



Scout Yarns

By Lieut.-Gen. Sir ROBERT BADEN-POWELL,
K.C.B.

My Visit to the Tsar.—Russian Boy Scouts.—A Problem.—
A Good Turn by the Guildford Scouts.—A Greeting from
Germany.—Do You Do Your Good Turn Daily?

MY VISIT TO THE TSAR.

I WRITE this letter to you in the train between Moscow and Warsaw, on my way home from Russia.

I don't know whether you have had it cold in England and elsewhere, but it was fairly chilly in St. Petersburg, and, my word, it was cold in Moscow! But nice clear weather, with bright sun and hard-frozen snow everywhere.

St. Petersburg, the capital of Russia, is a big modern city, very like most other European capitals, but the people, being dressed chiefly in fur coats and fur caps, look different from other foreigners; and the streets are very different, because instead of wheeled cabs and carriages you have sledges everywhere, which slide along very fast and silently over the frozen snow.

The city stands on the banks of the River Neva, which is about half a mile wide at this part. Just now it is covered with ice, and it is interesting to see large gangs of men at work laying down rails and planting great posts by which the electric trams will, during the winter, run across the ice in three different directions.

An Invitation from the Tsar.

One day I received an invitation to go and see his Imperial Majesty the Tsar.

There is a huge, great building called the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, which is the Tsar's palace, but he much prefers living with his family in a smaller house in the country, at Tsarskoye Selo, about twenty miles from St. Petersburg; and it was here that I went to see him.

Tsarskoye Selo is a small town, consisting of well-to-do villas in their own gardens; but though small, it boasts of a corps of nearly 600 Boy Scouts.

The Tsar's palace is a large single-storied building in a thickly-wooded park.

On arrival there I was conducted through a number of fine saloons on my way to His Majesty's room.

In one of these were some tables spread out with a large amount of china and glass, which the Royal Family had bought to give away as Christmas presents to their friends.

Another room was evidently the playground of the children, and at one end of it was an inclined wooden slide for indoor tobogganing.

In another room were three pianos, and it was evidently the music room of the young Princesses.

The Tsar has four daughters and one son. At last I was shown into the Emperor's study, and was most kindly received by His Majesty. No one else was present.

He was very plainly dressed in a dark green uniform, with only one decoration on his breast—the red cross of the Vladimir Order.

In appearance he is very much like our own King George, but his hair is lighter in colour and his face paler.

He shook hands in a most friendly way, and at once began to talk in excellent English about the Boy Scouts. Indeed, we talked of little else during the whole of my visit.

The Tsar is evidently very fond of boys, and is anxious that all Russian boys should have a chance of enjoying outdoor games and scouting practices, and at the same time learn something about Scoutcraft, and being able to look after themselves and to help other people as the British boys do.

He knew all about our work, and hopes

especially to get a large number of "King's Scouts" among the Russian boys.

Friends of All the World.

Another point which pleased the Tsar very much was the fact that we consider all other Scouts as our brothers, no matter what class or country they belong to.

He wants to see his own people in the same way good friends with one another, without thinking of differences of their positions or wealth; and he also wants to see them real friends with other nations, such as the Boy Scouts of Britain are now becoming with those of Germany, Italy, Chile, America, and other countries outside our Empire.

The other Scouts recognise St. George as their particular saint, and therefore I hope that on next St. George's Day, April 23rd, British Scouts will send out greeting cards to their brothers abroad.

I am having some postcards printed for the purpose in Russian, German, Spanish, and other languages. It would be an interesting thing for a troop to keep an album of those that they get in reply, as they will come from many strange parts of the world.

I hope before long to have a list of places abroad at which there are troops of Scouts. Then troops at home will be able to send to troops belonging to places whose names begin with the same letter. Thus, Manchester can send to Moscow, Cheltenham to Chantilly, Southampton to Singapore, and so on.

RUSSIAN BOY SCOUTS.

AFTER seeing the Tsar, I went from St. Petersburg to Moscow, a journey of twelve hours by train across the great snow-covered plains of Russia.

Just before leaving St. Petersburg I was surprised and pleased to find a Guard of Honour of Russian Boy Scouts drawn up at the station to see me off—and it was all the more kind of them, because I left at nine o'clock at night, and they had to come a long distance to the parade.

They were differently dressed from us, wearing round caps and trousers on account of the cold; but they had shirts and coloured neckties, patrol ribbons, Scout and other badges, and staves and patrol flags the same as ours.

They also carried a handsome flag, having on one side St. George and the Dragon, and on the other the portrait of the Tsarevitch—the flag being yellow silk with black border—the colours of St. George in Russia.

The Scouts were a smart, very English-looking lot, and I told them that I was sure that if they could come to England some day they would be welcomed by their brother Scouts there.

Then I started to shake hands with them, and they very quickly returned the compliment by presenting me with little mementoes; one boy gave me a book, another a photograph, two or three handed me flowers, and one gave me a very nice luminous compass.

It was very nice of them, and they were so keen and friendly that I was quite sorry to part from them.

When I got to Moscow, the Scout Committee gave me a dinner, and we talked all about scouting.

They have about 3,000 Scouts there, mostly in the schools. But as it was Russian

Christmas the boys were all away on their holidays, and so I did not see any of them.

They seem to be getting on very well in Scout work, but are rather handicapped by the long and very cold winter which they get in this part of the world. Still, they managed to do some very good despatch running on ski, or long wooden snow skates.

.....

A PROBLEM.

SITTING round the camp fire one night, some hunters in Canada were talking about getting lost in the woods, and how almost everybody who has gone hunting has at one time or another got "bushed."

Then came a question: "Supposing you were lost when you had very little with you, which of these things would you rather have?—

Rifle and cartridges,
Tobacco.
Matches.
Cooking pot.
Flour.
Blankets.
Axe.
Tea or Coffee."

There was a great discussion, but in the end they agreed on three being of the most importance. If any Boy Scout can state which he considers the most necessary things in the same order of importance that they did, I will send him a small gift.

Address you entries to The Editor, THE SCOUT, and mark your envelopes or postcards "Lost."

.....

A GOOD TURN BY THE GUILDFORD SCOUTS.

I AM very glad to see the Boy Scouts of Guildford have done a good act.

A cripple boy in that town was unable to get to school, and so the Town Council agreed to give £10 a year for getting him conveyed to and from school every day.

But a clergyman said that he would lend him a bath-chair, and the Scouts said that they would be glad to do a good turn, and to pull his bath-chair to and from school daily. That's what I like to see.

.....

A GREETING FROM GERMANY.

I HAVE had a very nice greeting from the German Sea Scouts Troop at Danzig. Any Scout who wants to send them a picture postcard will probably get one back showing them at their work if he asks for it. Their Scoutmaster is

Capt. B. Entz,
Marine Jugendwehr,
Danzig,
Hakelwerk 3/4 L.

.....

DO YOU DO YOUR GOOD TURN DAILY?

THE question was asked in a Manchester newspaper the other day, "Do Boy Scouts carry out the law of doing a good turn every day?"

Well, what do you say, Scouts?"

Do you remember the promise which you made on becoming a Scout, that you would, ON YOUR HONOUR, obey the Scout Law and do a good turn to somebody every day?

Do you do little acts of kindness or politeness each day because of this?

Yes, I feel sure that you do. You would not be true Scouts if you didn't. And therefore I believe that I can speak for each one of you and say, in reply to the question, "Yes, every Scout carries out the Scout Law of doing a good turn daily."

Robert Baden-Powell