WORKING THE PATROL SYSTEM

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I. THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE PATROL SYSTEM

THE Patrol System is the distinguishing mark of the Scout method of training. It is not something added for decorative purposes like the twiddly bits on a wedding cake, nor something called in for use in an emergency, like the Fire Brigade; it is *the* Scout way of doing things. If a Troop is not run on the Patrol System, it is not a Scout Troop – it may be excellent in many other respects; it may be bursting with First Class Scouts, and a pattern for camping and pioneering, yet, without the Patrol System as the motive power, it is not a Scout Troop.

This may seem a surprising statement, but experience shows that no other single aspect of Scouting is so difficult to understand, or to apply in practice. This can be explained by the fact that it is not the obvious way of doing things. When we first think of training a number of boys we naturally assume that the traditional methods – mass instruction by lecture, practice by numbers, and so on – are the best. Even after more than a generation of Scouting, this customary method has such a hold that we are apt to use it without realising that we are casting aside the unique means of character development which Scouting provides.

First and last Scouting is a method of training character. But what kind of character? What qualities do we want to develop? How is it done?

B.-P.'s conception of character was based on his profound belief in the importance of the individual as a unique personality; he therefore put self-reliance and self-discipline high on his list of desirable qualities. This independence he combined with the ideals of personal honour and of selflessness. All these he regarded as the essentials of good citizenship. On the negative side he was opposed to mass methods of training as these, he felt, stifled initiative and the development of individual ability.

He was faced with this question of individual training quite early in his army career when he took to scouting as his special sphere as a duck takes to water. In training young soldiers (at that period mostly illiterate and raw) he had to evolve new methods; the standard barrack-square drill of the time discouraged individuality and more was thought of spit and polish and precision in mass movement than of the qualities of character being developed. By a process of trial and error, B.-P. found he could get what he wanted by using small units, each of six men, with an N.C.O. in charge with full responsibility for training that Patrol. Efficiency and keenness were raised by one Patrol competing with another. When B.-P. took over the command of the 5th Dragoon Guards in India in 1897, he had an opportunity of trying out this Patrol Method on a larger scale; he trained a body of Regimental Scouts – an innovation in itself – and further developed his Patrol method by introducing a Badge scheme to encourage the individual to make himself efficient. One result of this experience was his book *Aids to Scouting.* Here will be found many of the ideas he later adapted to the training of boys, including such games between Patrols as Spider and Fly, and Lamp or Flag Stealing.

Years afterwards he summed up his army experiments in the following words:

"1. The giving *of responsibility* to the N.C.O.s (down to the Lance-Corporals).

"2. Making the training *enjoyable* to the men.

"3. Keeping the men in permanent *small units,* and these units in competition with one another, whether in the field or in barracks, roused their keenness and raised the level of efficiency all round."

The key words here are RESPONSIBILITY, ENJOYABLE, and SMALL UNITS, and these were later to be the key ideas of the Boy Scout method of training through the Patrol System.

This brief sketch of the origin of this method brings out an important fact; the Patrol System was applied to boy training because it had already proved its value in practical experience. It was not a theory evolved from a Professor's brain as he sat in his study contemplating the problems of training men or boys from a safe distance. It was a method developed in the field by a very practical man with some of the toughest material possible – the young soldier in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

When B.-P. came to extend his ideas to the training of boys, he did not realise the difficulty Scoutmasters would have in grasping the possibilities of the Patrol System; to him it seemed so natural after using it for many years.

In *Scouting for Boys,* the system is described in the following words:

"Each Troop is divided into Patrols of six to eight boys, and *the main object of the Patrol System is to give real responsibility to* as *many boys as possible with a view to developing their characters.* If the Scoutmaster gives his Patrol Leader real power, expects a great deal from him and leaves him a free hand in carrying out his work, he will have done more for that boy's character expansion than any amount of school training could ever do."

But in spite of further notes and suggestions, few realised that here was the key to success. The grouping of the boys in Patrols was of course done, but some Scoutmasters were content to leave it at that. So in May 1914 B.-P. was writing in THE SCOUTER:

"Many Scoutmasters and others did not, at first, recognise the extraordinary value which they could get out of the Patrol System if they liked to use it, but I think that most of them seem to be realising this more and more. The Patrol System, after all, is merely putting your boys into permanent gangs under the leadership of one of their own number, which is their natural organisation whether bent on mischief or for amusement. But to get first-class results from this System you have to give the Leader a real free-handed responsibility – if you only give partial responsibility you will only get partial results. *The main object is* not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as *to give responsibility to the boy, since this is the very best of all means for developing character.* It is generally the boy with the most character who rises to be the leader of a mischief gang. If you apply this natural scheme to your own needs it brings the best results.

