

SKY PILOT NEWS^{Nov., 1971}

Published monthly by the Sky Pilot Fellowship Ltd., Marella Mission Farm.

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 29, Castle Hill, N.S.W. 2154. Telephone 629-1555.

Director: K. Langford-Smith, Th.C., F.R.G.S.

Secretary: Mrs. Norma K. Warwick, Th.C.

Residential Address: Acres Road, Kellyville.

Subscription: 25 cents per annum. Registered at G.P.O. Sydney, for transmission by post as a periodical — Category A



Ralph

Photo: Mrs. N. Warwick

A DEAD TOOTH: From the Sky Pilot's Log, 2CH Broadcast

The wet season in Arnhem Land had come down with a deluge of rain that isolated most of the cattle stations. It was an early wet season and some of the men were trapped by the flooded creeks and impassable blacksoil plains. They gathered on the high ground near the Mission, hoping that the tracks would become passable again within a few days so they could get back to their home stations.

At the Mission, one evening, Joe was holding the floor. "It's a funny thing," he said, "but this wet season is like a fisherman's net."

"What's the matter with you?" Dick asked. "Have you gone 'troppo' or something? How do you mean the wet season is like a fisherman's net?"

"Well," said Joe, "a fisherman lets down his net and when he hauls it in he has all kinds of fish in it; some good ones that he wanted and some useless rubbish that is only fit to throw away."

"I still don't see what this has to do with the wet season."

"Don't you see what I am driving at?" Joe continued. "A lot of men came in here — mostly to pick up salt or stores. Then the wet season came a few weeks earlier than it should, and they're trapped here. They don't want to be stranded here any more than a fish wants to be stranded in a net, but they are and we have to put up with them."

"I don't know what you're wingeing about," George interrupted. "It takes all sorts to make a world and I thought you'd be glad of the opportunity of meeting a lot of different kinds of fellows. Ain't it a missionary's job to try to help the ones that need help most?"

"That's all right in theory," Joe admitted, "but you know as well as I do that there are some men who never can be helped — they just don't want it."

"I don't know much about religion, son," George continued, "but Jacob Jacobs taught me that any fool can sell somethin' to a man who wants it, but it takes a lot of skill to sell somethin' to a man who **doesn't** want it. It strikes me that you have a lot of fellows here who don't want religion and it's your job to sell religion to them. Well, go ahead and see what you can do."

"That's the idea," Dick agreed. "And the best fellow to start practising on is Jake. If you can convert him, anything is possible."

Joe snorted. "Don't be silly. It is only a waste of time trying to help Jake. He's past helping. I

never met such a man. He seems to have an absolute set on anything to do with religion."

"I suppose," said George, "you wouldn't believe me if I told you that when I first came to know Jake he was real religious. Of course, it was a long time ago."

"Jake religious? I don't believe it," said Dick.

"Ha, ha, I said you wouldn't believe it, but it's true, just the same. Twenty years ago Jake was an earnest, quiet young fellow and he had a lot of time for religion. Then somethin' happened and he went right the other way. He got worse and worse, until he became bitter and hard, like he is today."

"What went wrong, George, to make him change like that?"

"I don't rightly know. But he was engaged to be married to some girl he thought the world of, and she — well, she changed her mind, like women do, and went off with someone else. That's how Jake came to bury himself in the bush of the Never Never. Ha, ha," George chuckled, "I reckon the Government ought to subsidise girls like her. They want encouragin'."

"But," Dick asked in bewilderment, "why should the Government subsidise a girl for dumping the man she has promised to marry?"

"I know you don't like women," said Joe, "but that's going a bit too far."

"No, you've got me wrong," said George, hastily. "I don't have no objection to women at all — not in their right place."

"And what's a woman's right place?"

George chuckled again. "The right place for a woman is a long, long way from here. But what I mean is that the Government has spent a lot of money advertisin' the Northern Territory and tryin' to encourage young fellows to come and settle here. Mostly it's been wasted. But these here girls who break a fellow's heart have done more to settle the Never Never than the Government has. Half the fellows who live here now come away from the city on account of some girl who dumped 'em. There's Tom, for instance, and Jim and I wouldn't be surprised at all if Dick ain't another of 'em."

