch on ourselves.

Some of you are at times confronted with a very difficult problem. You may be asked to say something in the course of your work which you know to be not strictly accurate. If you do not carry out your employer’s wishes you risk dismissal. My advice may sound incredibly difficult to fulfil, but it must be, “Stick to the truth at all costs.” Honesty pays in the long run. Financial suffering is nothing to the moral suffering you will have to endure if you let yourself down by deceiving other people. In some lines of business it is considered “smart” to “do people down.” You know as well as I do what reputations such people have in the eyes of their neighbours. Stick to the truth, therefore, through thick and thin.

In the same way you are expected to be honest in your actions. Our Founder has a lot to say on the subject of honesty in *Scouting for Boys* (p. 179, Boys’ Edition). Stealing and “scrounging” are dishonest. “Cheating at any time is a sneaking, underhand thing to do. When you feel inclined to cheat in order to win a game, or feel very distressed when a game in which you are playing is going against you, just say to yourself, ‘After all, it is only a game. It won’t kill me if I do lose. One can’t win always, though I will stick to it in case of a chance coming.’ If you keep your head in this way, you will very often find that you win

after all from not being over-anxious or despairing. . . . And don't forget, whenever you do lose a game, if you are a true Scout, you will at once cheer the winning team or shake hands with and congratulate the fellow who has beaten you."

Again you see that it is little things that count, and that you have to watch your step all the time lest the brightness of your honour becomes dulled.

The age-old commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," requires not only that we should show our parents respect and deference, but also that we should perform the real services that are due to them. This is the interpretation put upon that commandment by Jesus of Nazareth. So we may look upon this first Scout Law as an introduction, or even as a title, to the other nine.

A Scout is trusted to do what he says, to be honest in his actions, and to be helpful to others.

When that is so, his honour is bright and shines out to attract and encourage others.

If you can name such a Scout – be he man or boy, or perhaps a woman – model your conduct on his, and all will be well with you.

### A SCOUT IS LOYAL

A MAN who is loyal is one who is faithful and true to *everyone* with whom he is brought in contact. Again I cannot do better than remind you of what our Founder has written in *Scouting for Boys* (p. 179, Boys' Edition): –

"Loyalty was, above all, one of the distinguishing points about the knights. They were always devotedly loyal to their King and to their country, and were always ready and eager to die in their defence. In the same way a follower of the knight's should be loyal, not only to the King, but also to everyone who is above him, whether his officers (Scouters) or employers, and he should stick to them through thick and thin as part of his duty. If he does not intend to be loyal he will, if he has any honour and manliness in him, resign his place. He should also be equally loyal to his own friends and should support them in evil times as well as in good times."

There is no need for us to die for our country, I firmly believe, but there is every need for us to live for it. When I was talking to you about our duty to the King I told you a yarn of some Indian soldiers who preferred to die rather than break *their* promise of loyalty; I also told you that we could show our loyalty in lesser ways by acting so that the name of our country should continue to be respected.

You are getting old enough, too, to look forward to the time when you will be exercising your rights as citizens of your country, so that it is high time you set about finding out what your duties are. Your present rights have been won for you by your fathers, but you cannot expect something for nothing, and it is up to you to realise that you will have to pay something in return, not only in money, perhaps, but in service. Your various good turns are something to start with now.

Loyalty to those who are set over us in any shape or form, at home, in school, in Scouting, in work, is necessary in order that things may get done. Some of you will

remember old Æsop's fable of the bundle of sticks. When the bundle remained tied the sticks could not be broken, but when it was untied the sticks could be broken one by one.

Loyalty is the tie that binds us all together and gives us strength.

You know how it is in a Patrol. If one fellow grouses, or shirks his share of the work, things are apt to go all wrong, and the others in the Patrol – especially the Patrol Leader – have an unfair burden to shoulder because of his disloyalty. Apply that same idea to home, school, or work, and you realise at once why a Scout is expected to be loyal.

As our Founder said, if you are not going to play the game, get off the field and leave room for another player to take your place. Every one of you knows how a fellow can upset a game if he refuses to play for his side but thinks only of himself. It can be said with every truth that disloyalty is selfishness carried to an excessive degree.

More especially must we be loyal to our friends. We are unworthy of the name of friend otherwise. We must never let them down. Even if we are disappointed because of some omission on their part, we must not on any account allow ourselves to think any the less of them. In most cases we will discover that the omission has existed only in our imagination, or that some subtle jealousy has led us astray. True friendship will stand against any storm and strain, since friendship does not consist in knowing only the best in a fellow, but knowing everything about him – bad as well as good – and continuing to like him and to seek to do him service.

