

## Missionary Correspondence.

## CHAPTER XV.

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A SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

Preparations were completed, trunk packed, good-byes said and practically a new life began to open before me. The steamship from Yarmouth connected with the train from Fall River, where the great Fall River boats, called "floating palaces," took on passengers for New York. Following instructions, I took a street car over Brooklyn Bridge and up Myrtle Avenue, to find Waverly Avenue. The conductor failed to "let me off" at Waverly, as he had promised, and I went miles beyond before discovering the mistake. I learned my lesson cheaply, though, not to expect conductors of street cars to always remember where they have been requested to let off certain unacquainted passengers.

But the Union Missionary Training Institute, 131 Waverly Ave., was not for me that first year, as only juniors and seniors studied here, while the freshmen were sent to the "Country Branch." The next day I took train for Hackettstown, N. J., sixty miles distant, where is located, in the beautiful valley of the Schooley Mountains, the "Centenary Collegiate Institute," a splendid boarding school owned by the Methodists. Arrangements had been made for the "Missionary Students" at the Country Branch to attend this institution as day pupils. Here we received our secular instruction, while Bible subjects were taught at the "Missionary Farm," two miles distant. A span of black horses with a three-seated wagon took the young women back and forth to the Institute, while the young men walked. Both at Brooklyn and the Country Branch the housework was done by the students. Cooking, sweeping, washing and ironing fell to the lot of both sexes at Brooklyn, while at the farm there was enough for the young men to do out of doors. A school paper, "Our Record," was printed by the young men in Brooklyn.

On the Farm there were four horses, twelve cows, pigs and large corn gardens, furnishing food for all these, as well as the hens and ducks. There was pastures, mowing fields, vegetable gardens, a peach orchard of a thousand trees, and a hillside of chestnut trees, furnishing firewood and timber for railway sleepers.

We students had abundance of work. Saturdays, holidays and before and after school the time was devoted to farm work, superintended by the hired farmer, Mr. Titus. Further, every student was supposed to give fifteen weeks' work on the farm during summer vacations, before they had finished their three years' course.

The young women attended to the housework, under the supervision of a competent housekeeper. Even this manual labor was, to some of the students not accustomed to it, really valuable training for missionary life.

My time at the Farm was among the pioneer years. The old house was torn down and a new one built. A large unfinished garret served as a sleeping room for the young men, while the general accommodation was rough until we had helped dig a cellar and lay a foundation for a house that was worthy of the instruction received within its walls.

Rev. W. B. Osborn, now of sacred memory, husband of our principal, was home much of his time that year, and then took charge of the

farm work. He was very energetic, and kept all the missionary lads hustling. To him is given the honor of having founded the "Camp Meeting" of America. His was a mighty voice, well suited to open-air preaching, and now it came in useful for shouting instructions. Of the eleven young men, only one besides myself understood anything of farm work. Naturally such a company of inexperienced workmen was a great trial to Mr. Osborn. Then five were from the tropical South, and disliked the snow and cold of New Jersey. They had not learned to swing an axe or do any other kind of manual labor, it being beneath the dignity of the Southern gentry. Once, when Mr. Osborn asked for an axe to cut wood, one of these young men brought him a pickaxe. Another, when it came his week to build the kitchen fires, started his first one in the oven of the cook stove, filling the house with smoke and us with amazement at his ignorance.

Since seeing the brick ovens used for baking here in Africa, I better understand the mistake of my fellow-student. Here, the Boers especially, use these ovens instead of stoves. When the thick walls have been thoroughly heated by a good fire inside, the ashes are all swept out, when the oven is in condition to do the best of baking. The bread or beans, or whatever is to be baked is placed inside, the door well banked and all will cook properly with no further attention.

That winter was the most trying the Country Branch ever knew. Several of the students were sifted out, being unwilling to endure the hardness as good soldiers. They went either to their homes or to some other school where conditions were less severe. I can not say that I regret the hardships of that school year. For me it helped to form character; though I remember that my lot was comparatively easy, as I knew how to "take hold" and could work on without supervision.

