

SKY PILOT NEWS

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George and his bark hut.

GEORGE'S TITHE: A Story From The Sky Pilot's Log (2CH Broadcast)

To those unfamiliar with the Northern Territory, it may be difficult to understand how a man without cattle—or, without any great number of cattle—is able to build up a large herd within a few years. At the time of this story, Joe had not been long in the north. When he heard that George, who had sold all his cattle and gone to Queensland for a time, had returned to the north with less than twenty head of cattle in order to start a new cattle station, Joe thought he was mad.

"Smithy," said Joe, "you know George pretty well, don't you?"

"Yes, Joe, I have known him for years. Why?"

"Well, is he quite right in the head? I mean, he isn't a bit simple, is he?"

"Far from it. George is a very clever old rascal—and a very lovable one, too. What's he been doing now?"

"He's taken up a lease near Long Billabong and brought twenty head of cattle back to start a new cattle station."

"What's wrong about that?" I asked. "It's good country, well watered and surrounded by other cattle stations. He should do well."

"The country's all right," admitted Joe.

"But how long is it going to take him to build up a herd of a couple of thousand cattle from twenty beasts?"

"It would take the average stockman about ten years. George should be able to do it within two or three years."

"Two or three years? Oh, don't be silly; cattle don't breed that quick."

"No one expects them to," I told him. "Most of the cattle stations, or I should say, some of them, in this country have been built up from nothing more than a team of working bullocks."

"Now you're as mad as George," Joe complained. "I don't know much about cattle, but I'm not as green as I look. I know bullocks don't breed."

"They don't need to. Perhaps I'd better explain. There have been cattle stations up here for many years. There are no fences, and wild cattle are scattered all over the place. Before a man can lease grazing land he must have some cattle; but the law does not say how many or what sex. George will bring his little herd to the country he has leased, and every beast on that country that doesn't carry a brand legally belongs to him—except calves still following branded mothers, of course."

"But those cattle really will come from the herds of men living near George."

"Maybe, but that doesn't alter the law. Anyhow, some of the cattle have been bred from cleanskins in their turn."

"A cleanskin is an unbranded beast, isn't it?" asked Joe.

"Yes. Well, besides the cattle on the lease he has taken up, George is entitled to half the unbranded cattle on the boundary—the other neighbour owns the other half; if there is another half."

"How do you mean, 'if there is another half'?"

"Well," I replied, "I know George. Usually he keeps strictly to the letter of the law. That being so, he never brands on the boundary; he burns a patch of country in the centre of his run, and when there is a good shoot of green grass the cattle come in from the boundary after it. Then George brands the lot, instead of half."

"The old scoundrel!" exclaimed Joe.

"It's quite legal," I explained. "And everyone does the same in this country, if they think of it in time."

"Well, I wish we had neighbours' cattle on this side of the river; we're mighty short of beef ourselves."

"Yes. I'm afraid that when I was down South on furlough the cattle were neglected

and wandered away. It will be years before we build up the herd again. We haven't any beef at all at the moment, have we?"

"Not a skerrick!" Joe said emphatically. "I wish we had. Heaven only knows when we'll taste beef again."

However, we were to have beef sooner than we expected. While I was away the next day, George came over, and Joe went to meet him.

"Hullo," said Joe. "You've been away for a long time, George, but trust you to turn up like a bad penny. Smithy's out. Anything I can do for you?"

"Hullo, Joe. Yes. I knew Smithy was out, the blacks told me; but you'll do. How are you off for beef?"

"Not a skerrick, George; I'm afraid we can't help you this time."

"I don't want beef; I've plenty of me own. I come over to see if you could use a bullock. I've got one there that's just dyin' to be killed. He's good an' fat, an' a bit of fresh beef will do you good. I heard you was short."

"But you haven't many yourself! You ought to keep them and let them breed up a bit."

"This old bullock I'm talkin' about ain't goin' to be much help in that direction, Joe. No, I can spare him all right."

"But you'll need beef yourself," protested Joe. "You can't go giving bullocks away like that."