"It is the business of the Scoutmaster to give the aim, and the several Patrols in a Troop vie with each other in attaining it, and thus the standard of keenness and work is raised all round."

Even to-day, Scoutmasters sometimes fail to make full use of the Patrol System. Various reasons may be suggested for this failure; some men do not like parting with authority – they want to be the only BIG NOISE; others doubt if boys are really capable of using responsibility; some have not thought out the implications of the idea; some may have made half-hearted experiments, and then timidly drawn back; it may be that a few are, by personality, not suited to this way of training and would be happier in work which does not involve using the Patrol System. For let it be again emphasised; SCOUTING is not SCOUTING without the PATROL SYSTEM.

In the chapters which follow an attempt will be made to show how this method can be put into practice in the Troop. It is not applicable to Wolf Cubs – to quote from *The Wolf Cub's Handbook,* "A Sixer is *not* a 'Junior Patrol Leader' and should not be looked upon as capable of taking charge of, or of training, his Six." Nor is the method vital to the running of a Rover Crew where the natural unit is "the gang for the specific job."

II. BEGINNING THE RIGHT WAY

The simplest approach to an exposition of the Patrol System is to follow the progress of an imaginary Troop from its infancy to maturity, and, as we go, describe and explain the working out of this key method. Let it be clearly understood that this history of the 5th Noeyewash Troop does not set a pattern to which all other Troops in all circumstances must conform in detail; the principles which will be illustrated apply to all, but the practical application must vary with conditions. Further, it should be noted that this account of the development of the 5th Noeyewash Troop is limited to one aspect – the use of the Patrol System; for simplicity, and reasonable brevity, all other aspects will be ignored, or only touched in passing.

George Clarke, aged 26, decided that he would like to run a Scout Troop in the town of Noeyewash (15,000 inhabitants). We are not concerned with how or why he came to have this idea, nor need we go into details of his negotiations with the District Commissioner and the Local Association, nor of his visits to Troops and the gallons of advice poured over him. He found himself relying more and more on the advice of the District Scoutmaster, who in his heyday had been a grand Scoutmaster; but he had reached the stage when he felt it better to hand over to younger men, who had got into the habit of consulting him in all kinds of difficulties.

Half a dozen boys

Here is George with permission to go ahead. He has found a derelict stable as a Headquarters with a bit of land behind it overgrown with weeds and full of lumber. And, most important of all, he has managed to collect half a dozen boys who are willing to give Scouting a trial.

They all got together for the first time one late spring evening, and as they stood in front of the stable, George felt that the plan he had made for his first Troop Meeting was all wrong. He had worked it out carefully; first he would explain something about Scouting – how it started, and the kinds of things it meant. Then would come a game, and after that some instruction in Tenderfoot knots; another game followed by a yarn and prayers. Actually only the last item was carried out – much to the astonishment of the boys – for as soon as he saw them together, he instinctively *felt* that his programme would not work, so he wisely scrapped it.

As a start he took down names and addresses and other particulars. Here are the main facts he collected.

Arthur Newton. Aged 11½. Father – a lorry driver.
Harry Petts. Aged 12. Father – a shop assistant.
Ted Wootton. Aged 11 (suspected of being "not quite 11"). Father – a policeman.
Fred Jones. Aged 12½. Father – a cabinet maker.
Bert Selby, Aged 13. Father – a doctor.

Dick Saunders. Aged 12. Father – a greengrocer.

Arthur and Fred were pals, and so were Harry and Bert. Dick and Ted were casual acquaintances of the others. Suddenly George realised what was wrong – these six kids did not make a gang, and that gave him his first idea. They must *do* something right away. So he suggested that they should make a bonfire of all the burnable rubbish lying about. The effect was magical. Coats were soon off, and tongues wagging as the lumber was piled up on the bit of spare ground. Who was to light the fire? George just ached to show them how! But he was wise enough to let the boys try themselves. He watched them to see who came out as the natural leader. Bert Selby shoved himself forward at first, but his "bossing" produced a little smoke and nothing else. Then they all messed about with matches and paper and bits of wood; at one moment it looked as though they would succeed, but the fire went out. At that Fred said, "'It's no good trying to get all this lot going at once. Let's start a small fire alongside and put the stuff on." Now Fred had hardly spoken a word all evening, and George was surprised to see how the others – with the exception of Bert – fell in line.

