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George

Christmas cards depicting the above photo and sized 6" x 4", printed in black and white on art paper are available, with envelopes, at 7 cents each, plus postage, or one dozen for \$1.00 (postage paid.)

VOICES IN THE NIGHT: From the Sky Pilot's Log, 2CH Broadcast

George and Palmer had a big mob of bullocks in hand. They had brought them from the coast, and from the south and west sides of the run in Arnhem Land. Most of them were fine beasts, in the prime of condition, and I admired them as I rode round the herd.

"Yes," said George, "they're a good mob of bullocks, all right. I reckon it's about the best mob I've ever started on the way to market. They're the pick of my run. What with the price of cattle bein' as low as it is, a man has to send good beasts to get a decent price at all."

"Most of them are excellent," I agreed. "They are well-grown, with enough condition to stand the trip without going shelly. But, George, what I can't make out is why you have left half a dozen scrubbers in the mob. I could pick out some of the bullocks that aren't fit for anything. They spoil the look of the mob. Surely you're not expecting to ring those in on the buyers?"

"No," George admitted, "I don't aim to sell them scrubbers."

"Well why waste time droving them all that way if you know they'll be rejected?"

"It's this way: the buyers will send inspectors out to see the cattle and take delivery, and they'll give instructions that any beast not up to the standard is to be rejected. Those inspectors will have to do somethin' to earn their money, and if they don't reject any, the buyers will say they're not doin' their job. If I send 500 prime bullocks, they'd be bound to reject about half a dozen, just for appearance sake. I don't want any of my good bullocks rejected, so I just throw in half a dozen scrubbers. The inspectors will spot 'em at once and reject 'em. Then they'll give me an ear-bashin' for tryin' to put one over 'em. But they'll accept all the good bullocks and everyone will be happy."

"I see. I wouldn't have thought of that myself," I admitted. "Anyhow you have got the bullocks nice and quiet. They've been in hand a few weeks and it makes all the difference. The drovers shouldn't have any trouble with them."

"They look quiet enough now, but all the same you can't never trust cattle. They'll need careful watchin' all the time. I ain't never happy till I see 'em delivered safely and paid for."

I camped with George that night. We sat round the fire and yarned for a while. The cattle were lying down quietly and the stockboys rode around them, whistling or singing softly.

Palmer had a lot to learn about cattle and he questioned George. "I say, George," he asked, "why is it the boys always whistle or sing when they're riding round the cattle? I notice

you do the same. I meant to ask you before, but I always forgot."

"It's to stop the cattle stampeding," George explained.

Palmer laughed. "I thought your voice would be more likely to start a stampede, if you ask me."

"I ain't never heard **you** sing," said George, "and I hope I never will. All the same, when you do night-watch with the cattle you'll have to either sing or whistle all the time. If you give a dozing beast a bit of a fright, it's enough to start the whole mob off. But if they hear you singin' or whistlin', they know you're about, and they don't take no notice. It's a trick you'll have to learn."

We little knew how soon it would be before these same quiet cattle would stampede. There was nothing to give us warning. One minute the herd was lying down, contentedly chewing the cud and the next, with a noise like a tornado, it was galloping furiously in the one direction. The ground shook to the thunder of a thousand hooves; the cattle, jammed together in a compact mass, burst through a patch of lancewood like the spearhead of a willy-willy. George acted before we knew that anything was wrong. He swung into the saddle of his night-horse, that was standing by, ready saddled, and we were showered with sand as the animal's hooves spurned the ground as it leaped from a standing position into full gallop. Lefthand was away on the wing.

Palmer and I had no horses and there was little we could do in any case. We sat down and waited until George came back. He rode into the firelight and swung out of his saddle.

"Phew!" he exclaimed. "That was nice and lively while it lasted."

"Where are the cattle?" Palmer asked. "Did they get away?"

"Get away? Of course not! I wouldn't be here if they were still goin' mad. We wheeled them into the other side of the scrub and Lefthand an' the boys is bringin' 'em back slowly. They're knocked up and quiet enough now but it was a close thing."

"But what started them off?" Palmer asked. "I didn't see or hear anything."

"No more did Lefthand or any of the boys. But cattle is like that. One minute as quiet as you like, and the next in a mad stampede."

"But they all went in the same direction? How did they know which way to run?"

"I don't know; but they always do it that way. Maybe they can hear some voice in the night

that tells 'em which way to run. I dunno. But it makes no difference which way they're facin'; when the stampede starts they all run together in the same way."

"I don't swallow that yarn about voices in the night," Palmer protested. "All the same it's mighty strange that they all know which way to run."

"There's a lot of things we don't understand in nature," George remarked. "If you watch a flock of pigeons or corellas or ducks flyin' all together, they'll wheel in the same direction at the same instant, just as if they've been given some order. Maybe they do give an order but we can't hear it. I believe that birds and animals have some way of talkin' to each other that we don't know nothin' about."

"Even if they had some leader who gave the warning, it doesn't explain why they all know in a fraction of a second what to do and when to do it."

"Perhaps it's something like what we call the 'hive mind'," I suggested, "when we are dealing with bees. A bee colony has a collective mind and will. By its mysterious working, all the bees in the hive, young and old, become a single entity. The hive mind realises the needs of the colony, thinks out a way to satisfy those needs, and organises the necessary work, often much quicker than a human mind could work out the problem."

"Well," George admitted, "it maybe somethin' like that. But how does the 'hive mind', as you call it, make the other bees know what the orders are?"

"It may be some kind of telepathy. I don't know."

"I still like to think someone gives an order," said George, stubbornly, "and all the rest obey. That's what I mean by voices in the night. There must be somethin' that we can't hear, but the birds and animals and even the insects, can."

"I don't believe it!" Palmer put in. "Sounds nonsense to me."

