

May 1962

Ed 21

On the 31st May we are celebrating two historic occasions in the life of our country. Firstly, the occurrence in 1910 when the four separate States became one nation - when the Union of South Africa was formed. That was 52 years ago. Secondly, the change in our form of Government to that of a Republic, which happened just one year ago.

In your school you are taught our country's history. I think we can all draw inspiration by reading about people who went before us, for it is because of their efforts, their courage, their devotion to the tasks which lay before them, their faith in God, which enabled them to carry on against apparently insuperable difficulties and continuous disappointments, that we enjoy all the things which we today take for granted.

I have been reading about one or two of these Pioneers recently, and I would like to tell you about some of them. Do you know who were the first white people to come and live in the Transvaal? Where they

came from, and why?

The first settlers in the Transvaal were a Mr. Thomas Laidman Hodgson, his wife and daughter, and Mr. Samuel Broadbent and his wife and son. That was on New Year's day 1823. They had travelled all the way from Graaff Reinet in ox wagons. They had come to open a Mission Station, and bring the Gospel to people who had never seen a white man before. It was a time when the Transvaal - it was not called that then - was ravaged by intertribal wars, when two of the Zulu Chieftains had fled from the wrath of Chaka, and were in turn ravaging Sotho people living in the Transvaal. Those early Pioneers must have been people of great courage and faith to face the perils that beset them. Their oxen to draw their wagons were stolen - marauding tribes were burning villages and killing the inhabitants, but the faith of these white people, and their belief that the task they were doing was God's will, sustained them through their many trials.

You children here have a beautiful school, and you have all manner of amenities. I recently read about a Dr. Rose-Innes who was charged with the improvement of education in the old Cape Colony in 1839. He was allocated the sum of £3460: with which he was to maintain the existing schools, and build and staff twelve new schools to be opened in the remote farming districts. At that time there were virtually no school teachers in the hinterland of the Cape Colony. Most of the teaching was done by persons who themselves only had a smattering of education, and where it was not usual for a person to spend more than two or three years at school. In the eleven Government schools in existence at that time, there were only 500 pupils. How far we have come since those days, and how much better our opportunities are than those of the early Pioneers.

- INSERT PARAGRAPH ABOUT VOORTREKKERS -

In the July holidays some of you will, no doubt, visit the Game Reserve. You may travel on the Jock of the Bushveld road. At the time of Jock of the Bushveld the Lowveld areas was a very unhealthy spot - tsetse fly

was a plague, and killed the animals, and you have probably read in Jock of the Bushveld of Percy Fitzpatrick's last trek, and how all his animals died between Malalane and Louws Creek. Few persons who travelled in those years were not laid low by malaria, so while you are enjoying all the amenities just spare a moment to think of those who opened up the area to make it possible for you to travel so easily.

Why am I telling you this? Because at a time like this, when we are celebrating great national events, it is good to pay tribute to those who have gone before, and who did much to improve the world as they found it. When one studies the lives of great men and women, one draws inspiration from them.

Some years ago I heard a definition of a gentleman, and this applies equally to a lady. The definition has nothing to do with fine speech, or the clothes that one wears, with a person's education, his parentage or his wealth. The definition was this:

"A gentleman is a person who puts more in than he takes out."

What does this mean? And would our South Africa be a happier place if we all complied with that definition? Is not our trouble in South Africa that too many people are trying to get things for themselves instead of saying "If I do that, how will it affect the other fellow?" South Africa's motto is 'Unity is Strength'. What can you children do to help bring about that unity. South Africa needs men and women, boys and girls, who have trained minds, healthy bodies, and who are eager to serve their fellows - to put in more than they take out. People who can see the other person's point of view - people of courage, with a spirit of adventure - people who are prepared to work hard, for very little worthwhile happens without sustained effort.

All boys and girls, and most men and women, are hero-worshippers. When I was a schoolboy one of my heroes was Dr. Edward Wilson. Have you heard of him? He was one of the persons who accompanied Capt. Robert Scott on his

expedition to the South Pole in 1912. Some of you will know the story of how, after reaching the South Pole, they found that Amundsen, the Norwegian, had reached the Pole first: how, on the return journey, one of the party, Capt. Oates, whose feet were badly frost bitten, and thus made it impossible to keep up with the other, left the camp to die in the snow rather than hold up his companions. This has been said of Dr. Wilson:

"In the epic of South Polar exploration no name is more rightly honoured than Edward Adrian Wilson, the friend of Robert Falcon Scott and Lawrence Edward Oates, with whom he reached the Pole and with whom he died in the heroic and tragic struggle back. It is hard not to speak in superlatives of such a character as Dr. Wilson's. In him were blended passionate devotion to work for others (nearly to the wrecking of his own health), deep religious conviction, intense love of the country and its birds and beasts, keen artistic perception and a horror of all that was mean and low and dishonest. In his medical and

research work at home and in his two Polar journeys, he found himself, followed his ideals and inspired all his comrades with a wondrous feeling of affection and admiration."

Dr. Wilson was a man of great character, who was unostentatiously a man of great faith, to whom the men on that expedition went with all their troubles and found him always ready to help. He gave of himself without stint. It is persons like Dr. Wilson whose characters we should study and make our heroes.

If you remember nothing else of my address, please remember that what South Africa needs, your school needs, your home needs, are ladies and gentlemen - people who are prepared to put more into their community, their school, their home, to put more in than they take out, and in doing so they will be happy people.

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