

A Teacher for South Africa.

(Sophie L. Harivel, in the 'Onward'.)

'Forty Canadian lady-teachers are required for South Africa to teach the Boer children in the concentration camps. A free passage out will be given, and the salary is fixed at £100, together with lodgings and rations. At the end of a year, a return passage may be had if desired. Already ten applications have been made to the Secretary of State.'

Standing at her desk in school, Muriel Stuart read this paragraph out of the paper. Once, twice, she read it, her face flushing. 'Oh,' she said to herself, 'how much I would like to go. Suppose I apply. I want a change from this dull little town, and then—' She broke off abruptly as another thought came into her head, making her eyes shine. Then the bell rang, and the children came trooping in noisily.

But all the afternoon the idea remained in her mind. In the reading classes she found herself wondering what books they would use in South Africa; so, too, with the rest of the work. Everything seemed connected with that distant country. At last the closing hour came, and with a sigh of relief she found herself alone with time to think it all over.

Again she read the short notice, and the more she read it, the more tempting did the offer seem. She had always a great desire to travel, and here was an opportunity to see part of the world. Most of Muriel Stuart's life had been spent in Merton, where she had been teaching for four years. Often she longed for a new sphere of labor, but for her mother's sake remained. Yet even the dullness of a small country town could not crush her ambition, and she was ever working and studying. From her childhood she had dreamed and planned of some time becoming a writer. It was her great ambition, and all her spare time was given up to the work.

This gave her additional reason for wishing to go to South Africa, as the experience would be very valuable to her.

'Why,' she said aloud, 'I could correspond for some of the papers here, and also write articles for the magazines.' Then her imagination took a lofty flight, and she went on, 'Perhaps I might write a book after I would come back. How would it sound? "A Canadian teacher among the Boers."' So she dreamed on, in fancy seeing herself sending a copy of the volume to the editors who had declined her manuscripts so politely. For half an hour she sat there, thinking and planning. Then, on the impulse of the moment, she started her letter of application.

After stating her qualifications and experience, she mentioned her special reason for desiring to go.

'Would it not,' she asked, 'be well to have a writer in the party who could correspond for the papers, and thus keep our work before the public? By accepting my application you will encourage home talent and give me a chance. Kindly reply at your earliest convenience—and say that I may go.' Over these last sentences Muriel laughed, thinking they were rather cool.

'But,' she said, 'the case is an urgent

one, so I wanted to put it strongly. I wonder what kind of man the Secretary of State is; nice, I hope. Well, anyway, I'll send it, and not say anything to anyone.'

As usual, she had acted on the impulse of the moment, but that evening, in her home, things took a different aspect. The family consisted of the mother, two sons, Harry and Tom, and two daughters, Muriel and Nellie. Mrs. Stuart was a small, delicate woman, always carefully tended by her children. They were all gathered together in the sitting-room after tea, and as the girls sewed, the mother read aloud from the paper.

'Why,' she said, 'listen to this: "Forty Canadian teachers needed for South Africa,"' and she went over the paragraph, which was already so familiar to one of the hearers. 'There, now, Muriel,' declared Tom, 'that's your chance to write a Boer novel and take the world by surprise.'

'Yes,' chimed in Harry, 'you could make name and fame at one stroke.'

'Why, boys,' began their mother, 'would you like your sister to go so far away?'

She still called her sons 'boys,' though they were grown young men, older than the girls.

'It would be only for a year, mother,' Muriel said, 'and, then, think of the salary, nearly five hundred dollars.'

'Yes,' returned Mrs. Stuart, 'and think, too, of that enteric fever of which so many people die. And then those treacherous Boers, too. It's too dreadful to think about. I wonder at them even asking anyone to go.'

Muriel was going to say something, but just then a friend came in, and the subject was changed.

'Well,' she said to herself, 'I did not know mother would look at it like that. I won't say anything yet; she would only worry.'

A little later, in her own room, as she prepared a manuscript for its seventh trip, she said, 'If this was a good article on "Life Among the Boers," it would not come back so often.' And once more she fell to thinking.

As she entered the teacher's room in school next morning, she found them all talking over the matter. 'All on board for South Africa,' said Miss Grey. 'I would go myself, only for those dreadful conditions.'

'Conditions?' asked Muriel, quickly. 'What are they?' Yesterday's paper had not given any.

'Here they are,' replied her friend, holding up a different paper from the one Muriel had, 'must be a Normal School graduate, and have first-class license, and also pass a severe medical examination. There! Easy, aren't they?'

'They are not very hard,' Muriel replied.

'No, not for you, perhaps, but for the rest of us, alas! South Africa must remain a far-off country.'

'Then we'll just do our best in this one,' cried the principal, as he went to ring the bell.

It was true that Muriel Stuart would not find the conditions hard. Her four years' college course had been the gift of an uncle of her mother's, and she had also ob-

tained her Normal diploma. Then, too, she was strong and healthy, and need fear nothing on that point. But what would the answer be? Many times she wondered during the next four days.

Then, on the fifth, she received a large, important-looking paper. With trembling fingers she opened it, and for a minute the type-written lines seemed to dance before her eyes.

'Dear madam,' it ran, 'I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the eighth instant, on the subject of an educational appointment in South Africa. I would advise you to send your testimonials to the Superintendent of Education for your Province. From their excellent nature, I have no doubt that, other things being satisfactory, you will be accepted.'

Muriel read it over as she walked home after school. 'Apply to the superintendent, and likely to be accepted,' she repeated. So far things seemed favorable, and South Africa with its chances seemed coming nearer. Then suddenly came another thought—what would her mother say? The other night she had said it was too dreadful even to think of, and now she must be told more. Slowly Muriel walked along, and as she came in sight of the pretty white house, said, 'Well, this time I will not apply without telling her.'

But it was not until her brothers had gone out for the evening that she placed the letter in her mother's hand, bidding her read it. As Mrs. Stuart did so her face grew white. 'Oh, Muriel,' she murmured, 'what is this?'

'Mother,' she began quickly, 'oh, mother, do say that I may go. It means so much to me, and will help me with my writing. Here I am always failing, you know, and out there I would have a better chance. Oh, mother, let me go, just for one year, only twelve months.'

Her words came in an eager rush, and her mother looked at her in wonder. Her thoughts were very different.

'To go so far,' she sobbed; 'and you might never come back; oh, Muriel!'

'Muriel,' said her sister, 'perhaps mother would like to think it over alone.'

Muriel quietly went out. She had said enough surely.

In her own room, she tried to go on with the story she was writing, but her mother's face seemed to come between her and the work. She found herself going over all her life. How proud her mother had been when Uncle Ned had sent her to college, how pleased she had been with her success. Then, how she had urged her to apply for the vacancy in Merton school.

'Never mind if the salary is small,' she had said, 'we will all be together, and that is the best.' Her ambition for her daughter had seemed to be satisfied then.

'Well,' Muriel said to herself, 'I have stayed here four years; that is a long time. Then, they don't really need me. The boys are both doing well now. And the large salary, too. Why, I could save a lot of it for mother.'

So she tried to convince herself, but her heart told her self-seeking was her real motive. Ever, too, a little voice rang plainly in her ears, saying, 'Even Christ pleased not himself.' And Muriel professed to be a servant of that Master, whose whole life was unselfish. The choice