



## African Diary

by Dr. W. H. Mullen

I was so entranced with my first trip to Basutoland that when I had the opportunity to go again I gladly went. This was the occasion of the annual Junior Class outing which, traditionally, is a mountain climbing trip. The high point of the trip (and please excuse the pun) is the scaling of Mt. Machache which rises to a height of about 9,400 feet.

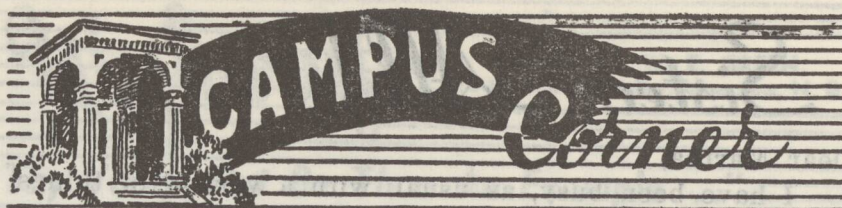
We took the car as far as we could, but from there it involved a walk of about six miles just to get to the base of the mountain proper. The approach was still all uphill, and by this time I had already done quite enough climbing. I went part way up the final peak, but the last 1,500 feet looked too formidable for my waning energy. Old Caleb, for all his eighty-five years, would have said, "Give me this mountain," and would have planted his banner at the top; but I was quite happy to let the younger members of our party have the glory. I parked myself beside a pack trail which went up through the nearby pass, and waited for the others to return.

For five hours I was alone in the mountains of Basutoland; yet not alone, for the trail was quite busy. Several herds of cattle came by under the care of Basuto men on horseback, then a couple "trains" of donkeys loaded with produce. Occasionally a family group would come down or up the trail. I was starting to eat my lunch when three very shy young herd-boys came by. They were wrapped in blankets but their feet were bare. At first they hardly looked at me at all, but at my food. I offered each a sandwich, and each extended his two hands, cupped together, to receive it. Then they talked quite volubly. I made signs that my heart was beating fast and that my other friends had gone up the steep cliff beyond us. By their smiles and nods I think they understood.

On the way in to the mountain we passed or went through about a dozen villages, some at the seven or eight thousand foot level. It would be quite impossible for me to describe the sheer beauty of the situation. The people were all friendly, and posed excitedly for pictures. At one hut where we paused to rest we were offered some dried fruit which I found tasty and refreshing. In one village was a well-built little brick church which probably also served the other nearby villages. I am not sure what denomination it was, but I am quite certain that this time it was Protestant.

This is harvest time in South Africa. "The frost is on the pumpkin and the fodder's in the shock." I enjoyed very much spending part of a recent afternoon helping to gather in our pumpkins and squash. Regardless of the calendar, harvest puts one in a thanksgiving mood. On Sunday, May 13, we had a special Harvest Thanksgiving service. It was a cooperative affair with our Anglican neighbors who occupy half of the mission station. The Anglican mission chapel was tastefully decorated for the occasion. I had the pleasure of preaching the sermon. A good number of community people came in for the service.

The King's Highway



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A brilliant young actor on the way to the theater was handed a tract by a humble old woman. He pushed it into his pocket and forgot all about it until he pulled it out at the hotel that night. He casually read it and then reread it. It so arrested him that, the next morning, he paid a visit to a minister, who pointed him to the Saviour.

Five months later he gave up the stage and entered a theological college. That man became Dr. George C. Lorimer, famous pastor of Tremont Temple in Boston.

—Selected

"One has no more religion than is acted out in his life."

Among my "religious" impressions of South Africa, I have observed that religion is still a very important thing in the life of the European population. At least this is true in The Orange Free State. The Dutch Reformed Church seems to have a lot of influence. Its effect is seen not only in the well-attended church services, where the biggest service is usually Sunday evening, but in the observance of the day itself. I have been in Africa more than fifteen weeks now, and I have not seen a single piece of farm equipment in operation on the Lord's Day. Undoubtedly this is the way it should be, but the contrast is quite noticeable in comparison with the attitude and practise in my own country.

"In my next 'diary' I hope to be able to tell you about my first visit to some of the Reformed Baptist work. If all goes well I plan to spend part of the last week in May with Rev. Glendon Kierstead. This will give me the opportunity to see the Bible School in operation.