

CAMP FIRE YARN

NO. 19

PREVENTION OF DISEASE

Germs, and How to Fight Them – Proper Food – Clothing – Troop Formations



A number of years ago, when I was in Kashmir, Northern India, some natives brought to me a young man. They said he had fallen off a high bank. He was in great pain, and his friends and relatives were already considering him as good as dead.

On examination I found no bones broken, but his right shoulder out of joint at the socket. I told them to lay him flat on his back, and then took off my right shoe. I sat down alongside the patient, facing towards his head, with my right leg against his right side so that my heel came into the armpit of the injured shoulder.

I got one of his friends to sit on the other side of him to hold him down. Then I caught hold of his wrist with both hands and gave a long, steady pull at his arm, using my heel as a lever, till the shoulder suddenly clicked into its place again.

Then he fainted.

His mother howled, and said that I had made a nice mess of the job, and had killed him. But I grinned and put on my shoe, and told her that I would now bring him to life quite sound and well—which I proceeded to do by sprinkling a little water over his face. He gradually came to his senses and found that his arm was practically all right.

Then the natives thought I must be no end of a doctor. So they sent round the country for all the sick to be brought in to be cured, and I had an awful time of it for the next two days. Cases of every kind of disease were carried in, and I had scarcely any drugs with which to treat them. But I did the best I could, and I really believe that some of the poor creatures got better from simply believing that I was doing them good.

But most of them were ill from being dirty and letting their wounds get poisoned with filth. Many were ill from bad drainage, and from drinking foul water, and so on.

This I explained to the headmen of the villages, and I hope that I did something for their future health.

At any rate, they were most grateful, and gave me a lot of help ever afterwards by getting me food and good bear-hunting.

If I had not known a little doctoring I could have done nothing for these people.

While talking about doctoring I want to warn you against the excessive use of patent medicines and drugs. If you are ill, go to a qualified doctor who will *know* what is wrong

with you, rather than buy some remedy which the advertisement says will cure whatever you may *think* is wrong with you.

Germ and How to Fight Them

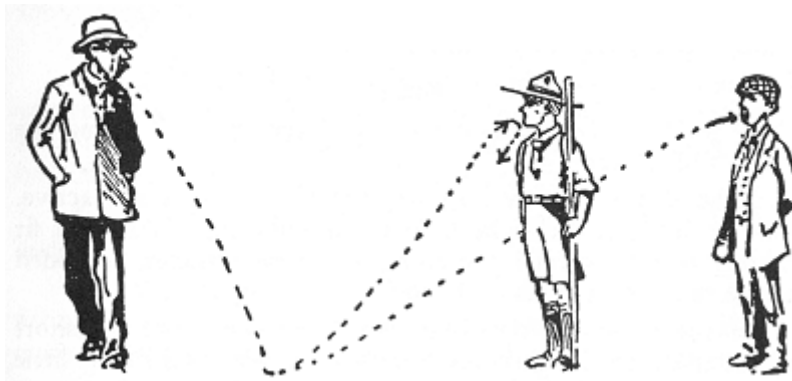
Disease is carried about in the air and in water by tiny invisible “germs” or “microbes”. You are very apt to breathe them in through the mouth or to get them in your drink or food and to swallow them, and then they breed disease inside you. If your blood is in really good order, it generally does not matter, no harm results. But if your blood is out of order, these germs may make you ill.

A great point is, therefore, to abolish the germs, if possible. They like living in dark, damp, and dirty places. And they come from bad drains, old dustbins, rotting refuse, etc. Therefore, keep your room, or your camp, and your clothes clean, dry. And as sunny as possible, and well aired; and keep away from places that smell badly.

Before your meals you should always wash your hands and fingernails, for they are very apt to harbour microbes which have come from anything that you may have been handling in the day.

“Do Not Spit”

You frequently see notices in public places requesting you not to spit. The reason for this is that many people spit who have diseased lungs, and from their spittle the microbes of their diseases get in the air, are breathed by healthy people into their lungs, and may make them also diseased. Often you may have disease in you for some years without knowing it, and if you spit you are liable to communicate that disease to sound people so you should not do it for their sake.



Tuberculosis is spread in several ways. Here is one of them: A sick man spits. The spit dries and the germs are carried into the air. A boy who breathes through his open mouth may suck the germs into his lungs. A Scout breathing through his *nose* has a better chance.

A great many people have the disease called tuberculosis, and it is very catching. But you need not be afraid of that kind of disease if you breathe through your nose and keep your blood in good order. It is always well on coming out of a crowded theatre, church, or hall, to cough and blow your nose, to get rid of microbes which you might have breathed in from other people in the crowd. The best chance of getting cured of it, if you get it, is to sleep always out of doors and to get plenty of rest.