You will find many tales of loyalty to duty in the pages of *Scouting for Boys*. You will find many tales of loyalty to other people in your newspapers to-day. When you read them, ask yourself what *you* would have done in the same circumstances, and determine that, should the occasion demand it, you will be both ready and prepared to meet whatever is required of you to prove your loyalty.

### **A SCOUT'S DUTY IS TO BE USEFUL**

**T**HIS Law is coupled with the promise “to help other people at all times,” of which I have already said a good deal.

I would emphasise, however, that it is impossible to be of use to other people unless one has learned how to set about it. Too many of us dash at a job without thinking first of all how best it can be done. In fact, we are inclined to resent being told how it might be done better.

That is frequently the case in jobs about the house. If you want to help your mother or another there, first ask what you can do to help, and then ask advice as to how you should do it. The trouble with most of us is that we imagine we know everything, don't take the trouble to ask, and get annoyed and cross when someone else attempts to put us right.

There is no need for me to go into all the things that you can do to help at home; many of them depend on the kind of house in which you live. There is a great deal of what I might call negative helpfulness that we can all do, such as wiping our feet on the mat, taking our shoes off outside if they are very muddy, keeping our things tidy, really washing our hands before we wipe them on the towel, and so on. It is our duty not to forget to do these things we ought to do. The amount of time spent clearing up after other people must be prodigious.

Our Scouting, especially our camping, should gradually train us into a habit of tidiness and good order, so that we hate to have things in a mess about us. That will be one good duty learned. Our camping will also teach us to be helpful in other ways connected with our homes, and will show us, too, that cooking, washing up, and so on are not particularly easy jobs, that many hands make light work. That, again, is a lesson we might apply at home with great advantage to the other members of our family.

Then there are the things we can do in our own Troop in order to carry out this law of usefulness. Naturally we all take a pride in running our own show, in looking on the Troop as *ours*. We have to work for that privilege of possession. These days there is a tendency for some Scouts to take their Troop possessions for granted, instead of working for them themselves. I hope you are not one of that number.

Troop funds should be kept for the gear which it is impossible for us to make with any degree of success – cooking utensils, Patrol tents, etc.

The smaller things, and more especially our own personal Scout gear, we should obtain, and if possible make, for ourselves. Some of us have acquired rather expensive tastes and are not satisfied with the makeshift remedies that brought the spice of adventure into the early days of Scouting.

We do need, if we are to enjoy our Scouting, to get back to simpler things. In some other countries there is a growing practice of holding what are called “Robinson Crusoe Camps.” The title is sufficient to tell you that these are camps to which a minimum of equipment is taken, and where everyone has jolly well got to fend for himself or go under!

There are other obvious ways of being helpful to your Scouters and Troop, in camp or at Headquarters, but the most important is by putting your back into your Scouting and helping your Patrol for all you are worth.

Helpfulness to other people is a matter of ability and opportunity. That can be done by individual good turns, or by Patrol or Troop good turns. Every week, the pages of *The Scout* contain accounts of the various good turns that Scouts all the world over are doing. Make a note of all these suggestions and see if you cannot make use of some of them in your own Troop.

I began to write this series before Christmas time, when the Scout good turn is perhaps more seen than at other times of the year. For many years the Canadian Scouts have set themselves the task of providing toys for the children of the settlers out in the lonely districts. This has become a national Scout good turn and has brought the doers of it both honour and joy. Their example has been copied by others, but not on so big a scale.

Like our Canadian brother Scouts, we should be at pains to look for a means of carrying out this Law of ours amongst those who are less fortunate than ourselves. The very young, the very old, the sick and suffering, the maimed, the unemployed are those who need help most. The blind have in many districts become the special charge of the Scouts at Christmas, and less frequently at all times of the year. They can be visited or taken out; and being Scouts, and so observant, we can, if we only will, get them to see through our eyes.

One last word, our eyes should see what is best in the world, its beauty and its joy. That should be our attitude towards life. A pleasant manner and a happy smile can prove a real help to other people. That is the example we can all do our best to set in our everyday lives. You never know what such an example as that may do. It is a fact that one man is alive to-day, only because one morning a Scout greeted him with a smile. That morning he

had determined to give up the struggle and finish with life, but one boy's cheery smile gave him courage to carry on and win through.

*The unconscious good turn of one Scout saved a life, the good turn of another Scout started the Boy Scouts of America; you can never tell what the results of your own good actions may be.*

### A SCOUT IS A FRIEND TO ALL

WHEN I was talking about usefulness I said that a pleasant manner and a happy smile could be of real help to other people, and so it is that the next Law enjoins on every Scout the duty to be friendly with all.

