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SUMMER CAMP AS EDUCATION FOR LEISURE

By A. E. HAMILTON, M. A. (Clark '12)

I am assuming without argument that the fundamentals of character are formed not so much under the pressure of routine school-work or business task as under opportunities for choice of action, under the freedom to do as we like, under the chance to follow our feelings where they lead.

The ideal of the best educational summer camps is to give boys and girls real character-building stuff through the training of the feelings and emotions through wholesome choices after the nine months of intellectual exercise and "mind training" in the school-room.

Camp taps the primitive impulses like nomadism, wanderlust, fightiness, shelter-building, home-making, hunting, cooking, etc., and gives them channels for wholesome expression in ways which, while training mind and body, also, and more importantly, train the feelings and emotions healthfully. Camp is, at its best, essentially a spiritual institution, and that without necessary reference to any theology or ism whatever.

Camp brings a boy romance, adventure, pioneering, exploring, the joy of accomplishment through hardship, the excitement of the woodland chase of "enemy" or "game," and the thrill of loyal team work in war-canoe and inter-group competitions.

Stars, clouds, moonrise, night noises, from gentle borings in wood to the call of the whippoorwill, grey dawn, rose dawn and birdsong in the morning, glimpsed and listened to from the blanket bed on pine-needles or sand—these things draw out the dawning soul-stuff in a boy or girl and leave an impress that will never wear away.

And Camp trains the feelings to choose things wholesome, to like things that make for health of body and mind, the life more abundant.

The biggest contribution of summer camping for boys and girls is probably going to relate to the increasingly vital problem of leisure time, and the use of leisure.

The ideal summer camp, as Doctor Gulick has pointed out, affords opportunities for choice of activities, it presents attractive temptations to wholesome actions and occupations. It leads by positive magnets so arranged that one's individual

choice determines largely his or her course of training. And it is essentially a training in the selection of things one wants to do in his leisure time.

For camp is essentially *schole*, leisure. It is a harking back to the old Greek ideal of what a *school* should be. And in proportion as its range of choice includes activities that are positively good, physically, mentally and spiritually, camp will succeed in contributing to the larger problem of adult leisure later on.

There is always an undertow of distant sociology to contend with in thinking camp. What do we want an eight hour, seven hour, six-hour day for? What are we going to do with it when it gets here? What are we going to cram those extra hours with? What recreations are we going to choose? What relaxations? What avocations, joblets, artistry, schooling?

And I'm more and more inclined to think that the things we learned to like to turn to when we were kids largely determines the direction we turn in later on: craps, cards, hanging around with the gang, shooting, trapping, sailing, canoeing, book-binding, drawing, reading, storying, exploring, riding, movies, prize-fights, sewing circles, receptions, teas, tending babies or hunting bricks for the temple of science.

In selecting the summer camp as a training ground for the feelings toward wholesome leisure-time activities, I am in one sense unfortunate in having to choose an institution thus far limited largely to sons and daughters of the "leisure class," for, however hard their daddies work, they are the kind of daddy who can take a vacation if he wants to, can indulge coin collecting, picture hunting, new automobiles, golf or camping if he likes.

But many of the same principles apply here as will apply to our camp for youngsters of all stations of life in the coming units of our more enlightened educational system, free to all and as necessary a part of training for life as any regular "schooling."

So I take camp Timanous (the boys' unit of the Luther Gulick Camps) as a microcosmic sample, and will concentrate on it, and its activities in lieu of reviewing the wider field of camping in general.

The principles that apply to a boy's camp apply in substance to camps for girls. There are divergencies, of course, but boys and girls of camping age have so many likes in common—the water, swimming, diving, aquaplaning, sailing, canoeing, boating; horses, pets, shelters, fires, games of running and throwing and batting; modeling, drawing, painting, making things of metal and wood; nature lore, woodland hikes, cook-

ing, exploring, gypsy-trips, that the things they differ in are almost negligible when it comes to general principles of direction of desire and the furnishing of opportunities for choice of activity and occupation.

A first class camp must have, to realize fullest possibilities:

1. A location bringing with it (a) good water facilities for water sports (b) woods for play, and to furnish wood for fires, shelters, etc. (c) open space for play and games (d) a small garden-farm for food culture, (e) a barn for horses and perhaps other animal pets, chickens, a cow, rabbits (f) fair play for whichever are the cooling breezes in summertime, (g) isolation, insuring freedom from much intrusion.

