

November 29, 1913

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

the foreign field, made a few remarks that went home to mother-hearts. The closing messages were given by our noble senior ministers, who spoke of the promising outlook foretold by the coming forward of strong young men to bear the banner of "Holiness unto the Lord." Enthusiasm ran high and this special service was one long remembered.

When hearing of my intention to thoroughly qualify for the foreign work, the Mission Board were pleased and volunteered a hundred dollars a year to assist in my education.

The brethren now urged me to receive ordination. Before speaking of this, however, I wish to tell one incident that took place while I was laboring in New Brunswick, on the Marysville circuit, just before the above mentioned meeting convened.

Though alone, I did, as usual, much calling among the people. What impressed me most in this district was the fact that so small a proportion of the villagers made any profession of religion. God gave some victory in the church services, and also in the house to house visitation. I distinctly remember calling where a discouraged looking woman was doing her week's wash. She left her tubs and gathered the children so we might have prayer in the house. As I read the precious word and spoke of Jesus as our burden bearer, it seemed that the call was very opportune. She frankly told me that she was completely disheartened. Her family was large and the cares and burdens of life were more than she was able to bear. The Holy Spirit illuminated her mind until she saw the wondrous Man of Calvary as the friend she needed. God never had intended that frail humanity bear their burdens alone. It is to just such as she—the broken-hearted—that He delights to make Himself known. Together we bowed in prayer, while she, weary and heavy laden, sought and found the rest that only Christ can give.

About nine years later she lay dying. When asked if she feared the future, she replied that all was well with her soul, referring back to this "call" as the time when she found the Saviour, who had since been her support and shield.

While in Africa this information was sent me by Deacon B. N. Goodspeed, a resident of the same village, Penniac. The good old man kindly wrote me the news of her triumphant death for my "encouragement," as he said.

Paulpietersburg, Natal, So. Africa,
Sept. 20th. 1913.

Dear Sister Baker,—In my last letter to you I was too hurried to write what I wished, so will try to do so in this. It is to give you a little idea of our changed conditions in this land from what they were ten years ago, or when we first came into this district. Then we paid £3 (\$15) per month rent for a very poor house of three small rooms and a detached kitchen. Each room was poorly lighted, had earthen floors, which were very uneven; there was no ceiling—nothing save corrugated iron between the sun and our heads; so during the first hot summer we suffered much with headache from the heat.

The land was strange, people shy and very disobliging—natives, I mean—and I had to teach my own servants how to do everything, as they were filthy dirty in person and habits. Our place of worship was, in fine weather, under the trees; in cold or damp weather in a dilapidated stable, the most of whose thatch roof had forsaken it.

Natal had just got through with the Boer war, and the country was still in a state of unrest, and there was also a famine from a

drought the year before, so corn, which usually sold for from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per 200 lb. sack, was selling for \$10 to \$15. We had no garden, and all food was expensive. There were cows among the people for sale, but our trip in coming here had so eaten into our funds at that time that we felt we had no money to spare to get one. However, after a few months we succeeded in securing one in milk for about \$25; but she was very old, and it was with the greatest care she lived through the following winter. We continually met rebuffs from nearly all white people, and found missionaries were unpopular.

The Boer from whom we rented the house repeatedly deceived us and cheated us out of nearly half the fruit he promised at first we should have.

In wandering around over this hilly country Dr. Sanders contracted fever, and the children also were down with it, all at the same time. I myself kept fairly well, but Judson was a tiny baby, having been born ten days after our arrival here.

However, God kept us happy and prospered our work, and a girl we brought with us from down country proved a splendid evangelist, as she was a Christian and would vouch for us; she also helped to teach while here, but she returned home after about four months stay.