Most of you will remember that Jesus of Nazareth was asked, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said, "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus had made it clear to all who listened to him that the whole world were their neighbours; that they ought not to do to another what they would not have done to themselves; and that this charity ought to be extended even to their enemies.

This is the type of friendliness that our Scout Law means. Like charity, friendship begins at home. It is our duty to try to understand all those who live near to us, and all those with whom we come in contact in our daily lives, at school, at work, or at play. Friendship is largely a matter of understanding, and so in order to help you to keep this law you must always try to understand the other fellow's point of view. Human nature seems to be so made that we are inclined to criticise more than to approve, to condemn rather than praise. As Scouts we must follow our Founder's advice and always look at the good that lies in the other.

In *Scouting for Boys* (pp. 28 and 174, Boys' Edition) our Founder alludes to Kim, "the little friend of all the world." Kim is the hero in Rudyard Kipling's book of that name, and it is from that book that the Second Class test of Kim's Game is taken. *Kim* is an excellent Scouting book to read, so get hold of a copy if you can and Study it. You will find that Kim's nickname was fully justified by his actions, and that he proved himself to be a real Scout in other ways as well. Our Founder fills three pages (pp. 11-14) with a short description of that book, so you can see for yourselves what *he* thought about it.

As Scouts then we have all to learn the habit of friendliness. You will find that it comes easily when you are in company with others, but that it is more difficult to acquire when you are by yourself. That is perhaps because you are shy. So am I, though I've found that many people don't believe it. I have no use for the blustering kind of fellow who can never keep quiet, but is always pushing himself in among other people; but at the same time I realise that I have to overcome shyness, as you will have to, and show outwardly that I am not really stand-offish. Otherwise there is the danger that I, and perhaps you, too, will be taken for snobs. Remember what our Founder has written, "A Scout must never be a snob. A snob is one who looks down upon another because he is poorer, or who is poor and resents another because he is rich. A Scout accepts the other man as he finds him, and makes the best of him."

I have been at great pains to emphasise the first part of this law, because I have found that when most people talk about it they talk about the Scout Brotherhood and leave the wider meaning of it out. The Scout Brotherhood is the inner circle of this world friendship, but we must be particularly careful to see that the inner circle is the hub from which all our friendships radiate, and not the dead-centre where they all stop.

This Brotherhood of ours is a wonderful thing and has, as our Founder pointed out, developed entirely automatically. When Scouting was born in 1907, it was suggested as something that would help the boys of this country of Great Britain, whatever their class or creed, to get together with each other and to grow up into decent men. It spread on its own to other countries until now it is a world-wide Brotherhood that knows no distinctions of class, creed, colour or country. That is a definite fact which I can vouch for, as I have seen Scouting in many lands. It is wonderful to think that you – as a Scout – can go to almost any country in the world and find that you have ready-made friends in the Scouts of that country.

My advice to you, however, is to travel gradually. First of all make sure that the other Scouts in your own neighbourhood are in fact your Brother Scouts. When you are sure that you have established friendly relations with them, are not afraid to greet them in the street, are ready to help them in their Scouting, then you can go further afield and enlarge the circle of your Brother Scouts.

This can be done by visits, hikes, attendances at Jamborees, and by correspondence. Your Scoutmaster has means of putting you in touch by letter with Scouts in other countries. Your Troop or your Patrol can be allied to another Troop or Patrol in other parts of your own country or in other countries, and you can swap news and ideas, and perhaps invite each other for a visit.

### **A SCOUT IS COURTEOUS**

**O**F this Law our Founder wrote: “That is, he is polite to all – but especially to women and children, and old people and invalids, cripples, etc. And he must not take any reward for being helpful and courteous.” (*Scouting for Boys*, p. 39, Boys’ Edition.)

The law of Courtesy is closely allied to the law of Helpfulness. All the ten Scout Laws dovetail into each other so as to make a complete whole. There is a lesson in that for it is impossible to neglect one part of our Law without also failing to keep other parts as well. We have to make up our minds to do our best to carry it all out as a whole.

Courteous primarily means having court-like manners: not the manners of the police court but of the sovereign’s court. Hence it has come to mean being polite to, and considerate for, other people. A courteous manner is the hallmark of a gentleman. Now, don’t mistake me and imagine that I mean a man who has the luck to be born of high rank or of rich parents. That alone does not make a gentleman. More and more has the term gentleman come to mean a man of honour, high principles and kindly feelings. Every man, no matter what his birth, can make himself a gentleman by his conduct.

Again, do not imagine that by the term gentleman I mean a kind of tailor’s dummy or mother’s darling who has neither strength of body nor strength of mind. A gentleman must be primarily a man who is able to hold his own with others, who can make his own way, but who has trained himself to be unselfish in action and manner.



