



### Scouting and Our Schools

Rover Scout I. V. Walsh, '39

It is the youth that matters. The leaders of the Fascist, Nazi, and Communist dictatorships, fully aware of this when they came into power, set out at once to subject youth to their ideals. The church opposed and defeated this policy in Italy. In Germany, the struggle still goes on. In Russia, communism has gained, for the present at least, a decided upperhand and has debased Russian Youth. The juvenile order of our democratic countries must be protected against a similar fate. Our young people must be developed along lines that will make them God-fearing and loyal citizens. The solution of the problem is of paramount importance and indeed on it depends the success of our rising generation. But where shall we find its solution? If I might venture a suggestion, I would recommend the Boy Scout Movement as one of the best answers to the questions.

Throughout the winter months our local newspapers carried many interesting articles by would-be reformers of our school curriculum. Though it was very gratifying to find so many sincerely interested in devising new methods for the formation of the characters of our boys and girls, it was really disappointing to find that they failed to stress that which is most important in education, the training of the will. Education, or if you will, character formation, consists in something more than the development of the intellect, something more than the accumulation and intensification of new ideas (many of which too often are false). Education aims at the development of the whole man. It must, therefore, look at the development of the body and more especially the soul. It may be added that



the natural development of the soul is attained by the true formation of the intellect and will. And in this natural spiritual development, the formation of the will, as every great educationalist knows, is far more important than that of the intellect. Instead of attempting to oust Latin, French, Algebra and Geometry from a school curriculum that has served us well, should we not seek rather to discover a program of ideals that will develop men and women of well-trained wills. Juvenile delinquency, want of initiative and the other lamentable defects of our young people of today scarcely may be attributed to an overdose of Latin or Geometry or to the want of a profound knowledge of botany or horticulture. It must be remembered that a well-trained will enables a man to rise above circumstances. It may compensate for wealth, it goes far towards neutralizing the handicaps of physical defects and may make up for the absence of high intellectual endowments. Someone has said that "according to the modern view, the school fulfills its exclusive function when it trains the cognitive faculties of the pupil and supplies him with the information he requires for his future lifework." Obviously this modern view is the fruitage of a false philosophy of education.

But can Scouting supply what is wanting in our schools? Is not the movement merely a new form of recreation? It is not. On the contrary it is primarily a system of education and, in the words of Lord Baden-Powell, "it may be taken to be complementary to school training, and capable of filling up certain chinks unavoidable in the ordinary school curriculum." Chinks there are—and indeed some of them are surprisingly large and inevitable. In our school year of two hundred days the boy spends about one thousand hours in the classroom. In other words, out of three hundred and sixty-five days, about forty-two complete days or one ninth of the year is spent in school. And just how much of this time the teacher can devote to any one pupil may be calculated by considering that many of our schools have an enrollment of forty pupils and more, variously distributed throughout ten grades. Reckon as it may, the boy is being educated, at the very most, one hour in school for every eight outside it. Again about seventy-five percent of children quit school at the age of fifteen. Evidently our schools are surely in need of some complementary system of youth training. In the space at my disposal, it is quite impossible



to give a detailed explanation of how Scouting may supply for many of the deficiencies of our schools. A mere glance at the Scout program must suffice.

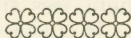
Taking for granted the recreational worth of Scouting, we shall turn our attention first to the intellectual training it provides. Here we find two distinct yet intimately associated forms of training, namely, general instruction and specialized training in certain branches. The general training provided is intended to equip the boy with such general and practical information as he will need in later years in the daily duties of ordinary life. It includes such things as knot-tying, axemanship, first aid, cooking, observation, thrift, etc. The special training provided by Scouting aims at discovering and developing the natural aptitudes of the boy with a view to providing him with a career. These apprenticeships are considered complete when the Scout has won a special Proficiency Badge. These badges are awarded for almost anything to which a boy may be inclined—airman, bee-keeper, carpenter, dairyman, debater, engineer, farmer, fireman, horseman, interpreter, mason, missionary, pilot, plumber, radio-man, surveyor, tailor, etc. etc. In a word, the full-fledged Scout has been described as "an exceptionally well qualified 'Jack-of-all-trades' and a specialist of no mean calibre in branches for which he has won special Proficiency Badges."

The training of the will consists primarily in establishing a program of ideals for it that will be in accordance with the dictates of right reason. In the Scout Movement admirable provision is made for this in the Scout law, "the foundation," says Baden-Powell, "on which the whole of Scouting rests." This law demanding, as it does, that the Scout be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent, "is indeed," according to Vera Barclay, "a way of perfection, and might well become a supernatural rule of life that would demand the highest a man could give." The Scout promise, the source from which the whole of Scouting springs, the theme and general rule of conduct that every Scout must make his own, is a declaration of fidelity to the Scout Law: "On my honour, I promise, that I will do my best to do my duty to God and the King, to help others at all times and to obey the Scout Law." The Scout motto, "Be Prepared," daily affords innumerable opportunities for self-control, initiative and all these other exercises of will demanded of men of charac-



ter. Indeed each of the Scout precepts makes a new demand on the boy to exercise his will-power in accordance with right reason and to subjugate the inordinate movements of his boyish nature.

In view of the foregoing, would it not be well for the would-be reformers of our school curriculum, and in fact for all of us, to devote some serious thought to the possibility of linking up the work of Scouting with that of our schools? It is possible that we might find a very consoling answer to the question of the education of our youth. Perhaps too, we might discover an explanation of the phenomenal development of the movement that has grown in the past twenty-one years from a group of about twenty boys to a world organization of 2,812,074 Scouts. And I believe, too, that all of us would heartily endorse the words of the founder of Scouting: "I think the virtues and possibilities of the educative side of Scouting may be summed up in the idea that we have here one medium at any rate by which the youth of both sexes and all ages can be trained in character, health, skill, and a sense of service to the community, and to become healthy, happy, and efficient citizens."



In this age we need not a church that is right when the world is right, but a church that is right when the world is wrong.—*Chesterton*.

Poverty is no excuse for birth-control any more than poverty is an excuse for a father's cutting off the head of his 10th child because he has money enough for only 9 hats. (Making the stork a bootlegger).