At last the fire was well ablaze. While it was burning, they explored the stable. The door was fairly sound, but the ladder up to the loft had disappeared. George found himself saying, "We shall have to do so-and-so," and the boys threw in a few suggestions. By the time the fire died down, all the first shyness had vanished. As they stood round the glowing embers, he said, "We'll just have a prayer and then pack up for to-night; same time next week." He noticed the look of surprise as he said the word "prayer," but he could not have wished for a better setting for the occasion. As the boys were getting ready to go he said, "I shall be up here most evenings putting things straight. If anyone has nothing better to do, come along and give me a hand."

George had a lot of thinking to do that evening; the reality had been quite different from his dream. One thing stood out most clearly – he had not realised before that a bunch of boys collected more or less haphazardly does not automatically become a Patrol; a Patrol spirit could only come gradually through Scouting activities and ideals. He himself must give the lead, and for the present be the Patrol Leader. As he followed this idea through, he saw that in this way he would be setting a standard of Patrol Leadership which would be carried on as the Troop grew. So he there and then called himself – in his own mind – the Patrol Leader of the Something Patrol; he'd let the boys (the Patrol in Council, of course!) choose the name.

That night he began the practice which he was to continue for years, of keeping notes of the meeting. This, too, he felt was an idea the future Patrol Leaders should follow; it helped to keep track of the progress of each Scout and it emphasised the need for doing something definite at each meeting.

The next week was a busy one. George visited the parents of the boys, and then each evening was down at the Headquarters getting the place to rights. Only Dick turned up on the first evening, but the following night two others came and before the next Meeting all had given a hand except Bert Selby. That Meeting followed roughly the lines George had planned for the first because by this time they all knew more about each other. Afterwards they had a Patrol Council and decided to call themselves the Hound Patrol – and when they all started baying George was rather glad there were no houses very close to the stables. He could hear the boys baying as they trooped off down the street – in a bunch this time, he noted.

There is no need here to follow in detail the progress of the Hound Patrol as they worked at their tests, had rough and tumble games, went off for Saturday afternoon stunts, and gradually got to understand what Scouting means in practice. George had the boys separately at odd times to explain the Law so that when the great day came for Investiture as Boy Scouts he knew each fairly well and felt confident that all would realise the seriousness of making the Promise.

He decided that the Investiture should take place at their first week-end camp. With a couple of borrowed tents and a builder's handcart they set off, all feeling a bit self-conscious in

their new uniforms. That camp was a landmark in the Troop's history. Not only did it see the first Investiture – round the camp fire – but George announced that he had picked out the Patrol Leaders of the first two Patrols; they were Fred Jones and Harry Petts. He noticed that Bert Selby looked a bit glum – he had proved the most difficult of the crowd, but when the new Patrol Leaders chose their Seconds, Harry chose Bert, and Fred picked on Dick.

George had a long talk with the Patrol Leaders on Sunday after Scouts' Own; he showed them the records he had been keeping of attendances and activities (but not his personal records of each boy); then he gave each a Patrol Record Book and a small note-book. Every Monday evening he wanted them to come along to the Headquarters to discuss with him how each of their Scouts was getting on, and suggest what they should do next. He explained that this was the beginning of the Court of Honour and later on, when there were more Patrol Leaders and they knew more about Scouting, they would meet without him.

With a builder's handcart they set off.

At that camp too, George established an idea he had been steadily building up – that each Scout must have some definite job to do in addition to his training. For some weeks now the business of improving and taking care of the Headquarters had been shared out amongst them. At camp, similarly, each had his particular bit of responsibility – collecting wood, scavaging, looking after the fire, cooking, keeping the tents shipshape, and so on. The point of this he made clear to the Patrol Leaders – every Scout must have his job – however small – in the life of the Patrol. Even if he wasn't very good at it, he must stick to it and the others must rally round him and help him to learn how to do the job properly.

So Fred became Patrol Leader of the Hounds, and Harry chose the name of Wolf for his Patrol. Arthur remained in the Hounds to be with Fred, and Ted became a Wolf.

"Your next job," said George, "is to fill up your Patrols. If each of you can bring one recruit, the job's done."

After he got back from the camp, George had a long talk with the District Scoutmaster, who listened with close interest to all that had so far happened to the 5th Noeyewash Troop.