2. Sanitary features of (a) pure drinking water (b) thorough and quick disposal of garbage and waste (c) dryness of sleeping quarters (d) relative freedom from bugs, mosquitoes and other summer annoyances of the kind.

3. Housing, simple, primitive but thoroughly protective against rain and storm. Beds simple but essentially comfortable for sound sleep's sake.

4. Thoroughly efficient kitchen equipment, competent cook, adequate assistance, ease of access for supplies, effective and roomy refrigeration.

5. Sports equipment (a) simplest of gymnastic supplies for spare moments—mat, horizontal bar, rings, trapeze, (b) sail, row, motor boats as occasion requires, canoes, rafts, diving tower, chute, etc. (c) Horses, wagon for gypsying. (d) Boxing gloves for boys (e) rifle and rifle range, (f) athletic field-equipment if really called for.

6. Provision for hand-craft, be it carpentry, clay, copper-work, drawing, decorating.

7. A definitive program for the accomplishment of definite and, whenever possible, measurable results, physical and mental by each individual boy. Plus a provision for letting the boy see recognized and recorded his own accomplishment (bulletin board, merit badges, etc.)

8. A spiritual standard underlying and permeating all camp activities, with a certain daily formalization, in song, story, prayer, or otherwise to keep the fact of the underlying standard alive in word and action.

9. A directing personelle that will attract to camp the character and quality of boy that will keep pace with its best traditions, perpetuate and add to them.

This last is first in importance, minimizing the importance of location, equipment and even program by comparison, and often compensating for serious lacks among other desirable requirements.

In starting a new camp perhaps the capital item is the establishment, the setting up of traditions. Largely they must be assumed to exist already. Provided a desired tradition is in accord with the fundamental workings of a boy's mental and spiritual mechanism, it can be assumed, and put up to the boys as a thing to be taken for granted. "We are accustomed to do this here"—"it is camp practice to do this"—and the thing goes.

There is a vital difference between routine program and traditional activity. Rest hour, or going to bed for a "sleep" after dinner is a matter of enforced routine, a certain amount of which boys will swallow with the good things of camp. Boys do not invent and perpetuate the "tradition" of rest hour. They soon fall into line, take it as a matter of course, and go through with it without protest—but just announce that rest hour is wiped off the slate for a day and see what happens! Rest hour is an institution, not a tradition.

Sharing marshmallows around the fire instead of keeping them to eat by yourself, is a camp tradition, initiated by the Director, but seized upon and perpetuated by the boys who find it to their own interest, individually and collectively to perpetuate it. It is more fun, more boys share the good things, and the donor gets a cheer and the approbation of his tribe,—and less stomach-ache.

The Director of Camp Timanous had four philosophical principles of camping in mind which he wanted to make traditional with the boys. They were:

1. To tell the truth
2. To obey first, discuss afterwards
3. To hit hard (task, or opponent)
4. To share good things with others.

1

Only one boy deliberately lied to the Director during the summer. He did so publicly, declaring that he had not asked to ride in a motor boat when, just a little time before, he had. Publicly he was accused of lying, on the spot. Publicly he had to admit it. He was cut off from the motor-boat ride, kept aloof from the Director for an obviously long time, and admitted to grace again only after probation and a demonstration of genuine willingness to compensate for a grievous wrong. This object lesson sank in under the skin of the whole group. It was concrete and definite.

In court, for the boys administered their own justice (though unconsciously directed by their Chief), a distinction was always made between an exaggeration, minification, slight

distortion or mistaken judgment in regard to truth, and the lie. The boys sensed the difference. There was play and leeway for boyhood pragmatism in regard to abstract truth, but there was no mistaking the selfish and deliberate lie. Court rubbed this in. Councilors and Chief, who, as on a par with the boys, were allowed discussion in court, took these occasions to make patent in words the "tradition" of truth, and if allegory or story helped, it was brought to bear not as an isolated moral lecture, but as an integral play of the court drama that was being enacted.

Bragging was treated summarily.

W bragged. He was officially dubbed "Big Mouth" by the boys and so called until a week before camp closed when the boys, around a little fire in the big tepee voted to burn the name "Big Mouth" on a piece of bark and, with only one dissenting voice, this was done. W. had earned back his name. But his bragging, and that of others, was always distinguished from the lie. The word liar was not used at camp after the first week or so.