Sleeping in Fresh Air

A Scout has to sleep a great deal in the open air anyway, therefore, when he is in a house he sleeps with the windows as wide open as possible. If he is accustomed to sleep in a warm atmosphere he might catch cold when he goes into camp, and nothing could be more ridiculous or more like a Tenderfoot than a Scout with a cold in his head. When once he is accustomed to having his windows open, he will not catch cold.

Many persons who are pale and seedy, are often made so by living in rooms where the windows are seldom opened and the air is full of unwholesome gases or germs. Open your windows every day to let the foul air out.

Food

A good many illnesses come from over-eating or eating the wrong kind of food.

A Scout must know how to keep himself light and active. Once he has got the right kind of muscles, he can remain fit without further special exercising of those muscles, provided that he eats the right kind of food.

In the siege of Mafeking, when we were put on short rations, those of the garrison who were accustomed to eat little at their meals, did not suffer like some people, who had been accustomed to stuff themselves well in peace time and who became weak and irritable. Our food there towards the end was limited to a hunk of pounded-up oats, about the size of a penny bun, which was our whole bread supply for the day, and about a pound of meat and two pints of “sowens”, a kind of stuff like paper-hangers’ paste that had gone wrong.

The cheapest foods are dried peas, flour, oatmeal, potatoes, rice, macaroni, hominy, and cheese. Other good foods are fruits, vegetables, fish, eggs, nuts, and milk, and one can live on these perfectly well with little or no meat.

If you have lots of fresh air, food keeps you healthy. If, on the other hand, you are sitting indoors all day, much food makes you fat and sleepy. In either case you are better for eating moderately. Still, growing boys should not starve themselves but, at the same time, they need not be like that little hog at the school feast, who when asked, “Can’t you eat any more?” replied, “Yes, I could *eat* more, but I’ve no room to *swallow* it.”

A great weakness nowadays is the amount of medicine which fellows dose themselves with when there is no reason for taking any medicine at all.

The best medicine is open air and exercise and a big cup of water in the early morning if you are constipated, and a pint of hot water on going to bed.

Clothing

A Scout’s clothing should be of wool as much as possible, because it dries easily. Cotton next to the skin is not good unless you change it as soon as it gets wet—it is so likely to give you a chill.

One great point that a Scout should take care about, to ensure his endurance and being able to go on the march for a long time, is his shoes or boots. I like shoes better than boots, because they let more air in for the feet.

A Scout who gets sore feet with much walking becomes useless.

You should, therefore, take great care to have good, well-fitting, roomy boots, and fairly stout ones, and as like the natural shape of your bare feet as possible, with a straight edge on the inside. Keep your boots soft with lots of grease, mutton fat, dubbin, saddle soap or castor oil.

If feet are allowed to get wet, from perspiration or from outside moisture, the skin is softened, and very soon gets blistered and rubbed raw where there is a little pressure of the boot.

Therefore, the feet should be kept as dry as possible. To do this it is necessary to wear good woollen socks. If a man wears thin cotton or silk socks, you can tell at once that he is no walker. A fellow who goes on a long walking trip for the first time is called a "Tenderfoot," because he generally gets sore feet until by experience he learns how to keep his feet in good order.

If your feet always perspire a good deal, it is a useful thing to powder them with powder made of boric acid, starch, and oxide of zinc in equal parts. This powder should be rubbed in between the toes, to prevent soft corns forming there. Your feet can be hardened to some extent by soaking them in alum and Water, or salt and water. Wash the feet every day.

TROOP MOVEMENTS AND FORMATIONS

Troop Movements

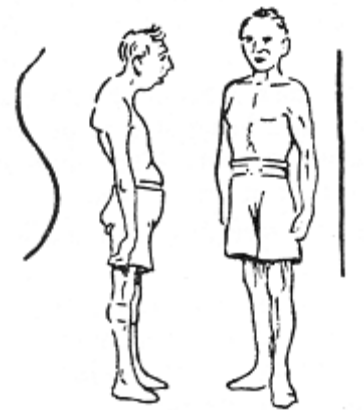
Scouts should know how to move quickly in Troop and Patrol group from one point to another in good order.

When done right, practice in quick and orderly movement sets them up, and makes them smart and quick. It strengthens the muscles which support the body, and by keeping the body upright the lungs and heart get plenty of room to work, and the inside organs are kept in the proper position for proper digestion of food.

A slouching position, on the other hand, depresses all the other organs, and prevents them doing their work properly, so that a man in that position is generally weak and often ill.

Growing lads are very apt to slouch, and should therefore do all they can to get out of the habit by plenty of physical exercises and drill.