"Now, see here, Joe, there's plenty more bullocks in the bush. Anyway, what's a bullock in this country? There'll be plenty more when me and you is dead, so why worry?"

"Well, it's very decent of you," said Joe, hastily, as if afraid George might change his mind. "I'll take it if you feel that way about it. Is it a tithe?"

"No, it ain't; it's a bullock. What's a tithe?"

"Christian people," explained Joe, "often give a tenth of their income to the Lord, and it's called a tithe."

"I never knowed the Lord was short of beef. But I'm killing this 'ere bullock for you and Smithy. It's a good bullock, but it ain't—what did you call it?"

"A tithe. But," Joe insisted, "to give it to those who haven't any beef is just the same as giving it to the Lord."

"Joe, you'll come to a bad end. You've been too long in this country without a holiday. You think you're God now! What next? If God wants some beef, I've got another bullock where this one came from;

but this one is for you and Smithy, like I said."

"Thanks very much, George. All the same, I know God will accept it as a tithe to Him, and He will reward you."

"You must be pretty thick with him, Joe, if He's goin' to take it so much to heart just because I reckon you're scraggy lookin' and in need of a good feed of beef. No, it ain't a tithe."

But Joe's words stuck in George's mind, and later he asked me to explain what Joe meant. Somehow the idea pleased the kind-hearted old stockman, and he thought it would be a good idea if he put it into practice.

"I get the idea," he announced. "An' I'm quite prepared to give a tenth of all my cattle to anyone who needs beef. Come to think of it, I ain't never given much away in me life. Not that I'm real mean, but I just didn't think of it."

I looked at the old man with wonder. "George," I said, "you've been in this country most of your life. In all that time have you never killed a bullock for the bush blacks—I don't mean your working boys, I mean the hungry, old and sick people who hang around in the camp?"

"Why, yes, I often do that, Smithy; I couldn't see nobody go hungry. I guess I kill one or two every month for the old and sick blacks."

"And you say you never give anything away! How many head of cattle have you got now?"

"Let me see. Seventeen cows, one bull and one killer—that's the bullock, of course."

"You can't afford to be generous now," I told him, but he only laughed.

"Ha, ha, plenty more cattle in the bush to be had for the takin'. I guess it won't hurt me to give one in ten to the Lord—as Joe calls it. Come to think of it, it don't seem right of Joe to say that. When I think of the dirty old blackfellows I give the last bullock to—well, somehow it don't sound right to say they was God."

"God won't be offended. Anything given to those unfortunate people will be taken as given to God, I'm sure of that. And God won't forget you, either."

"That's what Joe said. But I don't expect the Lord to take on about it."

George went back to his lease and put in some weeks of good hard work mustering the thick scrub. On his return from the muster, Joe and I went down to see him, and we were both surprised to notice how his small herd of cattle had increased.

"I say, where on earth did you get these

cattle?" asked Joe. "You had less than twenty a few weeks ago, and now you must have over a hundred."

"A hundred an' thirty-four, to be exact," George replied proudly. "Them cattle of mine is good breeders. Some of the calves was full-grown when they was born, as you can see!"

"A hundred and thirty-four! And I suppose you killed a couple for beef?"

"I kill one every week for the stock boys and myself, and I kill one in every ten for the old blacks in the camp. That's me tithe. You see, I've learned the word now, Joe."

"You're a fine man," admitted Joe with admiration. "I'm sure God will bless you for your generosity."

"He's done that already, Joe. I was wonderin' how I was goin' to get on about musterin' that boundary near Frank's. There was a lot of cleanskins on that boundary an' I knew Frank would want half. Then the Lord stepped in and sent a storm on my country. All the cattle on the boundary an' some of those over the boundary came along right into my country, an' I got 'em all branded afore Frank woke up. Ha, ha! He came along too late, an' the things he said would make your hair stand on end! But I told 'im it was the Lord's doing, all because of me givin' a tithe. Then I suggested he ought to give a tithe, too. Ha, ha, ha! I hope the Lord didn't hear what Frank had to say!"

Joe looked pained. "But George, you oughtn't to have branded all the cleanskins; half of them ought to have been Frank's."