After some nine months in this Boer's house we leased "Balmoral" and pitching our fine tent (20x14 feet about), began to build a house. It was all new, hard work, and native helpers were so difficult to obtain, that the summer storms came upon us before the thatch was on the roof. After the terrible storm that wrecked the tent, we concluded the house walls would be more protection, so, spreading the roof of the tent over the framework of the house roof, we settled things under the eaves of the house as best we could to keep off rain, and moved in. Just three days after, another violent storm, with large hail, came, smashing in the one window we had set up, and cutting through the tent roof as if they had been bullets. Pools of water lay anywhere and everywhere in the house, and only mackintoshes and sacks kept our beds dry, as the thatch was only on a few feet around the roof, and every rain came through more or less. It was a very dirty place to live in with a young baby as well as the other children, and several months passed ere the walls were plastered, and a year or more before the planks for flooring came. It was a hot summer, too, and not a tree for shade. There were no trees when we moved on "Balmoral," only grassy plains and hills. The poor children had to play in the shade of the eaves of the house, or come indoors.

We had no church building, so our dining room was used from the time a few bundles of grass had been put on the roof. Many precious souls have been taught the light and been led to God in this same dining room, for our work went on as well as the building.

Our chances for gardening were so poor that the first summer we raised very few vegetables, and many a day all we had in that line for dinner was a weed I could gather for greens. For months and months not a potato was to be had. Cattle sickness broke out, so before we left the tent, I think, we were deprived of our milk, as the government had made what they called "camps" for cattle, and everybody's stock was marched off of the farms to these camps; so we had no milk save from one goat. Butter was such a luxury we could only get it in tins at 50c. for 14 oz. Native servants we must have, but they were still scarce and

most incompetent, so often for a short time would have no girl at all.

Let me give you the other side of the picture. We now live in our own house and practically pay no rent, as there are natives engaged who pay a low rent to us which gives us enough to cover the lease rent of the farm. The house is far from beautiful and is exceedingly small for all of us, but having a thatch roof, boarded ceiling and floors, it is a comfortable little bungalow and we do appreciate its coolness during our summer heat. We still have no church, but use a native built square, which does fairly well with a small congregation. On "Big Sunday" we have meetings out of doors. We have not one of the best gardens in this district, have an abundance of vegetables all the year round. Potatoes were difficult to get for seed both the year and this, so far, and therefore expensive but we are in hopes to get seed established in having donkeys nor oxen for ploughing, and horse as yet for riding, we are greatly handicapped, but are doing our best with native ing just now. Later on we will need to plowing done when the rains come. They are already overdue. We have a beautiful orchard with a great variety of fruit trees, and many of these are in bearing, so though small, it means to us. I think nearly every kind of fruit and berry that grows in the Temperate Zone will grow here, and some tropical fruit with care. We have planned the orchard so to have fruit ripening every month in the year and have succeeded very well. Just now mulberries and strawberries are in fruit. The birds are a great pest. Our fruit trees also make shade for us all to enjoy. The children play under the mulberry trees. So the place has changed wonderfully to what it was when we first settled here.

We have one cow and some goats in milk. Butter is cheaper, but often scarce, and though flour, etc., is still expensive, our living is comparatively cheap, owing to the excellent vegetable garden and orchard. We have a good flock of hens, which furnish eggs and reduce our meat bill. Also lately we are starting to raise other fowls such as geese, turkeys and ducks. So much of their food comes from our garden that their flesh will be much cheaper than fresh meat, which is so expensive at the village. This is only an experiment, as ducks, we are told, do not thrive well in this district, and turkeys are difficult to raise.

Our work is extending across the Pongola. Several new ones have decided for Christ of late. Lydia and another girl, Elizabetha, are over there now on an evangelistic tour.

This week we had a visit from the Attendance Officer for this district, in response to an application to the Superintendent of Education for Natal. He promises to assist in the education of our children. It is too early yet to speak definitely, but we hope to have a school here ere long. God does hear and answer prayer.

The sheep farming has brought in Boer families on these farms, and some of these have children that should attend school. So there are six or seven beside ours who would attend this school.

Herbert joins me in sending best regards to you both. Lovingly yours,

ELLA.

All people enjoy their paper best when it is paid in advance.