"That's fine," he said. "You're beginning to see the problems now that you've had a bit of experience. Don't expect results too quickly. Take, for instance, this Patrol System way of doing things. There are two dangers about it; one is that you may come to think of it as an easy way out for you. It isn't. It's far harder than giving mass instruction. You'll have to watch how the Patrol Leaders do their job, and, of course, for some time you'll have to train them in the way they should go. Remember, they are only boys, and if they're of the bossy type, may become little tyrants; and they can't be expected to know much about training others. The second danger is that you may get to concentrate too much on the Patrol Leaders. The aim of the System is to train all Scouts in responsibility. Of course not all are capable of being Patrol Leaders. Some are good Seconds, but all benefit from having even a small job of work to do on their own. Responsibility is not merely a matter of bossing other people about. We want each of these

youngsters to understand that he has a personal responsibility in the success and progress of the Patrol – a good step to citizenship. You've evidently felt a Patrol spirit developing amongst the Hounds.''

"Yes," said George. "And it seems a pity that the Patrol has to be broken up."

"That can't be helped. In fact it has its advantages. There is a risk of a Patrol becoming too much of a closed gang, A Patrol Leader has two loyalties at least – so has each Scout – one to his Patrol and the other to the Troop, and if it's to the advantage of the Troop as a whole to take a Scout out of one Patrol to become Patrol Leader of another, it is just part of the show."

"I can see that," replied George. "It's a funny thing, but I almost regret that I shall no longer be – as I 've thought of myself – Patrol Leader of the Hounds.''

"But you'll always be Patrol Leader of your Patrol Leaders," said the District Scoutmaster.

III. BUILDING UP

When two Patrols had been formed, another use of the Patrol System was possible. There could be competition in games and in training, and also in smartness and general efficiency. The Hounds of necessity had concentrated mostly on learning the things needed for the Tenderfoot Tests; now Hounds could compete with Wolves in all kinds of relay games, and in knotting, signalling, fire-lighting, and so on.

George had to think out some fresh problems.

1. How were the recruits to be trained for the Tenderfoot Tests?

2. How were the Tenderfoot Scouts (which still included the Patrol Leaders) to be trained for Second Class?

All the time he would have to keep in mind the need for training the Patrol Leaders in their job, and also watch each Scout's development and try to meet his special needs. He felt like a conjuror who is tossing about half-a-dozen balls at a time. Fortunately he managed to get an Assistant Scoutmaster, but that didn't help much at first as *he* had to be trained as well!

The first problem was solved on these lines: the Patrol Leader would be responsible for the Tenderfoot training with the exception of the Scout Law which would be the Scoutmaster's business. The Patrol Leader need not, indeed should not, try to do all the instruction himself: here again responsibility must be shared with the Second and any other Scouts equal to the job.

The second problem, for the time being, had to be George's own job. When the Patrol Leaders had become Second Class Scouts, they could carry on as with the Tenderfoot Tests. He saw how important it was to use sound methods of instruction as these would later be followed by the Patrol Leaders.

So much for training. But there seemed a crowd of other matters to deal with: for instance, smartness and punctuality. George was determined that both these qualities should be conspicuous in *his* Troop. As soon as the two Patrols had got going, he had a long talk with Fred and Harry. In future an inspection would be part of the opening of a Troop Meeting, and he told them how they would be expected to see that their Patrols were correctly dressed, punctual and ready. They worked out together a scheme of points for an Inter-Patrol competition. George impressed on them that they must make it clear to their Scouts that each was responsible for seeing that he came up to scratch and did not let the Patrol down.

It was astonishing how quickly the games and competitions between the Patrols roused keenness. Each Scout learned that *he* was an important person in his Patrol, and that *his* smartness and efficiency counted for something.

The Patrol Leaders naturally followed the methods George had used with the original Hound Patrol; they kept record books showing attendances, subscriptions, and so on. Then each Patrol was given a corner of the stables as its den; George only made one suggestion on decorations – each Patrol had a chart stuck up to show how its members were progressing in tests.

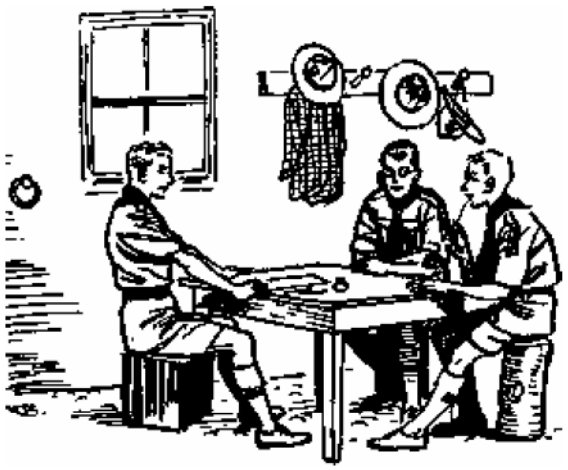
There was one form of Patrol activity which had worried George ever since he had toured round Troops before starting his own. Many meetings he watched included ten minutes or so for "Patrol Corners." He went round to see what was happening. Generally speaking this item seemed to be regarded as a "breather," and no one did anything in particular. Occasionally a bit of rope would be produced, or a signalling flag waggled about. On the whole, George decided, the time was really wasted; yet, there was a good idea there – the Patrol on its own, training under its Patrol Leader.