Stand upright when you are standing, and when you are sitting down sit upright, with your back well into the back part of the chair. Alertness of the body, whether you are



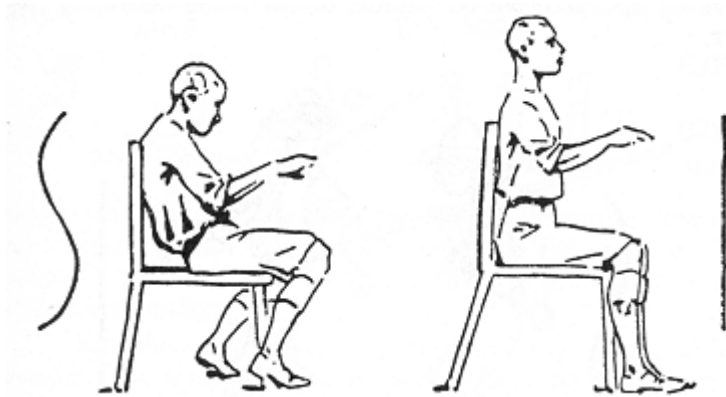
'S' stands for Sloucher, and 'I' stands for you, *if* you are upright.

Ask yourself the question. 'Am I 'S', or am I 'I'?'

moving, standing, or sitting, means alertness of mind, and it is a paying thing to have, because many an employer will select an alert looking boy for work and pass over a sloucher. When you have to stoop over writing at a table, or even tying 'a boot-lace, do not round your back, but tuck in the small of your back, which helps to strengthen your body.

On the word "Alert" or "Attention", the Scout stands upright looking straight to his front, with both feet together, hands hanging naturally at the sides, fingers straight.

On the word "Easy" or "At ease," he brings the left foot away six inches to the left, and clasps his hands behind his back. He is permitted to turn his head about. At the word "Sit easy," he squats down on the ground in any position he likes. "Sit easy" should usually be given whenever you don't want the boys to be at the "Alert," provided that the ground is dry.



When you sit in a chair, sit upright and don't let your body slide down into the "S" shape.

"Quick march"—boys move off with the left foot leading at a smart pace, swinging the arms freely, as this gives good exercise to the body and muscles and inside organs.

"Double"—boys run at a jog-trot with short, easy steps, hands swinging loosely, not tucked up at the side.

"Scout Pace"—the boys march at the quick march for twenty paces, then double twenty paces, and so on, alternately running and walking, until the word is given "Quick march" or 'Halt."

"Right turn"—each boy turns to the right.

"Follow your leader," "Leader right turn"—the leading man turns to his right, the remainder move up to the place where he turned, and then follow after him.

"Front form line" (when "Following the leader")—those in rear run up and form in line alongside the leader on his left.

Troop Formations

Line (means parties side by side) —Each Patrol has its Scouts in line, Patrol Leader on the right, Second on the left, the others in their order from right to left, Scoutmaster in front of center.

Open Column (means parties one behind the other)—Give the word “Patrols right wheel” (form line). “Halt” (when exactly behind each other at their proper distance, such as will enable them to wheel either to right or left into line).

Close Column—Rear Patrols moved up to leading Patrols for taking up less room on parade, or for being addressed by a leader.



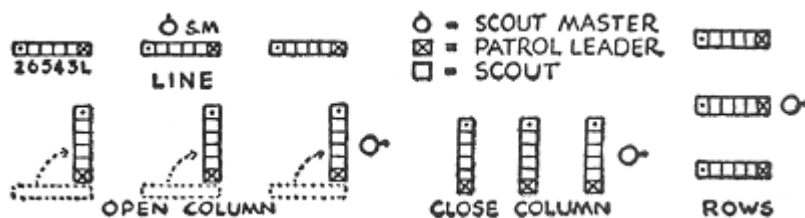
Don't slouch along looking at the ground, as if ashamed of yourself. Straighten up and flash a Scout smile.

Line can be formed from “open column”, to the right or left by wheeling the Patrols to that hand; or to the front by the leading Patrol standing fast (or advancing), the second Patrol inclining and moving up on its right, the third Patrol moving up into line on its left, and so on with other Patrols in rear, even numbers going up on the right, odd numbers on the left of the leading Patrol. The Patrols which move up always do so at the “double.”

Line can be formed to the rear from “open column” by “about turn” for everybody (always turn about to the right hand), and then proceeding to form line as above.

Formations by Silent Signals

With an alert Troop these formations can easily be made without any word of command; all that is needed is for the Scoutmaster to give a signal and every Scout immediately doubles to his proper place in his Patrol, the whole formation facing the Scoutmaster.



For instance, for “Line” he might extend both arms outwards to the sides from the shoulder; for “Open column” extend both arms outwards but bend them upward at the elbow; for “Close column” the signal might be like that for “Open column” but with the arms held forward instead of outward from the shoulders.

“Horseshoe Formation” is the ordinary one for Troop parades. The signal for this is usually to swing the arms to and fro with a semi-circular motion in front of the body.

For inter-Patrol games “Rows” is used. This means that the patrols are in Indian file, behind their Patrol Leaders with their Seconds at the back, facing the Scoutmaster, and in their usual Patrol order from right to left. The usual signal is both arms stretched forward from the shoulders.

Movements by signal are always made at the run and in dead silence.