2

The big war-canoe seated twenty boys. A perfectly safe craft in smooth weather, it was well at least to regard rough waves as dangerous. If boys talk while paddling they cannot hear orders. An order may mean safety or danger for the group. Therefore "no talking." This was a hard lesson to learn. There was always an excuse for words. "Johnny splashed me, Jimmy is out of stroke, Billy's paddle in the way." But these things had to be borne until the next rest period, when they could be discussed. Team work of this sort, all stroking together to the rhythm of a song, or the skipper's "stroke, stroke" brings a discipline of mind and body that is in itself valuable, but it also makes concrete, practical and obviously necessary the rule of "obey first, discuss afterwards." Other camp activities rubbed this in, but the war canoe is the most typical instance. The boys recognized the value of this discipline to themselves, they started it as a tradition of their own, and after a few weeks of practice it was the boys who brought offenders to time for infringing *their* tradition.

3

Boxing made concrete the value of *hitting hard* if one hits at all. That slogan of Roosevelt's became fledgling camp tradition, with a starting point in the ring. All the boys looked on at the boxing matches or the "grudge fights," as it was desired that they should all get the benefit of the instruction

that went with the match—hit hard, look squarely in the eye, keep guard up, lean forward, etc.

Charles picked fights with Tom. When caught he was brought by the boys to the ring, at grudge-time, and they battled with the gloves. Charles hit soft, Tom hit hard and straight. By the third round it was customary for Charles to shed tears and quit. That was in early July.

In middle August Tom and Charles were in the ring again. The result of dinning our motto into the ears of Charles began to appear. By the third round Charles was fresh, Tom was tired. Charles was hitting straight and hard. He was heavier and had a better reach—and had learned how. Round four found the tears in Tom's eyes. In round five Tom was ready to quit.

Now the moral effect of this battle was more far reaching than the Director had hoped to be able to measure. Charles was the baby of camp, living a solitary life, attaching himself to older folk when possible and trying to avoid "being the goat."

A week after the victory in the ring six different boys came to the Chief, who was frying bacon, asking for Charles. Something strange pervaded the atmosphere. Boys didn't usually hunt for Charles.

The Chief left his bacon and went exploring. In an old boat on the beach he found some fifteen boys playing pirate. Charles was captain, giving orders, appointing middies, stokers, pilots, mates. Everyone was going to Charles for orders. He was in his glory. His face shone like that of the traditional angels. He was radiant.

That play lasted until dinner time, and it began soon after rest hour, with Charles still skipper. He was hitting his job hard, giving orders hard, scolding hard, just as he had hit hard in his fight with Tom.

Hard and soft began to be catch words in the group, and the tradition took root, not through this fight, or this skipper-ship, but through the persistent injection of the slogan, concretely illustrated into the atmosphere. The tradition began to carry itself.

4

Candy was allowed only when shared with all after meals. Marshmallows were allowed at roasting fires. The tradition of the roast grew. Boys wrote home for marshmallows in preference to all other sweets, and shared them around the fire, learning in the process of spearing them on another boy's stick the truth of its being better to give than to receive.

The court afforded opportunities for generous treatment.

To temper justice with mercy was found to be pleasant, and this, too, began to take root as a tradition.

T came late to camp. He hit W over the eye with a club. Court sentenced him to a hard punishment unfitted to the crime. The Director spoke in court of the unsuitability of the punishment and referred to the custom of fitting punishment to crime (a custom which hardly existed, but which was desirable, and in accord with boy nature, and therefore that "went through") and also pointed out that T was not familiar with the camp tradition that clubs were no longer fighting weapons of man. That tradition was new, but it also took hold. T was grilled before court as to motives and action, confessed his sin and was saved. Two traditionlets were launched that persisted, and another way to be generous was made patent.

At table the tradition of being generous was watered by spoken recognition of generous or courteous conduct, and a pennant was awarded for special persistence in this direction. It was not so much good table manners that was aimed at here, as it was the strengthening of the tradition of generousness in an egocentric little savage, which the boy of eight to eleven usually is.

These are just a few homely illustrations of the way traditions took root and began to grow. Now traditions are the result of a continuum of conduct, they are attitudes and acts repeated by individuals and groups. And the stimulæ that fall on the individuals affect traditions mightily.

Three stimulæ, to use the language of the psychologist, stand out fairly clearly as important in the moulding of camp traditions:

1. The stimulus of the group
2. The stimulus of success
3. The stimulus of failure

The chief value of camp to the boy, as contrasted with however favorable a set of family-vacation circumstances, lies in the stimulus of the group, a thing that no amount of private tutoring, elaborate equipment, individual liberty can take the place of.

