

While Scouts should not be expected to 'parade' their services, it would be helpful if Scout Leaders, parents, and others would encourage boys in the doing of Good Turns, and recognize the difference between normal household and other chores, and actual Good Turns. Selfishness is almost a universal evil. Certainly it is overcome by the Scout Program, which is based upon the development of service for others, and the Daily Good Turn is an important factor in the development of a habit of service and attitude of mind which offset a tendency to selfishness.

James E. West, 1928

At the very heart of the Boy Scout Movement is the friendly Good Turn. It might even be called the motive power of the Movement and because it is so essential to the boy, to the organization, and to society in general. It is of great importance that we understand all that it really means as well as how to best stimulate its use and recognize its values.

What We Owe To the Good Turn

As a real matter of fact it was an unselfish, fine spirited Good Turn by an unknown English boy which brought Scouting to America in the first place. The incident, now a cherished tradition in the annals of the Boy Scouts of America, ran as follows: William D. Boyce, the Chicago publisher, a matter-of-fact business man, had lost himself in the heart of a London fog, and in his bewilderment he looked here and there.

A street urchin, noticing his embarrassment, came up and saluted Mr. Boyce and said, "May I be of service to you?" Mr. Boyce said, "If you can show me how to find such-and-such an address it will be a real service." This lad very smartly saluted and said, "Sir, follow me." He forthwith brought him to the place that Mr. Boyce desired.

Then Mr. Boyce, characteristically of the traveler, pulled his coin purse out and offered the boy a shilling. The boy promptly saluted and said, "Sir, I am a Scouts. Scouts do not accept tips for courtesies. The man said, "What did you say?"

The Scout repeated, and then added, "Don't you know what the Scouts are?" He said, "No, I don't, but I would like to know." The boy said, "Follow me." Boyce pleaded for the opportunity to do his errand and then, as he tells the story himself, this lad was waiting for him outside and took him to the office of Sir Robert Baden-Powell, whence he brought back to America a trunk-load of printed matter.

He went to Washington and with his good friend Mr. Livingstone, who subsequently was for 15 years the president Boy Scouts of America, he incorporated the BSA under the laws of the District of Columbia.

The Boy Scouts of America was incorporated in 1910, and in 1916 granted Federal Charter by Act of Congress.

Every year has seen Scouting grow larger and larger in its outreach until literally millions of American boys have had brought into their daily lives the gospel of the Good Turn.

What Is a Good Turn?

A Good Turn is a volunteered kind act of good deed. Boys must be encouraged to watch for things that need to be done, and then do them without being asked. More, boys must be trained and educated into the Good Turn Habit. They must be helped to see that doing a job which they are already supposed to do, even cheerfully, ought not be classed as doing a Good Turn.

Performing the regular routine duties about the home is not a Good Turn. The Good Turn is a bigger finer thing--the Good Turn is really a philosophy of living, of which Service to others becomes the key. A good Turn is a volunteered kind act or deed. If you can stimulate a boy so that such actions become habitual, then you have made the Good Turn Philosophy work in his life.

Such a process is a process of education, and will not be accomplished except by careful planning and by presenting the matter again and again under all sort of circumstances, and by yourself setting up and keeping in operation certain sorts of activities which will help the boy catch the idea and experience the thrill of the real Good Turn.

Kinds of Good Turns

Good Turns may be classed under different headings. Complying with the regulations and rules of the school and school grounds is doing one's duty, and not a Good Turn. On the other hand the Scout who watches for things that need to be done, and volunteers his services to the janitor, teacher or principal, has rendered a real Good Turn.

Community Good Turns include picking up banana peels from sidewalks; removing broken glass and nails, etc., from streets; removing papers and boxes from sidewalks and highways; reporting street lamps not burning; garbage nuisances, etc., on streets is but doing one's duty. and *not* a Good Turn.

Troop Good Turns mean going out of your way to help another Scout with his work, or helping him to live up to his Scout obligations. Going to another Patrol or Troop to help with signaling, first aid instruction or other Scout work, or the Scoutmaster with outside work regularly assigned, constitutes a fine Good Turn.

There are Church Good Turns, and Good Turns to Animals and National Good Turns and unlimited numbers of Individual Good Turns. Most boys do not wish to speak of their individual Good Turns. In this they should be encouraged.

Good Turns vary with every situation. We shall try to list and classify suggestions which may be helpful for your Troop. The important thing is to keep forever the Good Turn idea in all of your own thinking and planning, giving it definite place and time. Otherwise

it will soon drift into a mere superficiality and do more harm than good. Avoid any reward for Good Turns. Say to your boys:

"Just do something to help the other fellow, and the joy of the service well done will be its own reward."

So you see the Good Turn habit has no end of avenues down which it may go. There is scarcely a day or an hour, an event or a situation where there is not an opportunity to do a Good Turn. The point is that boys must be trained to see these opportunities and to take real joy in making the most of the opportunity.

It ought to be just as difficult for a good Scout to pass up a Good Turn as to pass up a second piece of pie.

Let us help a million boys get the Good Turn Habit!

