

19.2.18

August 1931

COUTER

Enthusiastic? After inspecting a small rally of them, Scouts and Guides, Cubs and Brownies, on the platform at Stormberg station, and they had cheered us off, we thought we had seen the last of them. Not a bit of it: they scrambled into motor cars and raced after us along the road parallel to the railway for twelve miles, and on our arrival at Molteno there they were again to welcome us a second time, and to chat and cheer us off again. A number of these were Afrikaners, that is Dutch-speaking boys and girls, formerly known as Boers.

At Maritzburg we saw a delightful Gilwell perched high in the upland, and doing great work among the Scouts and Scouters. Among the novel institutions to be seen here was that of a Pathway of Honour, made of footprints made in concrete by Scouts specially selected by their Court of Honour for general excellence and Scouty-ness. I went through the operation of having my footprint taken, to be placed at the head of the pathway. A very delightful idea!

Another good Gilwell exists at Johannesburg, and a new one has been formed at Cape Town, so everywhere the Movement is going ahead. The general improvement since my last visit four years ago was very noticeable, especially in the four new Divisions which have been formed on the lines of the suggestion that I made at that time out of the original unwieldy and over large Cape Province.

In regard to the natives of South Africa many of us have felt that since we British have broken up their tribal systems of discipline and training we have given them little to replace them beyond high wages, bad temptations, and such lessons in civilisation as they can gather from low-class American cinema films. We owe them some sort of character training as an antidote to these, and to the insidious propaganda of communists and other extremist agitators.

The colour prejudice is so strong in South Africa that if you were to admit one coloured boy to be a Boy Scout the white boys would be withdrawn *en masse* from the Movement. This has already happened in the Boys Brigade and Church Lads' Brigade. We have therefore helped to inaugurate a parallel Movement on similar lines for the non-European boys. This is called the "Path-finder" Movement; one for native girls on the lines of the Girl Guides is entitled the "Wayfarers." Both Movements have made a very promising start under the direction of Mr. Rheinallt Jones and others, and after six years have now been fairly established about the Union with satisfactory results. Their leaders are chiefly native school teachers, trained by officers of the Scouts and Guides.

Another Movement which proposed to start was that of the "Voortrekkers." Over a year ago the promoters, together with the Education authorities, had had a conference with the Boy Scout Council of South Africa. Every effort was made to get them to affiliate the idea with the existing Movement, since our great hope is that the boys of both Dutch and British descent, coming together in comradeship in the one Movement, would grow up as friends, and thus become a united South African Nation, working for the future good of the country without continually harping on past differences.

This Voortrekker Movement was said to be for Afrikaner boys desiring to be Boy Scouts. The Scout authorities pointed out that they could do this by joining the Scout Movement where they would be allowed

their own language and their own leaders. But this was not enough for the promoters of the Voortrekkers, who said that they could not take the Promise of loyalty to the King, and wished the word "Country" substituted for King. The Scouts declined to omit the word King, but were willing to add "Country" to the Promise, and so matters stood when I came to South Africa last month.

Dr. van der Merwe, the leader of the Republican party and the promoter of the Voortrekkers, came with his Committee to see me. He asked me, whether in the event of the Voortrekker Movement being started, it would be officially recognised as a national Movement by the International Scout Bureau. I told him that I thought this most improbable, since the Bureau could only recognise one Movement in each country, and on condition that that Movement took the Scout Promise of allegiance to the constituted authority in that country. Personally, I do not apprehend that the Voortrekkers, if they start, will have a very long and effective existence. An opposition Girl Guide Movement was started some years ago, also on political grounds, but this soon fizzled out.

As things are, 20 per cent. of our Scouts are Afrikaners, and some troops are wholly composed of them. My earnest hope is that by the boys of the two races coming together in one Brotherhood they will cease from looking back as their elders do on the quarrels of the past, and look forward to building up a united South African nation through the comradeship engendered in the Movement.

THE WAY HOME

The finale of our long journey will long live in our memory. As we steamed out from Cape Town on our last lap towards our home, we espied high up on the mountain side a thousand Scouts and Guides who had formed themselves into a gigantic living arrow; all waving white towels, they let fly to us their farewell message of "Goodwill and Peace."

A happy sequel to this was that at the only stop of call at which we stopped on the voyage towards home we found Scouts and Guides awaiting us. This was at the island of Madeira. The two Troops of Scouts there have now also produced a Cub Pack and a fine Rover Crew of twenty senior boys. There was also a newly formed Company of Guides, and a Brownie Pack. The whole lot turned out well equipped and smart in correct uniform, evidently keen and efficient. In their address of welcome the Scouts expressed their hearty goodwill and admiration for their Brother Scouts in Great Britain. One of their Rovers, Jaime Remos, will represent Madeira at the Kandersteg Moot, and I hope he will there pick up plenty of Scouty ideas and knowledge that will be helpful to his Brother Scouts in their home away out in the Atlantic.

Basen Parry & Silwell

The "Pathway of Honour"

A description of the "Pathway of Honour," referred to by the Chief on page 325, will appear in the September issue.—EDITOR.

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