1

A few boys seemed to wade right through camp without very much apparent reference to the stimulus of the group in the accomplishment of definite ends, while with others the reverse is true.

B swam to the rock (first test) alone, he was cheered afterwards, to be sure, but he went ahead by himself, practicing, until he made the raft all unbeknownst to us. Later he had

swum to the island, then around the larger island, (half a mile) and finally he asked permission to try swimming to Ship Island, a mile away, and, though but eight years old, made it in as good form as the older boys of twelve and thirteen. He would have continued right along for indefinite distances if he had been allowed. It seemed a personal, solitary thing with him, a set of accomplishments that he might as well have undertaken if camping alone with his family.

S tried swimming to the rock only under the most prepared and dramatic of circumstances. Attention of everyone was called to the trial, he advertised it beforehand, seeming to endeavor to bolster himself with the stimulus of onlooking eyes.

M always did his best work when he was the center of attraction, he attempted new things, did old things better and seemed to draw on all his vital reserves when he had an audience, when he was in the crowd.

L was never spectacular, but seemed to feel the admiration of the group, and to respond to it with further endeavors. He watched the chart recording successes in the water closely, made copies of it, wanted the original to take home. He was the best swimmer in camp, but was shy and retiring and silent about it.

Boys attempted the swim to the rock best when in groups of three or four, with others watching. Fear seemed divided up, less concentrated in any one boy. Dislike of public failure added an obvious element, and the competitive atmosphere (though it was not an actual race) stimulated still more.

S, however, would never join a group. He always wanted a single councilor with him, and the track clear for a lonely attempt. But he wanted his attempting known, far and wide.

Many more boys attempted sliding down the chute for the first time when the group was on the raft, than when they were invited for a solitary trial. Taking the first dive, with but two exceptions, was definitely eased by the presence of watchers though W practiced in solitude until he graduated from the crass belly-flop and worked up nerve enough to leap from the tower. B went to the rock alone, practicing dives until he was not ashamed of them.

And here the indirect influence of the group doubtless plays a rôle—the boys are practicing with the group in mind, and do their best work after all, when eyes are upon them.

Boxing is always of a higher order when the group is present than it is in the practice ring. Even practice is helped very measurably by having a number of boys present. Both single pairs with instructor and pair with instructor and groups were tried out alternately during the summer, and the

atmosphere was as different as one would presume it would be under the two sets of conditions.

Such a fact is quite simple and apparent, yet I have had fathers of boys tell me their sons need nothing from camp, they have everything provided at their summer homes, boxing instructor, horses, gymnasium, water, food. I wish they might see the relative intensity of work and play in their own boys under those conditions, and under the stimulus of the group; how much more of their margin of power is used when the gang is around, how close they draw to the very limit of their usually unused forces of will.

And in all this group stimulus, the underlying motive was constantly emphasized of *hit hard*. The group-stimulus, perhaps more than any other factor, helped cement this tradition into an enduring foundation. One cannot measure or weigh traditional values. One feels them in the atmosphere, senses them in boy responses.

2

The stimulus of success is closely linked with the stimulus of the group. A boy who is successful in a group wants to stay successful, and that means progressive accomplishment in camp. "Hitting" a thing hard and persistently enough usually brings this to a boy. Success breeds success in all but a very few.

B was a good swimmer to start with, but he tackled each individual water-stunt until he had completed them all and became a Shark. He thrived on success.

J won his paddle by persistent trying until he reached the goal, but he saw no further than the concrete paddle, rested on his laurels, used his paddle for a sand shovel, lost it to the Chief and had hard work recovering it.

E was told that he could gain weight, improve his angel scapulæ, round out his chest and harden his muscles if he would persist in a regime outlined by his councilor. In a month he gained five pounds, tested out far in advance of his former abilities muscular and found his chest delightfully rounding. (He was most hollow-chested and scrawny when he arrived.) Success drove him still harder into his program. At close of camp his shoulder blades were practically normal, his chest was wonderful to behold (he had the chest, and had only to get it into position) he had gained almost eight pounds, and actually got into games, swims and mischief. He followed his regimen of bed-exercise and table training largely because he felt the success of the effort and was constantly told how successful that effort was. Only an initial attention

was called to his defects, the rest was all harping on accomplishment. He radiated success.

