

Missionary Correspondence.

Paulpietersburg, Natal, So. Africa,
Oct. 21, 1915.

Dear Highway,—

"Doctor, doctor, our little girl had an accident; a snake has spit in her eye. I have brought a spare horse, and want you to come with me." I had been awakened about midnight by the barking of our dog, and lay listening to learn the cause, when there came the step of heavy shoes rapidly nearing the house (most natives do not wear shoes.) Then a voice in English (though I expected to hear it in Zulu) telling of distress and alarm.

It had happened several hours before. The candle was lighted when our neighbour's daughter, of five years, went to the table after a whistle to quiet her baby brother. She came running back to her mother saying that something burning hot had been thrown into her "three eyes." The mother on going to investigate saw a large spitting snake coiled upon the table with head erect and tongue darting out in defiance.

A Native boy failed to kill the intruder, and was then sent for the father, who was two miles distant visiting a neighbor.

The parents feared the loss of the eyes and perhaps the death of the child. But conjunctivitis from which they soon recover, is the usual result, though blindness may occur in rare instances.

The night was bright with full moon and we could see the footpaths like it was day as we travelled over the hills to the tent where lay the little girl who declared that her "three eyes" had been burned. Her father had tumbled everything about in a vain search for the offender, and planned a further overturning for the next day.

They have a house in building, and are now situated like we were just before we moved into ours. Living in a tent is all right during the dry season, but exceedingly unpleasant when the summer comes on with its heat and tempests of wind, rain, hail, thunder and lightning; like we do not have in a temperate climate. But a sheep farmer is willing, like a missionary, to rough it a while for the sake of his work.

It is good to have a few white neighbours, even though they are eight miles away, and of German descent. Families thus separated, and twenty miles or more from any settlements must be neighbourly, though isolation teaches one to get on without the usual borrowing and depending on others for help.

I have often remarked how little the Natives can do with. Even these Dutch people have their needs reduced to a wonderful minimum. When they trek or live in a tent it is astonishing how they get on in apparent comfort and contentment with so few conveniences. It makes one wonder if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not live in similar style. These Dutch of the "back veldt" will have mud floors, thatch roof, home-made beds and chairs and oven. From stores they buy practically only green coffee, sugar, salt, rice and clothing; and live from their large flocks and herds and small gardens.

The men folk have little to do, and women still less. Native servants shepherd and milk the cows, and plough the gardens with only slight oversight. The meagre housework is done by Native girls, who also act as nurses to the coming children. Invariably these Dutch infants learn Zulu from their nurses, so that their own mother must speak to her child in Zulu if she would be understood. There are, however,

other Boers who are enterprising and hard workers. These will have grain, vegetables, fruits and fowls for the markets as well as the usual mutton, wool, beef, etc.

But I still am wondering how those "three" little eyes are getting along, as it has been but two days since the tragedy occurred. The snake scare preceding this was from a Native source and the news reached us in the early evening. A woman, some six miles distant, had been bitten by a puff adder. The call found me in a rather "tired out" condition, so I sent Paul, armed with full instructions, and the required medicines, etc. This was two months ago and now the woman, to the surprise of all her friends, is about again.

We have a large variety of poisonous snakes here, some exceedingly deadly. Members of our family have had very narrow escapes, but thus far thank God, we have been kept from the evil.

Rains are late this year again, so some Natives must buy grain. Already they have begun. Some have the money, while others with many little mouths to fill have a hard time to get the price of a sack of corn. They are coming to us from away across the Pongolo, near a store over there because we sell \$1.25 less per sack.

Others come to us who have sickness at home, but no money. Their food is finished, can we help them? An old man asks for "just a little corn." He works for two hours and is given ten times what he earns. The next day his daughter-in-law arrives with a few shillings. She has left her three-day-old baby at home and now wishes to buy a sack of corn, carry a load home, and hopes to get the balance of the money soon.

