



African Diary

by Dr. W. H. Mullen

About four days after I arrived in South Africa I had a very pleasant conversation with an English farmer who was born here of pioneer parents. I told him that this was my first trip to S.A., and then he asked me how long I was going to stay. I replied, "About five or six months," and then I added: "I hope to learn a lot of things." His next comment was quite pointed: "When you have been here three years then you can say you are learning a lot of things." I replied: "In that case I'll say that I am seeing a lot of things." He said, "That's better."

Despite the man's comment I think I have already learned a lot of things after seven weeks, although the farmer's advice was very appropriate for those who think that a few weeks in Africa will qualify them as political or cultural experts. I have no such pretensions. But I have been here long enough to be aware of some of the more intangible aspects of the South African way of life. The external characteristics and differences are quite obvious, such as I mentioned in my last "diary." What I am referring to now one cannot learn in the home newspapers, books, or even missionary conferences. One discovers it in observing people's actions, in snatches of their conversations, in their inter-personal relationship, in their expressions of hope and sorrow, their accomplishments and frustrations. In other words, by being in the midst of the people one senses attitudes, feelings, perspectives, little nuances of thought and action that cannot be conveyed second-hand. I think it is on this level that one must find the illumination so essential to the understanding of the utterances in the public press, and the claims and counter-claims of a people in cultural conflict.

I do not react favorably to everything I have seen or heard, but I am impressed by a certain characteristic of the people, both white and non-white. It is difficult to isolate or analyze, but maybe it is sort of an unspoiled simplicity yet unburied beneath the more superficial excrescences of our western civilization. This, admittedly, is a generalization. I do find the typical striving for status in every level of society; and although Africa is sort of in the middle geographically between East and West, the pull of the West is very evident in the big modern cities like Johannesburg and Durban. This pull can be seen in their thriving industry, the congested traffic, the manner of dress, their art, education, best-sellers, symphony concerts, and tall churches. (So far there is no TV to enhance their other cultural media.) But even amidst the modern technology and efficiency the simplicity of which I speak is still apparent. It takes the form of a certain tender regard for the land with its great diversity of open veld, arable soil, and endless hills. It is also a kind of wholesome friendliness that shines through a somewhat more reserved exterior. I think this attitude is quite characteristic of most of the European South Africans.

An analysis, on any level, of the Bantu racial groups—that is, the indigenous African peoples of the southern part of Africa—is more complex, largely because of the

The King's Highway



SPOTLIGHT ON MAINE

During the Easter holidays, the Bethany Choir will make a brief all-Maine tour. The proposed itinerary is: Thursday, Beals with Jonesport; Friday, Calais with Crawford and Black's Harbor; Saturday, Houlton (Youth for Christ); Sunday morning, Fort Fairfield; Sunday afternoon, 2:30 p.m., Presque Isle with churches of district.

The mixed-voice choir will present a service of inspiration consisting of some of the greatest hymns of the church, old and new. The male quartet will also participate in the services. Travelling with the group will be Miss Carolyn Pocock, M.M., choir director; Rev. H. R. Ingersoll, superintendent and Rev. C. E. Stairs, college president.

One of the purposes of the tour is to stimulate the interest of the youth in Bethany. In fact, Bethany is looking to Maine to provide ten students of Christian character for next year's student body.



Miss Sylvia Fuller

Already the first of these is in the process of application. Miss Sylvia Fuller, Easton, has applied to enter the Bible department for the fall term. Miss Fuller, who graduates from high school in June, is an "A" student with a talent in singing. Her interest in Bethany was intensified by a visit to the campus last fall. She is looking forward eagerly to September.

Other prospective students are advised to apply now, for it is the School's intention to be more selective in accepting applicants for the coming year.

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Wanted! Men and women, boys and girls, who will qualify for the experience of holiness. Apply to God in person. Only qualified candidates will be accepted. In a very real sense this is the language of Scripture. God has graciously provided a "more excellent way" for those who are willing to separate, consecrate, supplicate, and meet God's conditions for holiness. **Evangelist Wilfrid Moutoux.**

modification induced by their European contemporaries. To some of the Bantu the effect is good and they gladly give up their own cultural structure in order to achieve status in the white man's world. Of course it is a question, apart from his acceptance of Christ's teachings, whether or not he has lost more than he has gained. But here too, despite the contrasts of plenty and poverty, achievement and frustration, there is a simplicity that is refreshing to observe.

Maybe this can be illustrated by a little scene that took place at my door. Many African children go by my room on their way to and from school on the far side of the mission land. One day as a token of my friendliness I gave a small cookie to each of three of our children. The response was one of spontaneous delight. They examined the cookies carefully, and with tiny nibbles to make them last as long as possible, they went off amidst excited chatter and happy laughter. It is true that I had another, and larger, contingent the next day; but I was quite moved to be a participant in a situation where a cookie was still a big event in the life of a child.