

## Chapter XI A Scout is Courteous

The essential element of courtesy, as well as of affection, is respect. But only when respect is expressed, in words, by manner, or by act, -- with grace and cheerfulness -- does it become courtesy. Grace is a charm or pleasantness, associated with something said or done when it is said or done with transparent sincerity and pleasure, -- not as a disagreeable duty, but as a happy privilege.

There is a very common, sham kind of politeness or courtesy which is only an imitation of the real kind. It imitates, as a monkey might, the words, manners, and acts of true courtesy, but does not know anything about the foundation of respect, sincerity, and happy cheerfulness that belong with it. This kind is, of course, a fraud -- like counterfeit money or anything else that pretends to be what it is not.

On the other hand, there are people who really feel respectful but do not know how to show respect. Unless such people learn to practice the courteous habits which properly correspond to their feeling, they are likely to lose some of their respect from failure to act upon it. Any faculty or ability that we have and do not use is likely to diminish and finally to disappear; but, if we work hard to remedy defects, the work brings increasing strength of feeling. Any good quality, like courtesy, when it is the result of sincere effort and intelligence, is bound to be deeper and more lasting than when it comes naturally and without effort; and with time and practice respect often acquires the grace that transforms it into courtesy.

It is a great mistake to think of courtesy as a kind of veneer or ornament rather than as a serious and practical thing. False or artificial politeness is a veneer which is easily rubbed off; but true courtesy, like all other valuable things, becomes firmly established by the sacrifice of many other things that stand in its way. The necessity for giving up things that we would like for ourselves for the sake of courtesy to another is what makes it serious and practical as well as dignified and beautiful. We may say that nothing worth having can be had for nothing, and what we must give up in exchange for true courtesy is our own selfishness and preoccupation.

When Sir Philip Sydney was fighting in the Netherlands against Spain, he was stuck in the thigh by a bullet. He succeeded in riding back to his camp; but, when a cup of water was brought to him, he turned to a dying soldier lying near by with the words, "Thy need is greater than mine," and declined the water for himself.

A similar story is told of Alexander the Great. When marching through the desert with his troops who were suffering agonies from thirst and fatigue, some of his followers brought him water found in a cave or other place sheltered from the head. Alexander poured out the water upon the sand, saying, "There is not enough for us all, and there is too much for one."

One of the most interesting examples of heroic courtesy in our own history is that of Captain Craven of the U.S.S. Tecumseh, referred to in Chapter IV.

When the ship was struck by the torpedo, she gave a lurch, and the captain and pilot both knew that she was sinking. The first second or two must have seemed like an eternity to those en as they stood facing one another in the presence of death, until the spirit of high courage an courtesy asserted itself in

Craven, as he pointed to the man-hole and said, "After you, Pilot."

The pilot escaped to tell the tale, and the captain left behind him an influence which will never be forgotten in the United States Navy. We can also imagine the happiness that he must have felt deep down in his own heart, at meeting death in an unselfish spirit and in faithfulness to duty.

The great use of courtesy is that it spreads an atmosphere of respect and encouragement and cheer. Of all traits of character, respect for other people, -- even if only for their possibilities, -- is the most constructive and uplifting; and contempt, which is its opposite, is the most destructive. A social atmosphere in which artificial politeness and unexpressed contempt gives the dominant tone makes it very difficult for people to be either just or try courteous.

Many rich children have the misfortune to be born in such an atmosphere and this disadvantage far outweighs the mere advantages of wealth. Sometimes poor people have a similar temptation to despise the rich because they are rich, and this is just as bad, -- just as weakening to themselves and to society in general. Therefore we should take the greatest pains to root out of ourselves every little weed of personal contempt just as fast as its head appears above the soil, so that we may do our share by always expecting the best from other people instead of looking down upon the, and by being ready to help and to be helped in overcoming everything that is not worthy of respect.

True courtesy creates a kind of sunshine in which good things flourish, and this sunshine is strengthening because it springs from the victory of good over evil.

Not one of the scout laws can be kept without the exercise of manliness and strength, and the strength put forth in obedience to the law increases with every victory gained. But it is also true that no man can gain strength in control over himself without a sense of happiness, and this sense of grateful happiness makes the sunshine of courtesy. The roots of chivalry are struck deep in the soil of respectful service, especially toward women, children, and the weak and helpless; but courtesy is its find flower, and represents by manner, word, act, tone, look, and gesture, the happiness and grace of self-control.