George put this to the District Scoutmaster, who agreed that a good idea was running to seed. "You may have been very unlucky," he said, "in the meetings you happened to visit, but I know that a lot of this 'Patrol Corner' business is badly managed. I'd go further and say this kind of slackness is dangerous because the youngsters get the idea that the dullest part of a meeting is when they get into their Patrol huddle."

"Need we have 'Patrol Corners'?" asked George.

"Of course not. I imagine the idea began soundly – as so many things do – as a substitute for a proper Patrol Meeting on another night where this was impracticable. Then the whole thing deteriorated into a conventional part of the meeting. If your Patrol Leaders can meet their Patrols once a week for training, you won't need 'Patrol Corners' – the very name has lost any sensible meaning."

With this conversation in mind, George decided that his Troop Meetings would not include a special period for "Patrol Corners," but each Patrol would get into a huddle for a special purpose only, such as deciding how to tackle a competition. Then they could meet separately once a week for training purposes. For a month or so he trained Fred and Harry together on how to run their Patrols, what to do at Patrol Meetings, and how to give instruction.



The first Court of Honour

Then there was the question of the Court of Honour. The idea of this was quite strange to Fred and Harry, so that too had to be got over to them in actual practice. George told them that later on he wouldn't be present at the actual meetings of the Court of Honour once they had grasped the purpose and method. This alarmed the two Patrol Leaders at first, but as they gained experience, so they became more confident. When the Troop grew to four Patrols – as it did very quickly after that first year – the Courts of Honour were carried on much in the way George had

taught them. For instance, each Patrol Leader gave a report, first on what had been done at his last Patrol Meeting, and second on how each Scout was getting along. This led to suggestions on what would be most useful at the next Troop Meeting. Gradually, too, as their own knowledge increased, the Patrol Leaders learned how to plan complete Troop Meetings, although George always reserved time for a surprise item which he himself devised.

It was with delight – and a touch of pride – that George watched the Patrol System at work. He found that it was not always easy to hand over responsibility to the Patrol Leaders. Sometimes jobs were not done as well as he hoped, but he was sensible enough to understand that the boys probably learned as much, that way as if everything went smoothly. Experience soon overcame his first doubts on the wisdom of allowing boys to have real responsibility; they seemed to flourish on it, and he noted a definite strengthening of character in Fred and Harry. He watched progress very carefully, and it was not long before he saw danger lights. Fred, for instance, was inclined to be the rather heavy boss – a stage sergeant-major type – while Harry tended to go in the other direction and let his Patrol run him. A chat with Harry helped to get him to see the need for taking charge more firmly and to distinguish between the genuine wishes of his Scouts and the red herrings they loved to drag across the path just for fun. The idea of the Patrol in Council checked Fred's masterfulness; this, George explained, was a kind of Patrol Court of Honour; it needn't take up much time, but if the Scouts had the chance of helping in making plans and decisions, each would then feel responsible for getting successful results.

He had got the idea of the Patrol Council from B.-P.'s suggestion.

"From different sources I have had interesting reports of very satisfactory results of developing the Patrol System. The sum of the whole thing amounts to this – every individual in the Patrol is made responsible, both in den and in camp, for his definite share in the successful working of the whole.

"This incidentally enhances the Leader's position and responsibilities, and develops the individual interest and civic capability of each member, while it builds a stronger *esprit de corps* for the group.

"The Patrol constitutes itself a Council:
"Patrol Leader responsible as Chairman.
"Second Leader responsible as Vice-Chairman and Quartermaster in charge of stores, etc.
"No. 1 Scout responsible as Scribe.
"No. 2 Scout responsible as Treasurer.
"No. 3 Scout responsible as Keeper of the Den.
"No. 4 Scout responsible as Games Manager.
"No. 5 Scout responsible as Librarian.

"The Council considers such subjects as, for instance, which badges the Patrol should specially go in for, where to camp or hike, etc., football and cricket matches, athletic sports and displays, and suggests questions to be considered and ruled upon by the Troop Court of Honour.

