



AMONG THE BOY SCOUTS—

By Ricardo de la Cruz *



A NEW YEAR MESSAGE TO SCOUTS

Another year has just ended. A new one has begun.

The coming of the New Year means a lot to many people. It symbolizes new life, new vigor, new activities. To the Boy Scout, it should not allow its meaning to escape.

The Scout does not need to make New Year resolutions. All he should do is to recommit himself to the Scout Oath and Law,—those ideals, which, in themselves, are the very essence of Scouting.

It is a simple act,—this renewal of our promise.

But simple as it is, it is significant of a thousand things.

He should review the past year and think of how he can improve himself. He should ask himself questions. Have I violated the Scout Oath and Law? If so, were those violations unavoidable?

He should examine himself just as a mechanic analyzes a worn-out machine. This is a new year. Bad habits should be discarded and good ones formed in their stead. In short, let us change ourselves for the better!

THE MERIT BADGE PLAN

Scouting is more of an educational institution than a mere organization of boys. Just as it affords opportunities for companionship and play, so does it provide a system of education and training by which boys are taught to love knowledge,—to seek for it, not as a matter of course, but as a means of enjoying life more than the average boy does.

This is accomplished by the laying down of certain examinations required to be passed by the Scout before he can be promoted to higher ranks.

Before a boy may be accepted into a troop, it is necessary that he pass the Tenderfoot Requirements. Then comes the rank of Second Class. Next to this is First Class. The foregoing ranks have specified examinations for their attainment.

To be a Star, a Life, and finally, an Eagle Scout, a Scout takes the Merit Badge Route. There are over ninety different merit badges. They cover a wide and varied area of subjects,—ranging from Astronomy to Zoology.

In order to be awarded a Merit Badge, a Scout has to study and pass the requirements for that Merit Badge. For example, a Scout wishes to take the Merit Badge in Swimming. He looks up the requirements for this particular study. Those requirements are listed in the "Handbook for Boys" and in the pamphlets sold at Scout Headquarters. The requirements for Swimming are: (1) Be able to swim one hundred yards. (2) Dive properly from the surface of the water. (3) Demonstrate breast, crawl, and side strokes. (4) Swim on the back fifty feet.

The Scout then begins to practice constantly the different strokes. Pretty soon, he knows all the required strokes. As a result, he becomes a good swimmer. If he practice earnestly and enthusias-

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AMONG THE BOY SCOUTS

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tically, he may become an expert.

Many Scouts have found their professions and vocations only through the Merit Badge Plan. A promising physician is doubtless interested in the First Aid, Safety, and Personal Health merit badges. Radio, Architecture, Art, Automobiling, Salesmanship, Woodwork,—they all occupy places in the Scout's Merit Badge Library.

There was once a country boy who was interested in Soil Management. He decided to take the examination for this Merit Badge. He bought a pamphlet and studied it for days. Then he presented himself before the Expert Examiner in Soil Management. He was a man who thoroughly knew his business. The boy had his pamphlet with him but the man put it aside. Instead, he took the boy to a private room. All around the room were shelves, and in the shelves were bottles and cans. The man led the boy and both of them inspected each bottle. In each one was a sample of a kind of soil. All sorts of soils found in their community and the adjoining ones were there, classified and arranged.

The boy was much interested. He inspected every container with eagerness and delight. He asked the man to teach him how to collect soils and the method of recognizing each kind. The man gladly helped him.

The boy set to work at once. They owned a small shed in their farm. He used it for his "laboratory." Pretty soon, he had shelves around the shed. Gradually, he had bottles on those shelves. He visited every place of their community and collected various soils. He became an "amateur expert."

But that boy did not stop. He went to other communities and brought his collecting paraphernalia along. Wherever he went, he hunted for new specimens. He became a real expert. People began to rec-

ABSENT ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



"You all look fine, children," Miss Santos said smiling as she looked around. But where is Bernardo?"

"He is sick, Miss Santos," Moises said.

"Sick? What is the matter with him?"

"He ate too much on New Year's Eve," explained Adriano. "We went around serenading," he added, "and our relatives and neighbors served us *suman*, *bibingka*, *puto*, and chocolate."

"Well, those are good things to eat," remarked Miss Santos.

"Yes, Miss Santos, but he stuffed

himself every time he was offered some cakes. I ate only twice during the night. Bernardo ate five or six times."

"He had to be given castor oil early on New Year's Day," Moises put in.

"I am sorry for him. Children, that case is a lesson for you. Food is good and we need it, but you must know when to stop eating. Your stomach tells you when you have had enough, but you do not listen to it. Eat as much as you need but not until you are uncomfortable. No matter how delicious the food, eat only to satisfy your hunger."

ognize him. The government realized his value. In no time, he was offered a position in the Department of Agriculture and Commerce. He has become one of the leading agriculturists in the country. He has succeeded. All these, he owes to the Merit Badge Plan.

This is but one of the many examples wherein we find that Scouting is a great determining factor in

our lives. If others can succeed, why can we not too?

MONTHLY ROLL OF HONOR

Based on Scout Advancement,
December, 1936

Troop 225, Pampanga 130 points
Troop 184, Cavite 122 points
Troop 185, Cavite 116 points

(Certified correct by Mr. Teodoro R. Castro, Record Clerk.)