The same spirit can be put into the smallest act of courtesy, such as offering a chair to a lady or giving up one's seat in a car, as that which was shown by Sir Philip Sydney in the Netherlands or Captain Craven going down in his ship; and the more this spirt becomes habitual in the small matters of daily life, the more likely we shall be to live up to when great emergencies arise.

"Etiquette" is the name given to the rules of politeness which should govern our outward actions. It is necessary to know these rules, as they are a kind of sign language which everybody understands. But, of course, they are not really courteous unless they spring from of a love of the principles of courtesy which we have just been talking about not from a desire to show off.

The Rules of Etiquette for boy scouts given in the Manual, and in the Pamphlet called *Cruising for Sea Scouts*, are as follows:

## **Good Manners**

The same thing that entered in to the training of these men, knights, pioneers, and Lincoln, then, must enter into the training f the boy scouts of to-day. Just as they respected women and served them, so the tenderfoot and the scout must be polite and kind to women, not merely to well-dressed women, but to poorly dressed women; not merely to young women, but to old women; to women wherever they may be found; -- wherever they may be. To

these a scout must always be courteous and helpful.

When a scout is walking with a lady or a child, he should always walk on the outside of the sidewalk, so that he can better protect them against the jostling crowds. This rule is only altered when crossing the street, when the scout should go between the lady and the traffic, so as to shield her from accident or mud. Also in meeting a woman or child, a scout, as a matter of course, should always make way for them, even if he himself has to step off the sidewalk into the mud. When riding in a street car or train, a scout should never allow a woman, an elderly person, or a child to stand, but will offer his seat; and when he does it he should do it cheerfully and with a smile.

When on the street, he continually on a quest, on the look-out to help others, and always refuse any reward for the effort. This kind of courtesy and good manners is essential to success. It was this unselfish desire to protect and help that made these men of olden times such splendid fellows.

Good manners attract and please, and should be cultivated by every boy who expects to win success and make his life interesting to others. In the home, on the street, in the school, in the workshop or the office, or wherever one may be, his relationship to others should be characterized as gentle, courteous, polite, considerate, and thoughtful. There are virtues and graces that make life easier and pleasanter for all.

## **Etiquette for Sea Scouts**

The most necessary and universal rule for Sea Scouts is prompt and respectful obedience.

"Standing at attention" consists of standing straight with the hands at the sides and the face and eyes directed toward the object of attention. It is a useful way of showing respect when the salute would be obtrusive or unnecessary, and when uncovered.

It is the duty of every seaman on going over the ship's side, whether arriving on board or leaving, to salute the Quarter-deck, and also when coming on deck from below. This is out of respect for the flag, whether it be flying at the time or not.

Every seaman must salute when addressing a superior officer.

When an order is given to a seaman, he should salute and repeat the order to show that he has understood it; when he has carried out the order, he should return and report the fact to the officer of the deck.

Note, -- It is not necessary, however, for the messenger to report the fact that the ship's bell has been struck.

Seamen observe the general rule of allowing ladies, officers, and guests to precede them EXCEPT when entering a boat. In this case the officers, etc., enter last.

When seamen who are sitting down are addressed by a senior officer, they should rise and stand at attention with a salute.

Sea Scouts should always salute senior officers, officers of the Land Scouts, and members

of thier local council when meeting them at any time. If spoken to, they should stand at attention and answer courteously any questions.

When saluting ladies the head should be entirely uncovered. Sea Scouts should always remember to rise and stand at attention on the arrival of ladies.

Sea Scouts are not allowed on the Quarter-deck except when necessary in the line of duty. In such cases, the Quarter-deck should be approached on the Port side, when at anchor, and on the Leeward side when at sea.

The use of the expression "if you please" and "thank you" in giving orders or in acknowledging the execution of orders is particularly inappropriate on board ship, for it is always assumed that duty is to be done as a matter of course, and without any question or personal obligation. Commendation or acknowledgment may be given in other ways, and the spirit of courtesy is rather enhanced than discouraged, by this assumption.

Sea Scouts should have a habit of alert attention which will make them instinctively courteous at every opportunity. Quick to see, quick to hear, quick to respond, quick to obey, and quick to serve.

A man who is courteous respects the good qualities and the possibilities of good in all other people; this attitude reacts upon himself in self-respect and in keenness and courage to detect and overcome his own faults. Hence, although he may frequently stumble, he feels himself a soldier obeying orders from the Great Captain of all men, and this feeling makes him happy and trustful and shines out in his relations to all other people.

So we see that the law "A Scout is Courteous" is closely connected with the law "A Scout is Cheerful," and the smile of the scout has much to do with his manners.

But all these rules do not result in true courtesy unless they are carried out with cheerfulness and pleasure.