"The Scribe keeps the Minutes of this Council as record, which are read out at the following meeting as usual to be corrected previous to their signature by the Chairman (the Patrol Leader).

"The Scribe also has the duty of keeping a Patrol log in which are recorded each week, briefly, the doings of the Patrol at home or in the field.

"The existence of these Patrol Councils, when conducted with proper procedure, at once raises the status of the Troop Court of Honour. If carried out with the correct routine and ceremonial of a business meeting, the Court of Honour becomes a sort of Upper Chamber of considerable importance in the eyes of the boys, as they take a close interest in its findings; and the whole thing becomes a valuable and practical education to them in 'civics.'"

"You know," said George to the District Scoutmaster, "I had an idea that as the Troop developed I should be able to take things easier. But I have to keep an eye on each Scout and

see that he's getting his proper training, and how he's developing. That seems to take up as much, time as when I was training the first batch."

"You might put it this way," replied the District Scoutmaster, "Organisation is always easier than observation. You've started things off on the right lines, but you'll have to watch carefully to see that they don't go off the lines. That'll need a lot of tact. If you butt in too much, chaps like Fred will get annoyed, while the easy goers like Harry will be only too happy to let you do their job. But don't get disheartened; you've made a grand beginning. Don't forget, they're only boys and have to learn."

IV. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Before the first Troop Camp of the four Patrols, George had each Patrol out for a week-end camp previously; he did not feel that the Patrol Leaders had quite enough experience to run their own camps. "Next year they can," he said to himself. He wanted, of course, to make quite sure of a sound foundation for a Troop tradition in camping.

As a guide for general organisation, George had B.-P.'s advice to go upon.

"As the camping season is now upon us, I may say that one or two of the camps which I have already seen have been unfortunately on wrong lines, though others were very satisfactory. I strongly advise small camps of about half a dozen Patrols; each Patrol in a separate tent and on separate ground, so that the Scouts do not feel themselves to be part of a big herd, but members of independent responsible units.

"Large camps prevent scout-work and necessitate military training; and one which I visited the other day, though exceedingly well carried out as a bit of Army organisation, appealed to me very little, because not only was it entirely on military lines, but the Patrols the essence of our system – were broken up to fit the members into the tents.

"Patrols should be kept intact under all circumstances. If more than six or seven Patrols are out at the same time, they should preferably be divided into two camps located at, say, two miles or more apart."

He particularly noted the phrases "independent responsible units" and "Patrols kept intact." Then he also noted B.-P.'s suggestion that each Scout should have a definite job; he had done this in the Hound camps and by changing jobs by rotation (other than Patrol Leader) there had been variety of experience. B.-P.'s list, which, of course, was only intended as a rough guide and not as a rigid system, was as follows:

"Patrol Leader. In supreme charge, responsible for assigning duties and seeing that they are carried out.

"Second Leader. Quartermaster in charge of supplies of food and equipment and first aid.

"No. 1 Scout. Cook, preparing meals.

"No. 2 Scout. Scribe, keeping accounts of moneys and stores, keeps log of the camp or hike.

"No. 3 Scout. Pioneer, making drains, bridges, latrines.

"No. 4 Scout. Sanitation, keeping camp clean, incinerator.

"No. 5 Scout. Axeman, supplying firewood. Fireman and waterman, has charge of cooking or camp fire and of water supply.''

There is no need here to go into a full account of the preparations made for the camp, nor of the actual day to day happenings. Each Patrol camped as a separate self-contained unit, and the site allowed them to be a good distance away from each other. Things went wrong at times, but by now George had enough wisdom not to charge in and try to put things right on his own; a few words to the Patrol Leaders, or a hint dropped to one Patrol Leader about any particular weakness, soon worked wonders.

He didn't seem to fit in

George did, however, blow up once; this was on the subject of general tidiness; his strong words on the subject were all the more effective because so unusual, and the startled Patrol Leaders were soon putting things, and keeping them, to rights. The Inter-Patrol camping competition helped considerably in keying things up and getting the best out of each Scout.