"A lot of things," I said, "sound nonsense till we understand more about how they work. Take radio, for instance, and television. In the air around us there are voices and music and pictures passing all the time. We don't know they are there till we get a receiving set and tune in. Try to explain it to a bush Aboriginal — even an intelligent fellow like Lefthand — and he'll think you are mad."

George laughed. "I let Lefthand listen-in to the radio down at the Mission one day. I thought he'd be impressed. All he said was, 'Another kind gramophone,' and he asked me to put on

another record. I don't know how he would react to television. You can't explain that sort of thing to him."

"It's simple enough when you know how it works," said Palmer. "I used to be interested in radio and I made myself a couple of sets before I came up here. Of course, they were crystal sets; valves and speakers hadn't come in then."

"It all bears out what I was sayin'," said George, triumphantly. "There are voices in the air that we can't hear unless we've got a radio set. Maybe the birds and the animals have a receivin' set in their ears. They can hear all sorts of messages that we can't, because we haven't got the right sort of ears."

"But to have messages in the air in the first place they must have transmitters as well," Palmer insisted. "Are you trying to tell me birds and animals have transmitters in their heads as well?"

George looked puzzled. "I don't know what you mean by them big words," he said. "I don't know why they should have trans-mittens, or any other kind of mittens."

"I said transmitters — the instruments that send out the messages in the first place."

"Oh them! Well, I dunno. All I know is what you seen for yourself tonight. All them cattle facin' different directions and happy and chewin' the cud or dozin', then, in a fraction of a second, all facin' the same way, gallopin' like fury. Can you explain that?"

Palmer was not able to give any satisfactory explanation of the way birds and animals seem to give and receive orders and obey those orders implicitly. But he was willing to believe in radio, because he knew something of the way in which it worked.

Many people today are quite willing to believe the most fantastic claims of science, but they don't believe in simple prayer. They refuse to accept the idea that God, the Creator, is willing to give and receive messages from His creatures. Probably the reason is that they are so out of tune with God that they are unable to receive the messages. But inherent in every human is the power to receive and return messages to God. The air is full of such messages. Petitions and praise going up to God, answers and commands coming down to man. Every Christian is conscious of this and accepts it as a very natural fact; those who don't are those who have not been able to tune in. The receiving set, without which it is impossible to hear or to please God, is faith. There is no other way to communicate

with God.

And the final entry in today's Log is taken from the 11th chapter of Hebrews: "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him".

RALPH MERRITT: In September Ralph entered Hornsby District Hospital for a serious ear operation. For some years Ralph has suffered from ear trouble (as do so many of the Aboriginal children) but it has proved so difficult to dry out the ear that the operation has been postponed time and time again; however this time the operation went ahead and has been a success.

Ralph is now working in a Sheltered Workshop at Baulkham Hills and he is doing quite well. He travels to and from the Workshop by public transport and is able to cope with this. With his first earnings, supplemented by his other savings, he purchased a small transistor radio set. He is very proud of this and it gives him great pleasure. The average life of a battery is about a week at present, but it is expected this will be extended when the novelty works off. Ralph has been with us for over fifteen years and is a general favourite in our "family".

CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL'S GIFT TO MARELLA: At the end of the final school term many Sixth Form teenage young people go a bit wild and there have been many people who have criticised them for this; but the Sixth Formers at Castle Hill High School are a public spirited lot and they searched round for some worthy object that they could help. Fortunately for us they eventually decided to help Marella, as they did last year.

Their help took the form of a Walkathon from Parramatta to Castle Hill during which they intended to collect donations from as many car and truck drivers and other people as they could. Permission was granted by the Police and they had placards saying the collection was in aid of the Aborigines at Marella Mission Farm. We heard of this in advance and we assumed they might collect two or three hundred dollars; however when all the money was counted it was discovered that they had raised the tremendous amount of \$1068.81. A cheque for this amount was presented to Mr. and Mrs. Langford-Smith by Mr. Wilson, the Headmaster; and the important part of it was that we were free to use the money wherever most needed. Sometimes donors stipulate how the money is to be spent

without realising our needs and we have money tied up that has been earmarked for a special object which at the moment is not practicable.

We wish to thank the Sixth Formers of Castle Hill High School for their wonderful effort; and this includes the staff and the Headmaster who so willingly co-operated. Our thanks are also due to the Manager of the Commonwealth Bank at Castle Hill, Mr. Holman, for so kindly taking over the tremendous task of counting and wrapping what were literally "buckets full of small change."

Before we received this gift our finances were sadly depleted and we were afraid all the profit from the Sale of Work would go paying for our heavy commitments. Now this has all been changed in a wonderful way, thanks to the generosity of the Castle Hill High School senior students.

THE ABORIGINES TODAY: Under this heading we published an article written by Mrs. Warwick in the September issue of this paper. It was very well received and we have had many favourable comments from our readers; in fact some people have passed on their copies to interested friends and people in Government positions. Our one object at Marella is to help the Aborigines, but this does not mean that we are blind to their faults; as with white people there are good and bad amongst them; and much militant demonstration carried on by a minority of the Aborigines is not doing their cause any lasting good. But we look forward to the time when, in the life to come, there is no colour prejudice but black and white alike are "children of the living God."

ORDER OF KNIGHTS: This mission is truly an inter-denominational one and our supporters come from all different Churches; although practically all our present children belong officially to the Church of England we like them to join in Christian fellowship with as many different Churches as possible. Recently our Farm Manager (who is a Methodist) arranged for nine of our boys to join the Methodist Order of Knights at Castle Hill Methodist Church. He arranges transport and the boys have a wonderful time every Monday night. We cannot allow them to travel any distance unescorted; staff is limited and transport difficult so we welcome this opportunity provided by Mr. Nash.