"Who, me? No, that's not true, George. At least . . . well, it wasn't only on account of that. What I mean is . . ."

"Ha, ha, ha, you needn't say no more, Dick. I reckon I guessed first go. But we was talkin' about Jake. You ought to try to help him, Joe. There's good material gone to waste in Jake."

"Maybe there is," agreed Dick, "though he's real hard and bitter now. But he would do to practice on, Joe."

"It would be a waste of time. Only a miracle could alter Jake."

"But," George insisted. "I thought you missionaries believed in miracles. No matter how hard and bitter a man might be on the surface, you and I can't tell what he's feelin' and thinkin' in his heart. Give it a go."

"It's no good," said Joe. "Jake wouldn't speak to me if I went to his camp and he'll never come near the mission."

"Here comes a visitor," Dick interrupted, "one of the fellows from the camp, I suppose. I can't rightly see who it is."

George started to laugh. "Talk of the devil," he said, "and here he is."

"Who do you mean?" asked Joe.

"Why, Jake, of course! Here he comes with his face all tied up in a red bandana. Say, what's the matter, Jake? Hurt your face or somethin'?"

"Toothache," Jake replied, in a muffled voice. "It's driving me mad. Haven't had a wink of sleep for two nights. The rotten, beastly thing!"

"Here's your chance, Joe," Dick exclaimed. "You always complain that you don't get any patients when Smithy's away."

Joe rose to the occasion. "Right you are, Jake," he announced. "I'll soon fix that tooth for you. Sit down for a minute while I get the pliers — I mean the forceps."

"Have you ever pulled teeth out before, Joe?"

"Of course I have; thousands of times."

"Now then, Joe," was George's remark, "the recordin' angel is listenin' to you."

"Well," Joe amended, "perhaps I shouldn't have said thousands of times, but I've often watched it being done and I did pull one out for old Lefthand. Anyway, there's nothing difficult about it, nothing at all. You just leave it to me. Dick, put the kettle over the stove, will you? I'll need some boiling water."

"What's that?" Jake was nervous. "What the heck do you need boiling water for?"

"To sterilise the tools — I mean, the instruments. And I must have some boiled water for the injection. Sit down, Jake, and take it easy. You'll soon be out of your misery."

"I don't like the way you said that."

George laughed. "Don't take no notice of Joe," he said. "He means well, but he sometimes says the wrong thing."

"He sometimes does the wrong thing, too," Dick remarked.

"Look here," Jake said, angrily, "take that

grin off your face, George. I'm suffering with this awful toothache and you all stand round with grins on your faces, as if you were waiting for a circus to begin."

"So we are," George told him. "Or, at least . . . what I mean is . . . well, we're just interested in the little operation."

"I feel real sorry for you, Jake," Dick smothered a chuckle and continued, "I know what toothache is like. You'll feel a lot better when the tooth is out."

"Well, now," announced Joe, "everything's ready. Better sit in this easy chair, under the light. Shift the table, Dick, we don't want anything broken if he's a difficult patient. Now, which tooth is it?"

"This big one on the top," Jake showed him. "The one that can ache the most. But I don't want a blooming audience. Get outside, George, and you, too, Dick."

"No," Joe protested. "They won't hurt, and I may need them to give a hand later."

"It took two men to hold Joe's last patient," George remarked cheerfully, "and that weren't as serious as toothache. He only cut out a bit of a splinter. That's when the lamp got broken and the leg came off one of our best chairs."

"Let me out of here!" Jake cried out. "What sort of a butcher do you think you are, Joe?"

Joe tried to soothe him down. "Don't take any notice of them, Jake. It wasn't as bad as they make out. The patient was just a bit impatient, that's all."

"Will I get a bucket or something for the blood?" Dick asked, helpfully.

"Shut up!" said Jake. "Get on with it, Joe. There's no need for all this fussing about. All I want you to do is to pull out my tooth."

"Open wide," Joe asked, in a professional manner. "Is this the one?", and he tapped it with the forceps.

Jake let out a yell. "Of course that's the one! Can't you see it aching? Anyhow, what's that needle thing for?"

"I'm going to give you an injection and then you won't feel anything. One small prick, that's all. Now, hold on."