One incident of the camp gave George much to think about. John Petts was one of the newer Scouts; he didn't seem to fit in, and Fred was his Patrol Leader. John was untidy, and careless; always mislaying things; often un-punctual. Still he was cheerful and seemed to like his Scouting. Fred came along one evening and let himself go on the subject of John Petts. According to him, John should be chucked out. George felt a bit guilty: he hadn't really had time to get to know John, who had come in with a number of recruits during the summer. So he calmed Fred down and took an early opportunity of having a chat with John. He wanted to find out what the boy was really keen about – and at last John rather shyly admitted that he liked birds and trees "and that sort of thing." That gave George an idea. At the daily Court of Honour he had with the Patrol Leaders that evening, he threw out the suggestion that there should be an Inter-Patrol competition over the next three days for the best nature diary and collections. No one seemed thrilled at the idea, but it was accepted. John at last found something he could contribute to the Patrol; when the Hounds came out top, even Fred had to admit that John was not so useless after all.

George used this example in explaining to the Patrol Leaders how they must try to find out a Scout's interests and then enlist these in the service of the Patrol while seeing that general training carried all along in the right direction. He realised more fully himself the importance of his own study of each Scout; the Patrol Leaders could certainly be trusted to carry out their jobs, but after all they were boys and could not be expected to weigh up and assess the finer qualities of character. That would always be his chief business as Scoutmaster. Their general judgment was sound; George discovered this when the stage was reached of new Patrol Leaders being appointed by the Court of Honour. Once or twice he had some doubt of the wisdom of the choice made, but he found that time and again the new responsibility brought out all kinds of unsuspected qualities in the new Patrol Leader.

By the time there were four Patrol Leaders, George was reasonably satisfied that they could be trusted to carry on Tenderfoot training and much of the Second Class work. But he wanted to see those Patrol Leaders get their First Class Badges. All Troop Meetings now included some Second Class and First Class work, but this rather intermittent instruction wanted pulling together. So George decided to take the Patrol Leaders together as his Patrol and train

them in First Class Scouting – actually he was also hankering after a return to those early days when he was really a Patrol Leader. There were other advantages in this scheme of a Patrol Leaders' Patrol; all the time the way in which it was run would serve as a standard for the Patrol Leaders in their own work, and George would be getting more and more knowledge of each of them.

With the other demands on time, this Patrol Leaders' Patrol could only meet once a fortnight; they had also their own week-end camp at the beginning of the camping season, and occasionally they had a Saturday afternoon expedition together,

A few months showed the value of this new development.

The Patrol Leaders gained additional prestige in the eyes of their Scouts. (What were these mysterious special meetings and camps of the Scoutmaster and Patrol Leaders?) They became keen on earning their First Class, and their increased knowledge and efficiency soon made itself felt amongst their Patrols.

It was not always easy to find the time for all these activities, but George was convinced that it was well worth the trouble. His greatest satisfaction was to watch how the Patrol Leaders – in spite of occasional set-backs and disappointments – fulfilled B.-P.'s saying, "Expect a great deal of your Patrol Leaders and nine tunes out of ten they will play up to your expectation."

V. LOOKING AHEAD

After the Troop had been going for about three years, George found himself faced with a new set of problems. One of the most interesting parts of Scouting he discovered was its unexpectedness – something fresh was always cropping up. This was all right for him and his Assistant Scoutmaster; it prevented them from getting into a dull routine, but George felt that there was *something* wrong with the Troop – or with him. Yet he felt as keen as ever; still, there was no dodging the fact that some of the Scouts were getting stale.

He talked it over with the District Scoutmaster.

"I can't make out what's wrong!" said George. "The Patrol Leaders are doing their job properly; the Scouts are getting through their tests steadily, but we seem to go a bit dead at times."

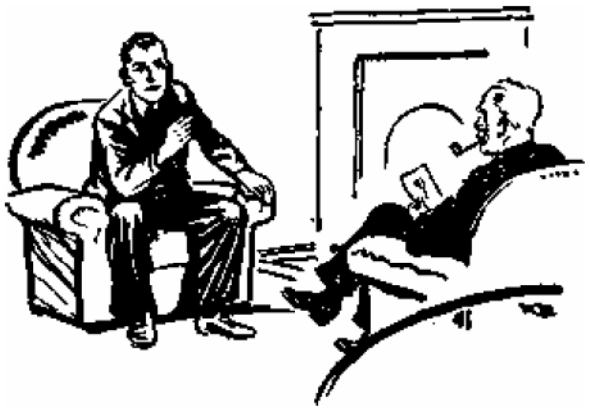
"Anyone chucked it lately?" asked the District Scoutmaster.

"How did you guess that? As a matter of fact, two have dropped out – two of the originals unfortunately. Both good enough fellows, too. They've both left school and gone to work. Is that the reason?"

"Maybe. I expect it's the old trouble – just growing-up. You haven't lost a Patrol Leader?"