One of the most courteous gentlemen it has been my privilege to meet was an old Mahomedan peasant who lived in the midst of one of the largest jungles still left in Bengal, in India. He met few people, he had never met anyone of my colour before, he was – as most people would consider it – uneducated, his work was of a very humble nature, but his manners would have lent dignity to a king.

Courtesy costs nothing save the pains that you yourself have taken in order to acquire it. Frequently it does need an effort to be continually considerate or thoughtful for others. You will notice that a Scout is asked to be particularly careful in his attitude towards those who are weaker than himself, whether they be very young or very old, whether they be invalids or cripples. It comes easy to practically all men and boys to be kindly to and to help such as these. Outwardly we may pretend, for instance, that kids are a nuisance, but inwardly we feel drawn to them – that is the instinct of protection, and there is no need for us to be ashamed of it. We may feel exasperated, now and then, with the slowness of old people, but yet in our hearts we realise that they have travelled a long distance and are tired, and so we want to give them of our strength and vitality.

Those who are handicapped in other ways appeal to our sympathy, and again we feel drawn to give them what assistance we can.

If, however, you are brought into contact with any of our handicapped Scouts, who may be crippled, blind, deaf, etc., be particularly careful not to treat them obviously as weaker than yourself. Be as natural and ordinary with them as you can, for they want to be like ordinary boys.

You will remember when you were younger how some man or woman in order to appear friendly talked to you in a kind of “baby” manner and how you resented it. It is neither courteous nor kind for anyone to pretend to place himself on the same level as those he is with. It is still worse, however, for him to put on superior airs.

Then, what about being courteous to women and girls? It is the custom of men to regard those of the opposite sex as being different in many ways from themselves. Their instinct is to look up to them and to protect them. That natural attitude still survives to-day, although conditions and customs have changed. Now, women compete with men in all branches of work, and in many branches of sport. They have shown themselves to be superior to men in many activities of life. They have shown a desire to be equal with men in every way. That is all to the good, and we can have no quarrel with these desires.

But what I and many other men feel – possibly you, too, though you are still young – is that in this struggle for so-called equality the natural reverence and respect which men gave to women is being strained. It is all the more necessary, then, that Scouts to-day should remember to be courteous to women, to give way to them in the street or on the bus, to help them when they are in difficulties.

For yourself you must remember to treat your own girl friends with respect, and to be kind and gentle with your own sisters. The big man is the one who can give way to the wishes of others, who can apologise for the mistakes he has made – even if he has been only partially responsible for them, who is always helpful and kind. The man who blusters and bullies, who is selfish and insists on having his own way, will never become the gentleman the other is.

You would do well to read for yourself what our Founder has written on the subject of Courtesy to Women in *Scouting for Boys*.

### A SCOUT IS A FRIEND TO ANIMALS

THE Scout who goes about through the countryside, amongst the woods, over the moors, by the streams, on the hills, knows what added pleasure is given to his journeys by the presence of the birds and the occasional glimpses he gets of other animals. Men who live lonely lives out in the open become more attached to the animals they see around them. Those who travel the seas have always collected bird and animal pets to travel with them.

It is not difficult to feel friendly to God's creatures; it is more difficult to put that feeling of friendship into action. Many men have become world-famous on account of the action they have taken to protect some species or other. St. Francis of Assisi befriended the birds and other animals some 700 years ago at a time when kindness to animals was regarded as something strange.

Early in this century Jack Miller, a farmer in Canada, became interested in wild geese, and persuaded his neighbours not to kill them indiscriminately. As a youth he had been a great hunter and pretty wild. "They had to tame me first," he said, "before I could think of taming them." Gradually the whole of his farm has been turned into a water-fowl sanctuary, and his example has spread throughout Northern America. Of more recent years, "Grey Owl" has achieved fame by his protection of the beavers.

In India, the Jains, a numerous sect of the Hindu religion, may not harm any living creature, however small, and stick religiously to their precepts in a land where small winged and crawling creatures can be both irritating and harmful.

For many years in this country determined efforts have been made to afford animals more protection. Various Leagues and Associations exist which have as their object the fostering of the proper care of pets and domestic animals. The Tailwaggers Club is one of these. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has increased the value of its work despite many internal difficulties. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has been very effective in securing the passing of Acts to provide close seasons for many birds, in establishing Bird Sanctuaries, in dealing with cases of cruelty, and in many other ways. The People's Animal Dispensaries have provided cheap or free treatment for pets.