Jake let out a roar and jumped to his feet. George grabbed him. "Quick, catch hold, Dick. You take his legs. I've got a headlock on him. Steady, boy! whoa!"

Jake struggled in vain. "Let me go, you fools. What do you think you're talking to, George — a blooming horse?"

Joe wiped his forehead. "I'll just give you another injection on the other side," he remarked.

"No blooming fear!" Jake said. "I won't have you sticking needles into my jaw like that. Can't you pull out the tooth without pricking it round the roots first?"

"But this injection prevents you feeling any pain."

"WHAT? You torture me with a needle so that I won't feel you pulling the tooth? And I don't call that funny, George," he added, as George started to laugh.

"I wasn't laughin' at that," George protested, "but I bet Joe has forgotten somethin'."

"No, I haven't. I measured the dose very carefully for the injection. Is your jaw going numb, Jake? Has the pain stopped?"

"Stopped? Of course it hasn't! It's worse than ever and I can still feel where you jabbed me with that needle."

"That's funny. The injection should have deadened the pain by now."

Dick picked up a small bottle. "What are these little tablets, Joe? Are you going to use them?"

"Good heavens, that's the morphine. I must have forgotten to put one in."

George laughed. "I said you'd forgotten somethin'. You've jabbed Jake with a needle and given him an injection of boiled water. No wonder he bucked a bit."

"Let me go," Jake demanded. "I've had enough of this fooling. If you can't . . ."

"Yes I can. I've got the forceps on now. Hold him, you fellows, hold him."

There was a yell from Jake and another one from Joe when he felt Jake's hands round his throat. "Let me go, Jake, let me go! The tooth's out. Let me go."

George called to Dick. "Quick, Jake's got his hands round Joe's throat. Choke him off, can't you; choke him off. Hullo! He's let go. How did you manage it, Dick?"

"I just squeezed his little finger in those forceps that Joe dropped. He soon let go."

"Well, I'm hanged! Ha, ha, ha."

An hour later Jake had calmed down. His tooth was out and the constant awful aching had gone. He thanked Joe somewhat sheepishly. "I'm sorry I got rough," he added. "I feel better now."

"That's all right, Jake. I'm sorry I hurt you. It was stupid of me to forget to put the morphine in the boiled water. It was just an accident."

"Well, it's over now and the tooth won't ache any more."

"No, the tooth won't ache any more. But I have a feeling you have a big ache in your heart.

You are very bitter against the world and against . . . against God, aren't you?"

"What if I am? That's my business. It's too late to do anything about it now. Once I believed in God . . . but my heart is dead now. Even God couldn't help me. It's too late."

"Your heart isn't dead and it isn't too late."

"How do you know my heart isn't dead to God?"

"Because it's still aching. A dead tooth can't ache and no more can a dead heart ache for God and forgiveness. The very fact that deep down in your heart you are suffering shows that your heart is still alive and there is still time to find peace and . . . your lost faith. No, if your heart didn't ache and you were indifferent, it might be too late. Your heart is alive because it aches. No matter what you have done in the past, give God a chance now. He's been waiting for you."

And the final entry in today's Log is taken from the 37th chapter of Ezekiel: "The spirit of the Lord set me down in a valley which was full of bones . . . and he said . . . can these bones live? I answered: O, Lord God, Thou knowest."

DEATH OF MRS. D. E. PORTER: On 2nd November Mrs. Dorothy Elizabeth Porter, of Carlton, N.S.W., was called Home suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 70. We extend to her family and friends our deepest sympathy in their great loss. She is survived by her seven children, Eric, Norma (Mrs. Warwick), Bob, Wyn, Colin, Doug, Kay (Mrs. Perry); also eleven grandchildren. Her eldest daughter, Mrs. Norma Warwick, has been the Secretary of the Sky Pilot Fellowship and Marella Mission Farm for over 21 years.

The late Mrs. Porter was a quiet, unassuming Christian devoted to her family. She was one of those grand characters who are often overlooked and yet who leave us an example that we can only hope to follow. When St. Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit he mentions love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: it is almost as if he were describing Mrs. Porter. Goodness, gentleness, meekness and longsuffering made up so much of her life. She had more than her share of illness and pain but her courage was undaunted and she always came up smiling bravely after each serious illness. She is one whom it will be impossible to replace.