But the real success, as viewed by his Chief, was spiritual rather than physical. A letter came from the boy's mother rejoicing over the boy's changed physical appearance, his surprising improvement of poise, posture, hardness and chestiness. But the real value that the boy had from camp was the attitude of success through having hit his particular problem hard, and stuck to it, hitting hard. This attitude, I believe "transfers" to other fields, "transfers" wherever desire links with will for the attainment of an end. It is this attitude that the camp tradition was launched to cultivate and fix.

And I incline to think that the same traditions, the same attitude, the same habit ought to apply as well to our use of leisure as to our use of working time. I'm hoping that just as there may be transfer of attitude and intensity of effort from the summer camp recreation to school activities, there may be also a return in kind and in modified intensity to these primitive absorptions of boyhood later in life as recreative "rest" and amusement.

But to intensity of effort, we must add technique. A great deal of failure, with its stimulus and its backdrawing, comes through lack of skill, or physical handicaps that limit the acquirement of skill.

3

A told us he took boxing lessons from Benny Leonard's trainer. J pummelled him around the ring until A began coughing and gave up.

A was merely too heavy. He had technique, but carried the incubus of twenty pounds overweight. Sheer physical inertia turned his "I can" into an "I can't" that was not uprooted as to boxing, all season.

Training down this lad to normal would, I believe, not only release his technical ability to box well and effectively, but would revolutionize his attitude toward not only boxing but a score of life's activities.

He tried to be helpful in the kitchen. One day he spilled a bucket of water over the floor. The cook told him he was too fat to fetch water, and never to try to help again. He never did—and another "I can't" was registered.

The stimulus of failure in his case was very faint. He failed, and ever so much as he might want to try again and succeed, the fates of adiposity were against him, so he turned to sand forts, shelters, writing letters and other occupations that tended to aggravate his condition of fatness. In working

against these tendencies, and toward the things the boy needed, the Director had to contend not so much with lack of desire as with physical "I can'tness."

On the other hand, in boys whose build was right, failure sometimes acted as a boiler fire inside, keeping up pressure and increasing effort.

W thrived on failure to make a good dive. He grinned at every belly-flop, let every sting act as a spur to another spurt, kept everlastingly at it until he made a dive, dived from higher and higher places until he made the jump from the top of our tower and was cited for "nerve."

J failed to swim to the rock for seven weeks. He "gritted his teeth" as he called it, after every failure, and declared he would make it yet. He had periods of despair, but hope and the sting of failure kept him at the task until, during the last week of camp, it was done. Failure in his case was as consistently persistent a stimulus as there was. There was little marked improvement in distance swimming, it was a matter of lack of hitting hard, keeping at it. One day he tided over that node of failure and got there. The distance itself proved easy after that.

However, his failures never met with recognition as failures on the part of councilor or director. He was always told, and most insistently, that he could do it. He repeated the words, telling himself that he could, and "gritting his teeth" about it.

Whatever values there may lie in the stimulus of failure, it is camp principle to create an atmosphere of success or possible success, and ever maintain it in hope and faith.

This applies as well to technique, as to mere accomplishment of a thing in the gross. "To do the thing in the best way, instead of in any old way," is a camp motto, and a boy is not successful until his dive is first class, until his stroke is A1, until he handles his paddle in good form, until he can build a fire that fits its peculiar occasion or function, until he can roll a poncho or make a hike-bed that is a work of art in the field of comfort. More and more am I convinced that to learn during a summer to do a few fundamental camper-things thoroughly well, is worth more than the happiest variety of sampling experiences.

IMITATION

Imitation plays an almost ridiculously obvious rôle in camp life, and can be turned to account in the forming of traditions as few other powers may be.

A carpenter bench is a good thing in camp, but it is sterile unless some generic occupation is started spontaneously, or with the appearance of spontaneity, within the group. The

Director's technique here consists in watching his boys and seizing the cue they give.

J built a grotesque little boat with a huge and impossible paddle-wheel. He came to the Chief for a rubber band to make it go. Someone saw him. That afternoon nine boats were under way. Next day the carpenter-bench and tools were made available to B who built a first class boat. A prize was then offered for good craftsmanship. It was found immediately that those who learned to use the tools did better work. The tools were in pressing demand.

Aeroplanes, boomerangs, arrows, cross-bows, rafts, spoons, seem to have their "seasonal" occurrence. Sometimes the initial point can be traced and found, sometimes the contagiously imitative interest seems to come from nowhere. Nurtured while it lasts, it helps enormously to fill camp time profitably. Neglected it peters out or becomes banal.

