

THE EARLY DAYS OF HONG KONG SCOUTING—PART 20

ARCHIVES OF THE PAST – Part 10

This is the final part of an article appearing in the February 1941 issue of the Hong Kong Scouting Gazette, some 10 months before the fall of Hong Kong to the Japanese Imperial Army on 25th December 1941. It ironically recorded the last Christmas "Good Turns" by the Hong Kong Wolf Cubs before the 2nd World War which would be followed by the darkest Christmas of Hong Kong History: the surrendering of the British Garrison to the invading Japanese Army on the next Christmas day exactly one year after.

CUB CHRISTMAS "GOOD TURNS"

(Continued)

On reaching the home, we were met by a lady helper and a huge crowd of kiddies who were very interested to see such a lot of visitors all at once. They were all dressed alike and it was a terribly difficult job to pick out each individual from the other. Some of them weren't a bit shy, and came up and said "Hello" to us.

We took all our parcels inside and placed them on a table in the hall. Akela went upstairs to greet Miss Dibden, who was unfortunately ill in bed, and the rest of us went outside into the garden to make friends with the babies. Of course, they were real babies, only about three or four years old, and much too young to understand all the games we played round the fish-pond such as "Tag" and "Bad eggs." However, they were real friendly people and before long, we had several of them 'nick-named' after our Cubs and soon they were all following us around and watching with much interest what we were doing next. Shere Khan said he was sure they thought us very funny people, and no doubt wondered why grown-ups, (we were grown up compared to them, you know), should act like we did.



I'm sure we were as much objects of interest to them as they were to us. Another thing which made us laugh was the fact that all the boys and girls were dressed alike, and we couldn't tell one from the other. Probably some of the children we called Peter, Francis, Alan and Gordon were girls. However, they didn't seem to mind so no one bothered about that.

After a few games, Akela came into the garden and told us

that Miss Dibden wished to see us and thank us for the presents we had brought. We all went upstairs and Miss Dibden made a very nice speech and said she wondered how so few Cubs could have brought so many things. We were just a wee bit embarrassed because after all they were only old toys and some oranges and sweets and besides that, it was our Christmas good turn and I'm sure we were all enjoying being there as much, if not more, than the babies.

After Miss Dibden had let us go we were shown round the home and if we had thought there were lots of babies outside, there were far more inside. They had little separate rooms according to their ages and were sleeping or lying awake in converted soap boxes made into little beds for them. They all looked very happy, with the exception of the very tiny ones and we couldn't tell whether they were happy or sad, they had such wee wrinkled faces. Of course they were only a few weeks old.

After looking round the home, we all went downstairs into the garden and gave each baby a sweet. You ought to have seen the Cubs unwrapping sweets and popping them into the waiting mouths of the kiddies. This of course, made us all firm friends, and wherever we went, we had two or three of the babies following us around.

It was time to go now, so we said goodbye to the nurses and went to catch our bus, which was waiting outside the gates. About eighteen of the older children came to see us off and walked right to the road with us. Gosh, you ought to have seen Shere Khan walking solemnly along hand in hand with one about three years old.

I'm sure they were all sorry to see us go and right they way down the road we could see them waving and calling 'Goodbye' to us.

We had tea near Sheungshui Village underneath some big trees and after two exciting games found it was time to go home. In fact it was nearly too late, and we had to make a dash for the train. We got a comfortable seat going back and when we got back to Kowloon we all voted that we had had a very pleasant afternoon and hoped that Miss Dibden's home would be a very happy place when Father Christmas came along.

Good hunting,

Jaytee."