It is possible for any Scout to obtain membership of the local branch of these and other Associations, but Scouting as such has taken no mean part in preventing cruelty to animals and in fostering the proper care of them. Rover Crews have frequently taken on the job of tending to pets. Scout Troops have established local bird sanctuaries. Individual Scouts have tended to animals and have fed the birds in winter. There is much that we can all do if we only will.

Kindness to animals should not be just a negative virtue; we do not carry out the Law just by abstaining from acts of cruelty or refraining from robbing birds' nests in the spring; we need to be more positive in our actions as well.

Any Scout can set up a feeding tray for the birds, and many samples have appeared in the pages of *The Scout* from time to time. Water as well as food is needed by them, especially in a dry summer and a severe winter. Any Scout can learn how the various domestic pets should be fed, and can look after those of his friends and neighbours who are on holiday. Any Scout can learn how to treat the scratches and other minor injuries which animals, like children, frequently obtain.

Out in the open a Scout can follow the advice of our Founder and learn to know and recognise the various animals that live in that locality, study their habits, and learn their cry. If camping near a farm, there is a great deal of interest to be obtained by learning how to tend

the various animals that comprise the stock of that farm. The handling of animals brings a familiarity which does not bring contempt but liking for them.

This law of kindness to animals is typified in a prayer that could be used, more frequently:

“Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends the animals, especially for animals who are suffering; for all that are overworked and underfed and cruelly treated; for all wistful creatures in captivity that beat against their bars: for any that are hunted or lost or deserted or frightened or hungry; for all that are in pain or dying; for all that must be put to death. We entreat for them all Thy Mercy and pity, and for all those who deal with them we ask a heart of compassion and gentle hands and kindly words. Make us ourselves to be true friends to animals and so to share the blessing of the merciful.”

### A SCOUT OBEYS ORDERS

**I**N *Scouting for Boys* the law is amplified by the words “of his parents, Patrol Leader, or Scoutmaster without question.” Our Founder goes on to explain (p. 28, Boys’ Edition), “Even if he gets an order he does not like he must do as soldiers and sailors do, and as he would do for his captain in a football team, he must carry it out all the same *because it is his duty*; and after he has done it he can come and state any reasons against it: but he must carry out the order at once. That is discipline.”

This further interpretation of the law has been rather a stumbling block to some who do not realise the way that our Founder looked at things. He believed that no one would give a wrong or ill-considered order. This particular law is surrounded by other laws which indicate that a reasoned obedience is required of the Scout. He is trusted, he is loyal, he is friendly, he is courteous, he is kind, he is cheerful, he is careful, he is clean.

He is disciplining himself so that he can perfect himself in all those things.

We must have some kind of order in our activities, they won’t arrange themselves, more especially if everyone has different ideas as to how to set about them. We must have someone to whom we can look for guidance. We must have something that will bind us together and set us to work. This something is usually called discipline: I will return to that word later.

Our Founder has named the three authorities to whom a Scout is subject at home and in his Troop – parents, Patrol Leader, Scoutmaster; but he does not mean thereby that these are the only people whose orders a Scout should obey. Anyone set in authority over you, who is responsible for your actions, has the right to give you orders whether it be at home, in Scouting, at school, at work, or at play. It is your duty to obey these orders and carry them out on the understanding that they are right and proper.

Of late years there was an inclination, which happily is now dying out again, to claim that mere individual freedom, unchecked and unguided, is the one goal of life, and the only true road to self-development. Think for yourselves whether it is possible for any one man to be completely free and independent of others. That would only be possible if, like Robinson Crusoe, he was wrecked, alone, on an uninhabited island. Even then a certain amount of method and order in his own doings would be necessary to his preservation. But as soon as Man Friday arrived on Robinson Crusoe’s island there was a need for the giving and receiving of orders.

Try and grasp this fact, that it is through obedience that we learn for the first time to rise superior to our natural self-will. We must learn that lesson, the sooner the better, or else we are nothing but a nuisance and a danger to those around us. Some boys think that to disobey, or neglect, orders is to show their manliness and independence; whereas it only shows their ignorance and foolishness. We must learn to obey before we can hope to command; we must make up our mind to follow before we can ourselves lead.

No boy who gets into a football team for the first time hesitates for a moment to obey the orders that the captain of his side gives him, and the advice that his fellow players pass on to him for his own good and that of the side. He would not think for a moment of disobeying these orders, and would know himself to be a complete fool if he started giving orders himself. After a year or two in the side he may in his turn rise to captain the side or to some other position of leadership in it. His fellows, however, will never elect him to that position unless he has proved his worth both as a player and as an obedient member of the side.

Apply the same idea to your Scouting and to your life, and you realise at once the absurdity of some of the talk you hear going on round about you, and of some of the thoughts you have had from time to time.