Spoons forgotten on a camping trip. The Chief carved one of driftwood. Others followed, and competition arose in craftsmanship. No carve, no spoon to eat with, "ghoulash" for supper, not much fun fingered. Ergo—an epidemic of spoons roughly hacked out, but with a tide-over to the workshop where creditable spoons were made, and later even decorated and kept as camp mementoes.

So spoons could easily become a camp tradition, saving tableware, making a tool intensely personal, developing the spirit of art-craft and channelling off the mere whittling instinct into definitely constructive uses.

NATURE LORE

Not "nature work" or "nature-study," but a concrete, seeable, handleable collection of bugs or butterflies, mounted on wooly cotton and pressed against passepartout'd glass, grounded the tradition of nature lore.

It was simply "customary" to make a collection of butterflies.

L made the first collection, exhibited it in its glass box, got credit for it on the bulletin of achievements and—set the pace.

L was one of the brightest boys in camp, twelve years old, clever with his fingers as well as with his brain, a sure shot with the net and possessed of an enthusiasm for capturing things.

But the two youngest boys in camp made little bungling collections, and were helped to frame them, and were just as proud and happy.

There was nothing savoring of the "class" in nature study.

Boys went up to the farm if they wanted to, swung their nets, took messes of bugs and butterflies to the Nature Lady "Mother Nat" who told them what they were, helped classify and arrange them and, when their names and something of their habit and use or un-use was learned, she recommended them for nature honors at headquarters.

A class in nature study would not become tradition. Making a collection for exhibition on exhibit day, and then to keep it for good, can and does become traditional, goes off spontaneously and needs only a slight attention of encouragement for the boys who do not so readily "take."

Learning trees, ferns, fungæ, mosses, flowers, sea-beach flora and fauna are semi-traditional. The impetus of winning honors through these acquirements, the necessity for frequent reminders, the more nearly intellectual nature of the task (or fun) make this part of nature-lore a borderline case between tradition and institution or program. "Have you learned your trees yet" is not nearly so electrically important a question as "have you swum to the rock" or "have you got your collection yet?"

Boys will classify themselves according to native ability. The difference between Camp classification and that of our schools is this: in camp, ten boys of ten grades of ability may work in the shop, or model at clay, or go hunting bugs at the same time and under the same (teacher) councilor. They belong to the same working group, but by their fruits they shall be known, and on the camp record they find themselves classified according as they merit classifying.

L made a collection of nine butterflies, three male and three female of three different species in a week. J collected two butterflies, a moth and a grasshopper. Both accomplished these results in the same week and on the same nature-trips. But L put himself in an honor class of *Naturists*, while J had yet a long way to go.

And to make the honor of *Naturist* carry with it so much that is attractive to a boy that J will want to come back next summer and try to get in that class, is not only to add strength to Camp's magnetism, but actually to increase the boy's initiative and stick-to-itiveness whenever he is out on the job.

The *Naturist*, returning another summer, does not isolate himself in a "class," he assumes some of the functions of a councilor, teaches those boys who like him and want to walk with him what he knows about birds and butterflies and so makes his own knowledge better tested and vital, while filling at least some of the boys with a desire to emulate him. With the *Naturist* rank go privileges that distinguish the boy, such

as greater freedom of choice in his walks and studies, night-time opportunities for mothing or listening in the silence for new voices heard only at night, permission to sleep in tree-house, and other rights granted in recognition of his good work done.

And, having "majored" so to speak in Nature Lore the summer previous, he may turn to some new elective honor, or honors, Woodcraft, Watersport, Marksman, Athletic, etc.

FEAR

Camp policy nearly merges with camp tradition at times, is one with it many times. A cardinal principle of camp is never to force a boy beyond his desire. To stimulate, to encourage, to make tasks and fun attractive, to lead, magnetize and even gently push, yes, but never to push hard, or pull too strongly. To frighten a boy in the water, hurrying to get him over an initial fear, works much more damage than the short cut is ever worth. But even this traditional policy must not become too rigid.

K was afraid to duck his head under water at morning dip. A week of observing other boys worked no change in his attitude toward the dangers involved. His councilor was allowed to initiate him into the mysteries of under-water, and from that morning on, he ducked.

But this lad was an exceptional case, and called for special treatment in many directions.

He was afraid of horses. He wanted to ride but could not bring himself to mount a horse. After considerable study by the Director and Council, despite his tears and howls of protest, he was mounted and held in the saddle. Soon he stopped crying and began to smile. In five minutes he was thoroughly enjoying the new experience. As soon as he was genuinely happy in the saddle, he was taken off and was not allowed to ride again until the following week when he mounted horse himself and felt thoroughly at home.