"Not on your life! If they had been on the boundary they would have been Frank's; but, as I was sayin', the Lord sent 'em into my country. I wasn't goin' to let the Lord down, so I branded 'em quick an' lively; there wasn't one that got away."

"That's not honest," said Joe.

"Too right it is. Smithy'll tell you that accordin' to the law I was entitled to brand any cleanskins on my own country."

"Legally, you were in order," I admitted.

"Of course I were. An' I reckon the Lord approved, too, or He wouldn't have let me build up me herd so quick. I wish I'd known about tithes before; I might have been rich by now."

I left George to argue it out with Joe. The old stockman was looking at things from a strange angle, but somehow I believe God understood. Anyhow, George prospered, and all the time he was in the north he gave his tithe—one beast in every ten—to those in need.

We may not agree with the way George

worked the scheme out, but there is a fundamental truth in the fact that God does bless those who freely give to those in need. Many a successful business man like Mr. Kraft, the cheese processor, regularly gives a tenth of his income to God's work. We should not give tithes merely in the hope of reward, but God is no man's debtor, and these words still stand, though we are no longer under the law, but under Grace. "Will a man rob God: Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:8.

(The above story is one of sixteen published in "DRAKE'S DRUM", which is available at 5/- per copy from the Secretary, Sky Pilot Fellowship Ltd., Kellyville).

YOUR TREASURE AND YOUR HEART.

Today a lot is heard about tithes or various forms of proportional giving. We must remember that we are no longer under the law but under Grace and therefore we should resist any attempt to bring us again under Mosaic law. But as we have received freely we should also give freely. Most of us have little interest in banks till we put some money into one. The same applies to missions. Being human, it is still true that where our treasure is there will our heart be also.

"**WHITE MAN'S 'BURDEN'.**" Under this heading appeared an excellent photo of some of our dark children in an evening paper recently. We regret that the article accompanying it was not very clear or accurate. It gave the impression that the aboriginal girls, evacuated to the city for safety during the war and kept under the care of various missions, lived under unsuitable conditions. On the contrary, they received every care and attention. Then they were returned to the north. Many of them, however, came back to the city of their own free will. It was then that some lived in unsuitable surroundings and got into trouble, for they were no longer under the care of missions.

STREET STALL. Our next Stall will be held (D.V.) in the grounds of the Parramatta

Town Hall on Thursday, 23rd August. Gifts of cakes, jams, clothing and other articles for sale will be gladly received.

DARK CHILDREN. Eleanor and Ronnie recently spent a day or two in hospital and had adenoids and tonsils removed. They were excellent patients and recovered quickly. All are well at present. The children were thrilled when the Matron of the Girls' Training Home at Cootamundra visited the Mission Farm recently. Coral spent some years at this home, and the Matron was a real mother to her.

BUILDING. The Mission Farm has been a hive of industry lately. Various parties of voluntary workers have been building a new bathroom, laundry and toilet for the children. A large "wet weather shelter" is being erected and an all-weather playground. Further details will be given in our next issue. We are deeply grateful to the friends concerned.

SKY PILOT NEWS. Subscriptions are still coming in every week, and we have been greatly encouraged by the reception given to our little paper.

THE "SKY PILOT". Mr. Langford-Smith, who has been far from well since the car accident last September, had to have further X-rays during the month. We are glad to report that he is improving slowly and is able to do more of the heavy work on the farm once again.

FOOD FOR "BEARS". Owing to a shortage of suitable leaves for the koalas at Koala Park, Mr. Burnet appealed to us. We were glad to supply young grey-gum leaves from the Mission Farm to help feed these lovable little animals.

GIFTS RECEIVED. Gifts of all kinds have been received, and it is not possible to mention them all. A builder gave us a load of bricks. With them we have built drains, paths, etc., to overcome damage caused in the past by flood rains. A company manager gave us a load of blue metal for concrete, and a carrier carted it free of charge. Women have made clothes for the dark children and provided them with dolls and toys. A gardener gave us 800 choice Hippeastrum bulbs. We have received double-decker beds, quilts, etc. To all who have helped in this way we extend our thanks on behalf of the children.