

Heart of the Camp

The attraction of fire is universal. City boy, village boy and boy on the isolated farm, all yield to the fascination of the fire. We see them on city lots, in the purple dusk, as day settles toward its close, making a fire from broken boxes, and squatting within its glow. We see them on the scorching sands where the sun is beating down on their heads and their backs are blistered by the heat, collecting driftwood and solemnly building themselves a fire.

The lure of the fire is as old almost, as the history of mankind. When man first discovered the miracle of fire, he made it a part of his worship. On his altars he set the sacred flame. So candles burn on the altars of churches even to this day, and men gather around the camp fire at night. It is a ritual.

Throughout the passing of the ages, the ravages of Time have not destroyed the symbolism of Fire. Customs, mannerisms, environmental experiences; and deep-seated conventions have all passed to the great unknown--and gone with them, has passed the symbolic meaning of many things. Yet, Fire, symbolic of warmth, confidence, cooperative thought and good cheer has remained unsmirched, unsullied and unchanged by the ceaseless rackings of Time.

The social history of every nation has woven into its warp and woof the symbolism of the fire. It has been a semi-sacred circle--where fellow mingled with fellow in a plane of relationship attained in no other human experience. The council fire of Colonial Days, the camp fire of the Revolutionary camp, the fires of wagon trains on their perilous trek to the unknown west, the hearth-fire of the burghers in Old New York, the fire-place of the New England tavern, the blazing fire of the Spanish grandee in the California patio--all have been spots where friends have gathered to greet each other, exchange experiences and spend a moment in contemplative thought.

The camp fire is the heart of the Scout Camp. Around its warmth and rosy light the Scouts gather in the darkness to sing songs dear to boyish hearts, listen to thrilling tales, or join in the Indian pow-wow or stunt contest. Now is the time to "talk of many things," the time for discussing Scout problems, for the recital of Good Turns, the interpreting of the Scout Law, the bit of friendly suggestion or admonition on the part of the Scoutmaster. The camp fire should take on a real significance to the Scout. The Scout Law and Scout Brotherhood should mean more to him because of the hour spent around it in close comradeship after the more strenuous activities of the day.

The Scout Law and the Scout Brotherhood mean more to the boy because of this hour about the camp fire.