"Thank goodness, no. I don't know what we should do without them."

"That's just the trouble, George. Those chaps who left were probably just tired of the old round, and knew there was little chance of being Patrol Leaders. No, I'm not going to tell you what to do; you'll discover the remedy yourself.



He talked it over with the District Scoutmaster

I'll only drop this hint – the Patrol System was not designed just for the training of four Patrol Leaders."

At first George refused to face the facts. He just couldn't imagine the Troop without his present Patrol Leaders – especially without Fred and his Hounds, and Harry and his Wolves. It wouldn't be the same! Yet, there was a lot in what the District Scoutmaster hinted. It might be two or three years before another Hound Patrol Leader was wanted, and there were some good fellows who ought to be Patrol Leaders or Seconds. If they didn't get the chance, they might slack off, or leave. Perhaps the District Scoutmaster was right.

There was only one thing to do – talk it over with the Patrol Leaders and see what they could suggest. After he had put the position fairly, Harry said that he would be quite willing to make way for someone else; after all, he'd had his fun and although he'd hate to leave the Wolves, he saw the point. Fred agreed but with more reluctance: he wanted to know what would happen to him and Harry. What was there for them to go on to? They were too young to be Rovers, though he supposed there would be a Rover Crew later on.

This point had already occurred to George and he had played with the idea of forming a special Patrol of any older Scouts who would like more advanced Scouting and have their own meetings. When he threw this out as a suggestion, it was at once welcomed.

"Just like the old Hounds," said Fred and Harry.

"Not quite," said George. "The new Patrol will need its own Patrol Leader and Second, and later on we may have to form another one."

George was surprised at the keenness roused. His immediate concern was, "Who was going to run this new Patrol?" He wanted to himself, but he simply couldn't spare more time for Scouting. His Assistant Scoutmaster was quite capable of running the Troop, but he'd need another Assistant Scoutmaster. Then the Troop could be practically handed over to them while he kept a general eye on it, and gave his chief energies to the older Scouts.

Another Assistant Scoutmaster took a bit of finding, but at last he was discovered, and the new organisation of the Troop set up. Several of the older Scouts chose to join the new Patrol and almost at once the Troop seemed rejuvenated. Two more Patrol Leaders were appointed, and this made everyone feel that things were moving and that there were more chances of becoming a Patrol Leader or a Second.

And so the 5th Noeyewash Troop formed its first Senior Scout Patrol. At that stage we must leave them.

VI. WHAT IT AMOUNTS TO

In following the progress of one Troop it has been possible to show how the value of the Patrol System was gradually extracted. The following points in particular have been emphasised.

1. The keynote of the Patrol System is the development of a sense of responsibility in each Scout.

2. The Patrol Leader, and, to a lesser degree, the Second, have obvious positions of responsibility, and provided the Scoutmaster genuinely gives them scope, they will make the most of their abilities.

3. The Patrol System is not only a Patrol Leader System. Not all Scouts can, in the nature of things, become Patrol Leaders, nor are all fitted to be so. They find their responsibility in the individual share in promoting the welfare of the Patrol as a whole, and in special jobs they can be given.

And with the Patrol Leaders

4. A Scoutmaster must always be on the watch to see that,

(i) the Patrol Leaders provide for the training of all members of the Patrol, and that (ii) each Scout does get his real share of responsibility according to his abilities.

5. The Patrol System is fundamentally a training for citizenship since it provides opportunities for planning activities and training, for the appointment of Patrol Leaders, and for the working of Patrol with Patrol as members of the Troop. The Scouts should thus, by trial and error, learn how to conduct their affairs in a spirit of good will where each, for the sake of all, may have to forgo some personal satisfaction.

More advanced Scouting

6. Every Troop reaches the stage when the Patrol Leaders, having had a useful experience of responsibility, tend to block promotion, and so to dishearten Scouts who need the same experience. It is, therefore, important that they should make way for younger Scouts while themselves going on to more venturesome and advanced Scouting.

It is very easy for a Scoutmaster, after some years with a Troop, to forget the initial stages which must be gone through if Scouts are to develop along sound lines. He may too feel that his present Patrol Leaders are so good that it would be disastrous to replace them. This attitude is the negation of the Patrol System which *breeds* Leaders. Changes are not always welcomed, but experience has proved beyond question that opportunities for responsibility will bring out unsuspected qualities in boys, and the new Patrol Leaders may well prove as good as, possibly better than, the old ones. As B.-P. said, "Where the System is properly applied it is absolutely bound to bring success. It cannot help itself!"

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