Another young mother, (though she is not yet a wife), begs some corn for her twins. She has not the money yet, but rather thinks we will not see her go hungry. By the way, I was called to her help, lately, and I presume, saved her life together with that of her twin babies.

Flijah, formerly of our church, now a Zionist, is her man, and hopes to marry her when he shall have finished paying the ten cows.

Today, while visiting a sick Native, I learn that he also is "with a famine." He has no money and his sons are away from home. Will I give him a sack in exchange for a goat? Last year over half the goats about here died, so I do not want goats as they are not a safe investment. But I shall not hesitate to let him have the food he needs, and take my chance of selling the goat.

Daily I think, "I was hungry, and ye fed Me." And we have been placed here, I believe, not only to preach the gospel by word of mouth but by deeds of kindness and charity.

"I was sick and ye visited Me," is with us, and there are numberless opportunities to help the sick. Not only with medicines, words of comfort, but with little gifts of food such as they cannot get at their homes. There is one near neighbour we have been quite liberal with. Too liberal I find, for a few days since, Lydia came to me, and asked if I would give the above mentioned man some firewood. I expressed my surprise at this unusual request, as we buy all our fuel from the Natives. "But he is helping himself, and will soon be away with the wood," replied Lydia, indignant at his action, though he is her uncle.

So, friends, one must be wise as serpents, though dove-like. Especially is the negro weak right here, and given an "inch" will take an "ell." In this case the man had come to expect,

as a matter of course, that I would give him most anything he might want. My future dealings with him, though outwardly unchanged, will be more guarded. I will have him give me something in return for my favors to him, and his attitude will soon be entirely changed.

So every missionary must sooner or later learn the art of helping these needy ones, without making them beggars.

Brother Kierstead had one bitter lesson, of which he may have told you. They worked hard cooking sweet cakes, and sewing little book-bags for every church member, making a Christmas feast and all the rest. Now it is the custom among these Natives, not only to thank for a personal gift, but they even "thank for" gifts received by their friends. Well, you may ask Brother and Sister Kierstead how much gratitude was spoken or shown on that occasion.

So we, in making presents, even to our church members, must, for their good, be guarded as to how we give. Otherwise instead of showing the sweet spirit of gratitude they will even say right out "is that all?" In which case our methods become a curse to them, and not a blessing.

We therefore go on studying Native character, and asking Him for wisdom, who giveth liberally. And also take a lesson home to our own heart. Are we not ourselves, often like these spoiled Natives? Instead of ever showing the sweet spirit of gratitude to God for all His unmerited mercies, and humble contentment with our lot, we feel, or even say, "Is this all I am to have in life?" Such an attitude, on our part may cause the all wise Father to send us chastening, that will not be pleasant to bear.

Let us then "forget not all his benefits," but count His blessings until our hearts thrill with gratitude, and our lips speak His praises.

Yours, striving to do as He would,
H. C. Sanders.

THE SHOE PINCHED.

A preacher at the close of one of his sermons, said, "Let all in the house who are paying their debts stand up." Every man, woman and child, with one exception, rose to their feet. "Now, every man not paying his debts stand up." The exception, a careworn, hungry-looking individual, clothed in his last summer's suit, slowly assumed a perpendicular position.

"How is it, my friend," asked the minister, "you are the only man not able to meet his obligations?"

"I run a newspaper," he answered meekly, "and the brethren here who stood up are my subscribers, and—"

"Let us pray," exclaimed the minister.

We hope, having read the above, that a number of our subscribers are going to say, "Let us pay."—*Selected.*

Members of the W. C. T. U. of Hartland spent a most enjoyable time at the home of Mrs. D. H. Nixon on Thursday evening, knitting for the soldiers. The next meeting will be at the home of Mrs. S. Hayden Shaw, and all who are interested in knitting for the soldiers will be welcome whether they are members or not. At this last meeting the members decided to send the White Ribbon Bulletin, a year's subscription, to each of the Hartland clergymen.—*Observer.*

Religion is not a lot of things that a man does, but a new life that he lives.—*Phillips Brooks.*