There may always be one or more cases of special "intellectual timidity" where an idea has been lodged in the mind about the danger of a thing like water, horses, rifle, boxing. K rationalized his fears and feared his rationalizations. He had heard or learned that horses were dangerous (no history of a previous fear, or scare could be traced) but he merely stated in cold terms that horses were dangerous, not that he was afraid of horses, and hung to the belief until his rather forcible experience changed his mind, when his feelings followed suit.

Usually, however, it is camp policy to be long patient with

initial difficulties, and never to force a boy into anything beyond power and desire.

SONGS

Imitation in constructive directions obviates much of the merely negative in discipline and law. There was no "don't carve your initials in the furniture and trees" at Camp. A boy was selected early as having done good work, he was awarded a paddle, and the right to decorate it with his sign or symbol, a symposium on symbols was held, interest in symbolic trademarks or signs grew warm, and the natural tendency of boyhood to appropriate landscape and property in his own deep carven name was merely shifted to the decorative element in the paddle tradition. Camp was singularly free from annoying petty desecration and the only specific reference to the matter cropped out in a song of a "would be camper"—

He thot the lake would bite him if it got above his knees,
He didn't know mosquitoes from potato bugs or fleas
He used to carve initials on the furniture and trees,
But he's never been to Camp Timanous!

Song merely followed action and encouraged imitation. Morning dip, taking a dive, paddling in tune, brushing teeth, piling wood, sleeping out on the pine needles, getting licked in a boxing match—these and many more, found their way into classic camp songs which doubtless had their sub-conscious effect and added splendidly to the camp morale, or "quality of the spirit of the whole."

"He told of the boxing there, bout after bout,
He said that the best fun was getting knocked out"

— to the rollicking tune of "Blow the Man Down" and linked with other versings that glorified work, success, and failure well taken, established a standard for camp minstrelsy by which all songs could be tested in the future. The song-tradition was pitched high with a definite purpose in the plan and spiritual drive of the whole.

COURT

To make "court" serious was a delicate bit of pitching tradition to just the note desired. Humor must have its place, for even a court must be a living thing, but to make boys realize that this playing at grown-up court procedure was serious business, that it was their own instrument of justice and mercy, was the vital point.

Court tried cases of major discipline. A Judge presided and a jury sat. Lawyers might be chosen, or plaintiff and defendant might plead their own case. There was privilege of final appeal to the Director, but this was seldom, if ever, resorted to. The boys worked out their own cases generally along lines of sound common sense. The fact that their decisions were sometimes guided by participation of councilor or Chief in the court procedure did not seem to make them less the boys' own. They gradually came to believe in the court as theirs, and appealed to it as theirs and took keen interest in its procedure, and in taking their part.

Court uses the stimulus of the group to draw out one's best in defense and attack. The competitive element enters, success gives zest, failure either discourages or puts more fight into a lad, depending largely on his native temperament. The boys learn to talk on their feet. Accuracy of observation is tested in cross-fire of questions, exaggerations have short life, succinct statements of truth swing their full value into the fray, truth itself is tested and found solid. Half truths find hard sailing under cross-examination and tears often take their place.

Infrequency of session is life-blood to court tradition. Only cases of real merit, where it is worth the time and effort of the group, are brought up. Others are squelched quickly, or die before the Court can be called.

PADDLE-SHIELD

This camp, on an inland lake, played up water-sports supremely. Canoeing, boating, diving, swimming, war-canoeing and longer trips here and there on the water meant the focusing of much traditional matter lakeward.

The canoe-paddle was chosen as a focal point. A boy, through variety of effort to accomplish definite items on the camp program might earn for himself a blank, unvarnished paddle, like the blank shields of King Arthur's fledgling knights.

Through further effort and more accomplishment, he earned the right to decorate his paddle with a symbol, or sign which he had chosen as his own after earning the right to possess a symbol. As a special reward for extraordinary merit in his course of accomplishment, he was entitled to decorate the reverse of his paddle with the symbol that stood for his Camp. He might then decorate and varnish his paddle, after which it was his to use and to keep.

This tradition began by giving paddle, symbol, camp symbol all at once, and it was found that just in proportion as a paddle

was made hard to attain through additional effort for the various elements, just so much harder did the boys work to earn it, therefore the gradation of earnings scale.

