

August 30, 1913

THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

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for strength as well as utility. Their society is called the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, and has a dozen missionaries in or near Swaziland. I was asked to preach in the afternoon and of course, thought the service a good one.

Some business in Petretief kept us until late Monday so we did not reach our next stage, Mankyana, until nine o'clock in the evening. Here we were cordially entertained by Mr. Wehmeyer, a Dutch missionary of the S. A. G. M.

We spent all of the next day at his station looking about gaining more or less information. This man has been twenty years in native work mostly in Swaziland, having begun in the Salvation Army. They did not support their workers very well in those days, he says, but expected them to get their living from their congregations. For three months he lived on porridge made from mushy corn, after getting cold "was not so bad." Well, he left the Army, refusing an appointment at Pretoria and joined the S. A. G. M. At first he worked as their "carpenter," building their churches and houses, but for some years has been doing only the work of a missionary. Like many other of the Boers, he has a good way with the natives.

Mankayana has no public school, being but a Government Station with magistrate, police force, jail, one store and several private residences. Its situation is quite elevated and healthful, among the hills of western Swaziland, near the Transvaal border.

From here Brother Kierstead returned home while I went farther on into northwestern Swaziland, where there is tin mining. Twenty miles to the northeast brought me to Bethany, a station of the S. A. G. M., where a man and wife, with two lady helpers are working.

At present Mr. Bailey is supplying here for Mr. Coates, who is home in England on furlough. Mr. Bailey has a daughter in England at a training school, expecting to join her parents next year as a regular missionary. For years she was her father's interpreter, as he did not acquire the native language. Also they have a son in preparation for the ministry.

They feel themselves honored of God, that He thus calls their children to His work—"Him that honoreth Me, I will honor."

Thursday I reached the capital of Swaziland, Mbabane. This is a growing town of about 150 people, mostly English. Here are the Government officials—resident commissioner, with assistant and secretary, the police officers, magistrate, district surgeon, etc., also a jail, hospital and four tin mines. This is an important centre for mission work among the natives. The Wesleyans have a church building and a native preacher. They are an energetic people and have their native workers in every place, apparently, though their European missionaries are few. All the rest of the work falls to the S. A. G. M., who at present have three lady workers living in a paper-wooden house, sent out from England by a wealthy friend. The house is pretty and convenient, though not fireproof, nor as comfortable as they wish. They have a small but substantial church building on their two acre piece together with four huts for accommodation of native evangelists visiting friends, etc. The stable buildings are iron and wood, while a grove of wattle and gum trees surround the whole, excluding the sun so a good garden is impossible—much to the disgust of the native preacher's wife. She is one of the stoutest

black women (or white) that I ever saw. The absence of her usual pastime, hoeing in the garden, is likely responsible for her corpulency. She does not suspect this, however, as she explained to me they had "nothing to eat" since there was no garden. I intimated vaguely that her proportions suggested good feeding but she refused to see the connection, saying they had only corn meal—meaning she missed the variety she once grew in her own gardens, green corn, pumpkins, beans, etc. Well, "Mame," as she is called, is also a large personage in influence and ability, quite eclipsing her "old man," Charley, who draws the monthly salary. He, too, is thick set but has more bone and muscle in proportion. His opinion of himself is higher than that held by others, so much so that he chafes under feminine supervision and openly expresses his desire for a male "umfaundise," teacher. He is rather dense in his mental make up, but good—yes, he reminds me of the hero in Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Three days I spent at Mbabane, and each day I grew to like the town better. Its picturesque situation is charming. About half way up a mountain slope, it scatters itself about, in and at the sides of a little level space, not large enough to call a valley.

Thus, there are hills in front, hills behind and hills above all covered with high grey rocks, while the village (but you must not call it such when there) looks down the gradual descent of three miles to the valley of the Little Regrette river. The climate here is considered very healthful. Through the winter frosts will scarcely kill tomato vines.

