

December 16, 1912

THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

Missionary Correspondence.

PAULPIETERSBURG, NATAL,
November 1, 1912.

Dear Highway,—

Here is a clipping from a Durban newspaper, The Natal Advertiser, of Oct. 19th:

PRAYER FOR RAIN

Sunday was a special day set apart by the earthly "powers that be" (in the Union) for special invocations of the Divine Being for rain. Prayers which, up to the present, have not been answered. There is no getting away from the seriousness of the situation; up-country especially. At present it means drought, and if it continues, at no distant future, famine.

As we here are south of the equator, our seasons are the opposite of yours. When November brings cold to you we are well on in our summer. Rains for planting should have fallen two months since, but to date only the top dust has been moistened. Next Sunday our little band are to pray for rain.

All about us the natives are continually speaking of delayed rains and famine. Last year there was severe drought over a small portion of the country, reaching this district. Perhaps one-fourth of the expected crops were reaped, so that the natives must buy corn for from four to eight months. Already the price is 25 shillings per 200 lbs. against 8 shillings as usual at harvest time.

These people consider themselves much afflicted by this famine, but their condition is not as serious as one at home might suppose. Employment is always obtainable, and at present is very near. Railway construction between Vryheid and Pietertief, via Paulpietersburg, gives them the chance of earning 45 shillings and their food each month, while the Government is offering 40 shillings for native labor on a wagon road from our Paulpietersburg village in nearly to Balmoral. On an average, every hut has its able bodied man who is capable, were he so inclined, to earn double the food needed at his home, even at these famine prices. The "women folk" at home would care for the gardens. This is almost their exclusive burden even when the "gentlemen of leisure" are about. For there are friends for them to visit, weddings to attend, beer drinks on, where opportunities to see and woo maidens for wife No. 2 or 3 or 4, as the case may be. True it is that the men plow when there are oxen, and they sometimes plant with a hoe and help to weed, especially the gardens of the neighbors who have prepared beer and called a "weeding bee."

A healthy native man may thus idle away his time until all his grain is gone; then continue to sit about his kraal while his wife, without a thought or murmur, goes to beg food from some fortunate neighbor, or buys it with wood she has carried on her head for a distance of several miles, or she may receive corn from those just buying from the store, by bringing theirs home for them, or, if they live on Balmoral, she will likely come and beg from your representative. He, however, immediately thinks of the lazy man at home patiently waiting for the wife to return and grind and cook for him. He further realizes that the native public opinion gives no blame, only sympathy to the unfortunate individual overtaken by the common famine. Their ways are not as our ways.

Again, other cases come to the missionary for help who have no wage earner at home.

All who come must be helped by counsel, or work, or a small loan, or food for work that does not earn it, and even food for no return.

These natives do not bank their overplus money, but invest it in goats, cattle, or, more commonly, lend it to their friends. Thus, at this present time, there are natives returning from work with more money than is required for their needs. They buy with part and lend all the rest. In this way they are now helping one another so that there is little real suffering among them.

Our native evangelists have needed salary in advance to tide them over this time of greater need. Solomon and Samuel are plodding on as usual. At the home of Aaron a new baby has arrived, so he is attending to the spring gardens, and preaching part of his time. The return of Lydia is delayed, but we hope she will be home for the "Big Sunday," the 3rd.

Our school has withered until we entertain fears that it may not be evergreen. Yet Elisha is teaching and the thing is not dead. Peter recently visited the Zionists for healing. Upon his return he brings many of their peculiar ways of worship, which seem to us like "wild fire." We cannot foretell the outcome, but the fire is spreading. There are fallings, kickings, continuous and strange noises, and such like, all attractive to the native. Yet Peter himself seems as good as gold. We will see. And may the Good Shepherd guard His flock, giving the needed wisdom at this time of testing.

Pray for us.

Yours in His service,

H. C. SANDERS.

P. S.—To explain, Aaron plants not because of his new boy, as such a present to the husband excuses the native wife from her garden duties only two or three days.

H. C. S.

THE CHRISTIAN'S UNQUENCHABLE DESIRE.

He who has real grace desires more grace. The man who desires no more may well distrust what he has; when we hear people say they desire no more religion, or "got it all when they were converted," we sympathize with them. We know there must be a serious defect in what they have, and we do not blame them for not wanting more.

The great and good men of the Bible were ever on the stretch for all they could get because they enjoyed so much what they had.

Moses, after having had an interview with Jehovah, said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." David said, "My soul thirsteth after the Lord." Paul said, "Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching to those which are before, I press towards the mark." John, after having seen all the glories of the Apocalypse, longed for better acquaintance with Jesus and cried, "Even so Lord Jesus, come." We sympathize with those who want no more and exhort them to get a better kind of religion—to get a taste of real salvation, then they will feel like Wesley:

"Insatiate to this spring I fly,
I drink and yet am never dry."

A soul with this thirst in him will never object either to the term or experience of "the second blessing." If there were a thousand degrees of grace, he would take them all.

The widespread indifference to holiness is on the part of people who are too dead to have any spiritual appetite.—*Witness*.

CHRISTMAS.

In Bethlehem of Judea,
That wondrous night of old,
The people slept, nor heard the tale
The choir of angels told.
In Bethlehem of Judea
They did not see the flame
That made the midnight sky so bright
The hour that Jesus came.

The shepherds heard the singing;
The sages saw the star;
The simple folks were near at hand,
The wise men came from far.
But crowds of careless people
Went to and fro apace,
Nor dreamed that Christ had come to make
On earth His dwelling place.

Still when the Christmas music
Thrills on our sordid air,
Great throngs there are who do not hear,
Great throngs who do not care.
They miss the core of sweetness,
Not hasting to the tyst
With Him who comes to bless the world,
t With Him who comes, the Christ.

In Bethlehem of Judea
Some slight excuse was theirs,
Who did not hear the music
Which found them unawares.
In our own native country
And in our later day
There is no least excuse for us
If deaf and blind as they.

For He hath often told us,
By lip of bard and seer,
By angel voice and token,
By His own drawing near,
That in the Christmas dawning,
And in the winter wild,
Once more the earth is summoned
To bow before the Child.

The Child! the son of Mary!
The Son of God Most High,
Came down to wear our nature,
For us to live and die.
And still the simplest find Him,
And still the sages bring
Their gold and myrrh and incense
To offer to the King.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW.

Gideon Ousely, whose faithful ministry was crowned with wonderful results, tells how he was called to preach in the following very striking and suggestive way:

The voice said:

"Gideon, go and preach the Gospel."

"How can I go?" said I. "O Lord, I cannot speak; I am a child."

"Do you know the disease?"

"Oh, yes, Lord I do."

"And do you know the cure?"

"Indeed I do. Glory be to Thy Holy Name."

"Go, then, and tell them these two things, the disease and the cure. All the rest is nothing but talk."

The disease and the cure! What business has a preacher talking about anything else but that.—*Selected*.