There is now no "Country Branch," which is one of the improvements in the management of the U. M. T. I. since the time of my freshman year. And yet I doubt if the present students are any happier than were we of that pioneer winter.

Those are precious memories. We students got to know and love each other as brothers and sisters. Our dear Principal, with her only child, Lilian, made her home at the Farm. None of our instructors could compare with Mrs. Osborn. Her faculty for teaching and inspiring her class, or even a large audience, was wonderful. But I will do her better justice by referring the reader to her autobiography, "Heavenly Pearls Set in a Life," published by Fleming H. Revell Co. There one may gather something of the magnificent character and labors of this "mother in Israel," whom God has used so largely to send the gospel to every land.

Here let me pause to give a pen picture of some of the worthy would-be missionaries with whom I became acquainted during that year at the Country Branch.

Sulphur Springs, Transvaal,

November 11th, 1913.

Dear Highway,—We have now spent three Sundays on this side of the river, and have found abundant opportunities for work among the natives. Also, in the providence of God, we have had the privilege of doing what we could for Mr. Haknel, a white man from the Klipwal mine, who has since been taken to Piet Rief and died there.

We get larger gatherings of the natives to our meetings here than the general attendance

now at our mission station. Sunday before last I was obliged to hold the service in the open-air, as there were too many to get into a hut.

Yesterday we were into a new place. In the morning we had a meeting at a kraal about ten miles from here. The attendance there was not large as all present were heathen, though two young men present had a faint desire to believe. A new gold mine has been opened about one mile from the above mentioned kraal, but it is now closed down, with only a native in charge. The owners are endeavoring, I presume, to raise more capital for developing the plant.

In the afternoon we held a service which was better attended at a kraal two miles this side, among some believers whom I believe belong to the Ethiopian movement. This mission, so far as we can learn, generally seems to be more political than spiritual. However, we had a good time there, preaching the Word, and the people seemed to enjoy it. Quite a number of natives in this district seem willing to listen to the truth, and seem to appreciate the services of white missionaries. We regret that, because of Mrs. Kierstead's poor health, we may find it necessary to leave here about the 20th of December for our Mission Station on Balmoral, to prepare for our homeward journey.

Trusting you are all enjoying the Lord's presence and blessing in your work, we remain as ever,

Yours in His service,

I. F. KIERSTEAD.

Sulphur Springs, Transvaal,

November 17, 1913.

Dear Highway,—We praise the Lord this morning for His presence and for the privileges we find here for service for the Master. Yesterday we had a "Big Sunday" here; had open-air services under wattle trees, which proved a blessing, as the sun was very warm. There were over ninety present. Samuel and Solomon were here and helped in the services. About all of our members on this side of the river, with those who are studying, besides many heathen, came to the services and listened attentively. We pray that the word spoken may have fallen on some good ground and will spring forth unto life eternal. People are all very busy planting now. Having plenty of rain, the natives are rejoicing.

Dinezulu, the Zulu king, died recently, and there is great mourning among his people. He became a Christian some time before his death, so he had a Christian burial. He urged his people to believe and follow Jesus. What a victory for the cause of Christ! Thousands of natives, as well as Europeans, attended the very impressive funeral service. Wesleyan and Congregational ministers (natives) held the service. His many wives followed his body to the grave. His son was appointed king by the Indunas (chiefs), but he will not be recognized by the government, as their authority and power has been taken from them since the late rebellion.

We wish all your readers a very happy Christmas-tide, a bright and victorious New Year.

In Jesus' love,

IDA M. KIERSTEAD.

"If we praise God as honestly and heartily as the birds, we should be as happy as the birds."

As he is the best Christian who is most humble, so is he the truest gentleman that is the most courteous.—Trapp.