There is a fine school building just completed. The present Government grant is \$2,000 per year, though there are but twenty-two boarding pupils and as many day pupils. The founder and principal is a young energetic, far-seeing Church of England minister, whose ambition is to reach the parents through the children—and he succeeds.

Of the three S. A. G. M. lady workers here, two went to out stations for the week-end and Sunday, leaving the third home to see that I have work to do. Friday afternoon she took me for a tremendous mountain climb to meet one of her patients that I might diagnose and prescribe. There was the usual prayer service and seed sowing which was apparently greatly appreciated, especially by our sick boy.

The next day we descended to the valley to visit an out station called Ezulwini, (in heaven). Here they called an old blind woman for me to see. She had cataracts, and when told that they could be taken out, great was her surprise. She did not understand how her eye could be cut in two and she live and recover.

At last Sunday arrived which is the great day of opportunity in Mbabane for the missionary and the natives. The first meeting was before breakfast at one of the tin mines. Three of the "boys" (men are called boys by all the employers) were dressed while all the others were "raw," heathen. My, but they did listen! After breakfast my tireless guide showed the way to the hospital where we had a very earnest though small (in numbers), meeting. From there we went to the jail where a good crowd or "bad," as you like, is always to be had. But really the criminal class here is not as one sees it at home. Only one in ten here are really criminals at heart. They are most all just like the average native who did

not happen to get caught or did not meet the temptation.

Another thing which will impress the visitor is the apparent absence of everything like our jail life at home. They all sleep in one large room. In the morning they all come out, wash up and get ready for breakfast. In due course of time they march out to their work, and return at night. It looks exactly like the "barracks" where ordinary working natives sleep. The only difference I noticed is that they wear the striped jacket and pants, and that three armed native police lounge about nearby. They, too, listened splendidly.

After dinner came the meeting in the native church at the station, where about sixty were ready to listen very attentively.

Nine meetings are usually held by the S. A. G. M. workers each Sunday at Mbabane, thus giving the gospel to two or three hundred natives. Most of these are heathen, and nearly all are in the town for only a few months (about six) when they return to their homes all over Swaziland, including the low-lying, unhealthy, eastern portion and carry whatever light they may have. Thus will appear the great importance of this work. Then after a rest at home of three months to six they go out for work again, very likely back to Mbabane and to the same missionaries.

The Swazies, as a race, are said to be inferior to the Natal Zulu. They lack the independence of spirit, the bravery, and their worst weakness is their lack of moral stamina. Their morals are far below those of the Zulu. But God loves the Swazies and gave His only begotten Son for them. Because of their inherent weakness the greater is their need of Him whose strength is made perfect in weakness. Of the few white men living in this country, perhaps ninety per cent. are throwing their influence on the wrong side. Naturally the native looks up to the superior for example—but what does he see?

These blacks are sheep with no shepherd. Jesus was "moved with compassion" by a like spectacle, and acted. Are we His followers? Can we look idly on and see a score of His isolated messengers vainly trying to cope with this difficult problem? So often they see the work of years apparently wrecked by the fall of a native preacher, because the battle is hard, looks discouraging. The Swazi are uncertain quantities. Shall we retire from the fight or give our energies elsewhere, and let them go—to—the Devil? These are the questions that have been knocking at my heart.

Taking a large view of the case, Satan's kingdom is strongly entrenched in this land. I have shown you only his strong forts. But the Swazi does often become a good Christian and stands and endures to the end. It looks to me like Christ would have all the Devil's Kingdom faithfully and continually bombarded. If God points toward Swaziland as a field for our efforts shall we shrink or shall we be willing to go where He sends.

We have on hand at home a snug little fund given for the express purpose of founding a new mission station. Then two years ago our mission board in session at Beulah (when I said I was certain that Swaziland was "insufficiently occupied") voted that we visit that country and learn its true needs, with the end in view of establishing a new mission station.

In this letter you will see that much more help is needed in Swaziland. All I ask at this time is that you think the matter over, pray about it and be ready to do whatever our Lord

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