“I know as much about Scouting as the P.L.,” you may say, and rightly so, but what would be the result to the Patrol if you started to contradict him and refuse to obey him? You can answer that quite easily for yourself. The Patrol would no longer be one complete team, it would be divided into two, or even more, parts, with the result that it would go down in the standard of its Scouting and quickly drop below the level of the other Patrols. In Scouting, *and in life*, it is team work that makes for success.

Don’t be afraid of discipline; welcome it; it makes men of us all. Its meaning is followership, not dictatorship. If we Scouts observed this law of followership more Scouting would be a better thing. We need more of smartness, of obedience and of quickness to make us real Scouts. We are apt to be slack and slovenly, lazy and unpunctual, and all these offend against our Law.

Let us give cheerful obedience to all under whom we come, even if it is at times distasteful or inconvenient. In so doing we will discipline ourselves, and that should be the immediate aim of every Scout.

### **A SCOUT SMILES AND WHISTLES UNDER ALL DIFFICULTIES**

**D**ON’T be put off the meaning of this law by the humorist who says it is impossible to both smile and whistle at the same time.

He is wrong; you can smile with your eyes and whistle with your mouth quite easily! I told you before of a smile that saved a man’s life, and you know for yourselves what a wealth of encouragement there lies behind the smile of someone you respect and like.

Good temper and cheeriness are knightly virtues and come as a result of self-discipline. Many people are happy, cheery and content by nature without any effort on their own part. Others are not so fortunate and have to watch their tempers and fight against attacks of lowspiritedness which assail them from time to time.

I have a fellow-feeling for these last, because I am built rather that way myself, and so I realise the difficulty that some of you have to keep smiling.

I wonder if any of you have been to a hospital for cripples. If you have, like me, you must have been astonished and rather shamed by the cheerfulness of its inmates. I have seen boys, and girls strapped in most uncomfortable positions, suffering great pain, and yet not only with smiles on their faces, but songs on their lips, and all intent on cheering up anyone else that was worse off than themselves. Some of you who read this will, I know, be labouring under difficulties of this kind, and I thank you for the example you give to us all.

Others of you will have your difficulties, which are not so great; don't worry about them; face up to them like men with a smile on your lips, and you will find that they are not so hard to bear.

This is what our Founder writes about it all in *Scouting for Boys* (p. 184, Boys' Edition):

"If you are in the habit of taking things cheerfully, you will very seldom find yourself in serious trouble, because if a difficulty or annoyance or danger seems very great, you will, if you are wise, force yourself to laugh at it, although I will allow it is very difficult to do so at first. Still, the moment you do laugh, most of the difficulty seems to disappear at once, and you can tackle it quite easily. Good temper can be attained by a boy who wants to have it, and it will help him in every game under the sun, and more especially in difficulty and danger, and will often keep him in a situation where a short-tempered fellow gets turned out, or leaves in a huff."

History is full of the stories of men and women who joked in the face of danger in order to keep their courage up. This refusal to give in is, perhaps, a special characteristic of the British race, but I have seen it equally well demonstrated by other peoples, too. To smile in the face of defeat, whether in a game or in more serious matters, is one of the best tests of character.

So you see that this law says that a Scout has grit and courage. He does not grouse; he does not make excuses; he does not blame others if things go wrong. He tackles any job that comes to hand willingly and cheerfully. There is something of what we call the Scout spirit in this law: it is not so much what we do that matters as the way we do it.

It is a happy coincidence that cheerfulness begins with the same letter as that of the badge which, next to the Bronze Cross, is the highest honour that Scouting can give to any boy – the Cornwall Scout Badge. It "is an exceptional award in respect of pre-eminently high character and devotion to duty, together with great courage, endurance or gallantry."

Lastly, I would again remind you that, while cheerfulness and courage go hand in hand, both can be of real service to other people. We may not feel ourselves to be very brave, but we can always be cheery and help that way.

Let us all try, then, to echo the prayer "that bearing about with us the infection of a good courage, we may be diffusers of life, and may meet all ills and cross accidents with gallant and high-hearted happiness."

### A SCOUT IS THRIFTY

**M**Y mother was born in Aberdeen and my father in Aberdeenshire, so that this is naturally a law that appeals to me!

But, may I tell you a story? A year or two ago I was in Aberdeen and took a tram down Union Street to the Station. I had no small change on me, and the Conductor had not sufficient in his bag to change a note. I said, "Well, I'd better get off and walk." He replied, "Oh no, sir, I'll stand you the fare." He took twopence out of his pocket, put it in his bag, punched a ticket, and handed it me with a smile, saying, "You can repay me when next you are in Aberdeen."