The paddles also focussed the art-work of the boys. Some needed much more assistance than others. Some boys drew and colored their symbols and decorations many times on scratch sheets before they were allowed to attempt, with assistance, the decoration of their paddles. The way one boy guarded and treasured his decorated paddle was a joy to all who beheld it.

But the most interesting single tradition bearing on the philosophy of Camp, both from the sociologist's and the educator's view points, was the Timanous tradition.

Camp was named after one who lives now only in memory, tradition, spirit. The weaver of Camp songs had never known him face to face, but felt his attitude, his spirit, if you please in the atmosphere:

And for the boys who followed him he fought with all his
might,

He was a leader brave and true,

And he won the hearts of all the folks who came within his
sight,

And of some of us who never saw him, too.

Only two of the boys in Camp had known Timanous (an Indian name for Guiding Spirit given to Doctor Luther Gulick) the rest gathered from a word here and there, from references to his personality and work at morningsong and reading exercises, from occasional anecdotes relating to his life and from the portrait that hung in the main bungalow, that Timanous was a history, a point in the past from which traditions ramified, and abiding influence in the present, though hard to explicitly define, and more felt than understood.

I may have read it into the atmosphere myself, but I felt that here, in actual practice, within a group of "little savages" one could note the evolution of the ancient tribal God, or great ancestor, or revered Chieftain who lived on through generations of traditional heredity, speaking through the lesser and more immediate leaders of the present time.

This very fact of personality gave body to the traditional background of Camp in its spiritual essence, for, though seldom referred to consciously as the embodiment of such traditions as I am making the main theme here, it was generally felt that he did embody them, stood for them, gave them their initial velocity and would be pleased to find them working out today.

And this has appealed to me as a most wholesome, concrete and uniquely personal hero-myth. For myth it is carrying the core of solid truth that all perpetuated myths are centered by, and being here essentially local, palpably possessed by the immediate group, or tribe.

Fortunately "Old Chief Timanous" as Camp song had made him familiar to the boys, had left a wealth of immediately applicable camp tradition-stuff that could be known as coming directly from him through those leaders and councilors who had from him inherited ideas, ideals and enthusiasms. He had also left his written words, in books, and these were read by councilors who read with sympathy, and who could not help radiating something of the same spirit that animated those words when they were written.

Two of the council had vitally experienced in action the substance of one glowing paragraph which bears quoting here, so germane to the subject it is:

"Friendships demand the focussing of the attention upon each other—there is no friendship without acquaintance. For this reason doing things together, having mutual interests, is a common mode for the formation of friendships. There seems to be something almost magical in the common things of life to draw people together. Doing those things together which all the people of all the world have done together; experiencing the common feel of earth under one's feet, the look of green trees, the touch of fresh water; cooking in the open; sleeping on the ground about the camp-fire; carrying the pack; standing the strain of the long trail—somehow human nature seems to come right to the top and look around under such conditions as these. You somehow don't need to become friends—you just are friends . . . It seems as if sham, insincerity, false courtesy and other pretenses are swept away by the sweat that pours from the body and you and he stand before each other for what you really are . . . Under such conditions souls fuse."¹

And so, through councilor and Chief acting out in their several ways as much of the spiritual tradition laid down for camping by Timanous as they might, the myth was nurtured and has begun its growth. And here Camp Tradition and the larger matter of Leisure Time draw close together.

Here we have much of the spirit of a personality who has lived out, spoken and written out a great deal of the very best not only of camp lore, but of life-lore itself, pouring itself into a dynamic mould, the camp unit. We have councilors who have lived through such friendship forming experiences

¹ The Dynamic of Manhood. Dr. L. H. Gulick.

as Timanous has described, and happy to see other boys tasting the same rich joys. We have boys subject to these friend-forming influences in the most natural of primitive circumstances; boys doing these things together because they have chosen to, and working into the texture of their inner natures the very stuff of right conduct and of happy human relationships.

And if a man has had this simple philosophy of the out-of-doors and its myriad possibilities of enjoyment ingrained early in his nature, will we not have a more spiritual world to live in? For after all, the very elements of spirituality are here in the doing of wholesome, happy things together because we may choose to do them and the reward in the doing is joy, and peace, and freedom and purity of purpose and all the cardinal points of any attempt at defining spiritual life. And to these concrete things will a man turn in later life when he has a chance, and to these he will want his children to turn, and will work for their opportunity. *School*—leisure and opportunity for happy, wholesome choices will get back its share in our educational scheme of things, and summer camp will have made its larger contribution to the moulding of American character.