

Chief Scout's Anniversary Message

The Letter Which Was Read At Troop Meetings Throughout the United States on the Birthday of the Boy Scout Movement

February 8, 1915.

The One Hundredth Year of Peace with England

WE are climbing the mountain together, O Brother Scouts, and it is good to stop and look back once in a while, for then we can see how high we are getting and take the proper joy of success in a noble height. Why do we always prefer to travel upwards? We are quite ready to make an expedition into some dismal swamp and search eagerly for adventures there, but when the night comes we want to leave it and climb. We must get up into some high, dry place for the night, or we are not quite happy. Surely it is an instinct born of ancient experience.

I remember once on the prairies some thirty years ago I was tramping across country with a friend. We carried a pot, some tea, some bread, a gun, and each a blanket.

It was July, boiling hot weather, and the mosquitoes were fiercer than words can tell, and more in number than the dollars in Uncle Sam's Treasury. We came to an abandoned house that night and decided to sleep there, for it was threatening a thunder storm. There were bunks along the wall and we lay down, but there was no rest for us. The mosquitoes gathered like vultures over a carcass, and feasted as we groaned. At last I said to my chum, "There is a cellar below; let's make a smudge there and try that!" So down we went, carrying our beds along with us.

The cellar was just a big hole in the ground, without floor or wall, but the floor above made a roof.

Then in the middle I made a small fire and smothered it with punk and sod, so that it gave a strong smoke. We were lying on the ground. There was little or no draught, so the smoke rose in a flat cloud and hung about four feet from the ground, not bothering us, but effectively driving out and disposing of all of the mosquitoes; so we settled down to sleep in peace.

Did we sleep? I shall never forget that night. It was cool in the cellar, it was clear of mosquitoes, we were comfortably blanketed; but—how shall I tell the blank misery of that place? Without any obvious cause, we tossed about in a horror of—we didn't know what—a sense of doom, a certainty of disaster, nothing we could name or locate, but it was horrible.

At last, after two or three hours of tense, sleepless misery, I said to my friend, "Let's get out; I'd rather be sucked dry by 'skeeters' than stand this awful dungeon another hour."

So we went out and laid down on the open prairie. The dawn wind came cool, and drove the mosquitoes away; and very late, when we awoke refreshed, the sun was shining through our blankets.

I don't know that there is any particular lesson in this. If there is, it says:—"Boys, don't live in a hole—but get up as high as you can, provided it feels comfortable and you know it is safe."

We, as a nation, are happily up high on a rock just now, and I think I may say the whole world envies us. It gives us a chance to show how the scout spirit has struck in. If we can't give money, clothes or stuff to help the war victims, we can at least give kindness.

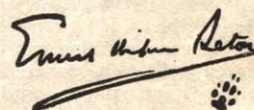
Not long ago I saw a fellow (not a Scout) making fun of an old refugee because of his broken English; I said, "My friend, you seem to think yourself very superior. Well, you needn't. That man is your superior in, probably, everything; in age, in travel, in knowledge of the world, and also in language, for he knows a little of yours as well as his own, and you know only yours, and that in a crude way. But, above all, courtesy, for he has made a gentle reply to your mockery. Some day the tables may be turned, and I only hope

you will have learned meanwhile to be a man and a Scout, so that your answer may be calm and courteous like his."

He was a little ashamed of himself, though he still made a joke of it. But he wasn't a bad fellow. He was merely heedless and ignorant, and I doubt not the thought came back to him afterwards to bear fruit.

Well, brothers! This promises to be a year of great possibilities for good scouting, especially among the poor and distressed. This world never had more need of us. May we all get busy in a way that will be worthy of this biggest opportunity.

Cordially yours,



Scout Anniversary Week Celebrated Everywhere

Scout Exhibition at Annual Meeting

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America was held in Washington, D. C., on February 11.

One of the most important features of the program, aside from the business sessions, was the Boy Scout exhibition held at Convention Hall in the evening, under the direction of Scout Commissioner E. S. Martin, of Washington.

This rally was one of the most elaborate scout demonstrations ever held in this country. Every troop in Washington was represented and there were visiting troops from near-by cities. The exhibition included all of the ordinary scout activities, such as tower building, relay races, first aid, rope work, etc. A special feature was a series of troop stunts, such as an exhibition of trek wagons, volunteer fire department work, bicycle corps, humane compass, etc.

The big event of the rally, however, was an address to the boys by Dan Beard, the National Scout Commissioner. The rally closed with the singing of "America" and the sounding of taps.

Get Badges from President

It is safe to say there were no happier boys in the world on February 11 than seven members of various troops of Washington, D. C., who received badges and medals from the President of the United States in the East Room of the White House in the presence of the members of the National Council and representatives of Local Councils from various sections of the country.

One of the seven Scouts, Scout H. A. Gatley, received an honor medal for life saving. The other six Scouts were given Eagle Scout badges. These boys were Edward Pardoe, Troop 51; Edward Sherry, Troop 37; Lawrence Prentice, Troop 4; F. D. Watson, Troop 5, and Clinton Allard, Troop 21.