Now to business. Thrift means economical management, or, in other words, good husbandry; economy, management, and the home, all enter into it. So many people seem to think that to be thrifty means being stingy and miserly; that is an entirely false interpretation of the Law. So many others seem to think that thrift refers to money only; but it embraces all kinds of material things, as well as some intangible things, such as time.

First of all, let us consider the question of money. The fact that the thrift test in the Second Class and First Class Badges is confined to saving money has perhaps produced the false impression that I have already mentioned.

It is undoubtedly a good thing to save money so as to save something against a rainy day. A considerable amount of self-control is required to prevent yourself from spending all your pocket money or your pay. That self-control is good for character, although you shouldn't be a prig and think too much of that. The trouble with many boys is that they are too free with the money that their parents or others have given them.

A few years ago we kept a careful record at Gilwell of the amount of money spent each weekend at the Providore (or shop) by Scouts camping there. We found that as much as 2s. 6d. was spent on an average by each boy each week-end. A proportion of that was spent on necessary food, but the greater part was spent on luxuries in the way of sweets, etc.

We did not regard this as a good sign. If you think about it yourself, you will doubtless agree. Here were a number of Scouts coming out to camp in the open with ground and water provided free, and spending a great deal, selfishly, on themselves. They were not following out in practice the law that a Scout is thrifty.

On the other hand, I have seen many Scouts coining out camping, providing themselves with plain, ordinary, but wholesome food and enjoying it all without the need for anything in the way of unnecessary luxuries. Yet, again, I have known Scouts come out to camp, erect their tents, and immediately go down to Chingford to the Cinema. I always wonder why people such as they come out to camp.

As against them there are Scouts who have made their own tents and other camping and hiking equipment, and have so much real and proper pride in the results that they are determined to use them to the full and enjoy the whole of their time in the open.

Every Scout should keep a careful account of what he spends; he will then learn how much his money can do and how far it can go. This will give him a money sense which will enable him to manage his own, and his family's, affairs properly later on.

I should like to give one special word of advice. Don't be tempted too much by part-payment systems of purchase. It is much better to save up beforehand and then you know if you can really afford to buy what you want. To get what you want and after that start to pay for it is false economy. Before I came to Gilwell I wrote from Scotland to a large London furnishing firm for a catalogue.

They sent me an enormous one accompanied by a letter in which they set out in glowing terms the advantages of their part-payment system. Unfortunately the whole effect was spoiled because at the foot of the printed page the following was typed: –

“P.S. We usually find that our Scottish customers prefer to pay cash and get 10 per cent, discount.”

I figured it out afterwards that by paying cash I had effected a saving of nearly 20 per cent, in all!

A Scout is careful of all his possessions, so that they last longer. If we look carefully after our clothes, for instance, we will get ever so much more wear out of them, and there is nothing so comfortable as an old coat which is still presentable and has been with us through many wanderings.

More particularly is it necessary for us to exercise this law of thrift in regard to things which we share with others. All Troop and Patrol property should be regarded as demanding our special care and attention, we should be more particular in the use of it than if it belonged to ourselves.

The same applies to our home belongings, and to public property. Some people seem to take a delight in misusing anything which does not belong to them, but they are not Scouts but scoundrels – people with no principles. Damage to other people’s property is sometimes done out of sheer carelessness, but at other times out of jealousy.

Jealousy is not a virtue but a crime; it is difficult to conquer; but history shows that those who grudge others their good fortune do not, as a rule, subsequently deserve any good fortune which comes to them in the future.

Of intangible things, like time, there is now no room to talk. I would just say this, unpunctuality is a waste of time and so unthrifty. Unfortunately, unpunctuality affects more than the person who is late, and that is true of other mismanagement as well. The results are harmful to others besides ourselves.

This Law of Thrift, then, implies that we must be unselfish, and that we look ahead, as true Scouts should do, in order to be able to meet any difficulties that may arise so far as financial and other matters are concerned, with the knowledge that we are prepared to meet them. The real joy comes when as a result of care we are able to provide for the welfare of others besides ourselves. One last warning: never get into debt, no matter how small; it is a mug’s game.

### **A SCOUT IS CLEAN IN THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED**

**C**LEANLINESS is next to Godliness, so the saying runs. King David, the Psalmist, put it in this way:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

“He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”

In a sense, this last law sums up the whole of the Scout Law. If one is clean in thought, word and deed, then one must also be trustworthy, loyal, useful, and all the other things that our Law enjoins on us to be.

Every Scout who is working for his Second Class Badge is expected “to know the general rules of health as given in *Scouting for Boys*.”

These rules are to be found in Camp Fire Yarn No. 18, where our Founder writes clearly and frankly on the subject of “Health-giving Habits.” Everyone, therefore, who aspires to be a real Scout must read and do his best to understand that particular Camp Fire Yarn.

We all know how our thoughts are apt to wander from time to time and dwell on subjects which are perhaps harmful to our moral well-being. We should not, however, be too cast down and alarmed about these wanderings, so long as we are able to keep them in check; but we must, if we are to be masters of our own souls, make a real effort to check them.

Different people have different ways of countering the ill-effect of wandering thoughts; some even start repeating the multiplication tables!

The best thing to do when you feel your thoughts being led astray is to think determinedly of something that is beautiful and good, of some piece of scenery you saw last camp, of some picture that appealed to you because of its charm and freshness, of some person whom you respect and love. Our thoughts are influenced by what we see and read, just as are our more unconscious thoughts – our dreams. It is necessary, therefore, to try and read and see only such things as are clean and decent. Luckily, the Cinema is beginning to realise that what is clean appeals to the majority of its clients rather than what is dirty. In a word, we should endeavour to avoid swearing and any kind of nasty talk. This is what our Founder thought about it:

“Bad language and swearing are generally used, like smoking, by boys who want to try and show off how manly they are, but it only makes them look like fools. Generally a man who swears is a man easily upset, and loses his head in a difficult situation, and he is not, therefore, to be depended upon. You want to be quite undisturbed under the greatest difficulties; and so when you find yourself particularly anxious, or excited, or angry, don’t swear, force yourself to smile, and it will set you right in a moment.”

The dirty talk that sometimes goes on amongst boys is of a similar nature, not a sign of manliness but of foolishness. Just think of the people that you yourself respect, and you at once realise that they are people who are able to control themselves and their words, and that you respect them because they are clean and decent. Sometimes you are inclined to make a hero of a man who is a bit of an athlete, or is able to do things better than the average, but if that same man shows that in other things he is rather a beast you feel that he has let you down, and though you may envy his ability, you no longer respect or look up to him.

Each one of you has to distinguish between good and bad for himself; but, luckily, your Scoutmaster or some other man or woman may be able to help you with advice.

Cleanliness in deed refers to many things in connection with our actions, our habits, and our practices. First of all, we want to keep, as the Psalmist says, our hands clean; that is, make ourselves look presentable at all times.

It is not difficult, even in camp; it just means taking a proper pride in ourselves and in our outward appearance. That outward appearance includes our uniform and other clothes, which should always be neat and tidy. Again, we should take a pride in doing all these things for ourselves, looking after our own clothes, cleaning our own shoes, and all those many odd jobs that some are content to leave to others to do for them. Then, we should have tidy habits, keep our



own things and the room where we work and sleep neat and in order. This also applies to our camping. This insistence on clean camping is not just a fad on the part of your Scoutmaster, it is a necessity in order that we may all learn, and stick, to the habit of tidiness. In camp, especially, we can have an influence on others by our example, and I would ask the older ones amongst you to remember that and to realise that you can bring credit or discredit to Scouting generally by the way you camp and behave when you are out of doors.

The Psalmist talked of a pure heart. There is the root of the whole matter. We have to respect other people; we have also to respect ourselves. We have to have pure hearts, and to keep our bodies pure, too. It is not possible for me to write to such a large number of boys whom I do not know and cannot see and be of real help to each. If you feel that you are getting into bad habits, if you are being tempted to do things which you ought not to do, ask help of someone else. Do not be afraid to go to someone you can trust and tell him what is worrying you. Your father, your mother, your Scoutmaster, your teacher, your pastor, all are anxious that you should grow up to be a strong, clean man. Appeal to any of them for help, if you feel that you can trust them, and you will quickly find that two heads are better than one and that a burden shared is a burden halved. Don't be afraid to do this, or think that by doing it you will forfeit their love or esteem.

Charles Kingsley, who wrote books that we delighted in in my youth, also wrote this:

“A blessed thing it is for any man or woman to have a friend; one human soul whom we can trust utterly; who knows the best and the worst of us, and who loves us in spite of all our faults; who will speak the utter truth to us, while the world flatters us to our faces and laughs at us behind our backs; who will give us counsel and reproof in the day of prosperity and self-conceit; but who, again, will comfort and encourage us in the day of difficulty and sorrow, when the world leaves us alone to fight our own battle as we can.”

Win and deserve such a friend as that, and you will thank God continually for him or her.

The Law of Cleanliness sums up the Scout Law,, and can itself be summed up in the one word I gave you before – Gentleman.

Another Psalm of David, the fifteenth, is commonly known as the Gentleman's Psalm; it makes a good finish to these talks in which I have tried my best to be of some service to you, and I quote it as my wish and hope for you:

“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

“He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

“He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”