

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

P. O. Hartland, Natal,
March 25th, 1918.

Dear Highway:

In my last letter I spoke of our "Big Sunday" at Balmoral. The following one is always that across the Pongola.

I found the river very high, but was fortunate in getting a native guide, who showed me where the new crossing is, as since my last visit at Ntungwini the Pongola has had its greatest flood for many years, which has swept away or buried with sand most of the native corn gardens that were in its valley. Rivers large and small have shared the fate of the Pongola, changing their crossings and general appearance.

The usual number with teeth to extract were in waiting at the church and several waylaid me on the road.

Watching time is again here, which greatly interferes with our work reducing our congregations, but some are willing to leave their gardens and let the birds feast rather than miss their communion service. One woman came with a small branch of the grain, "Kaffar Corn," over each ear. She shares the superstition that when a watcher in leaving their garden, thus takes away some grain with them, then the birds are less likely to eat what is left.

Our congregation was small, but the meetings were even better than usual. One woman, a seeker for four years, was baptized and received into the church.

Thomas, though only about seventeen years old, is a bright boy and promises to become one of our best workers. He has just returned from Johannesburg and is now doing outpost work near his home.

Johan writes that he will soon be back. In the meantime Simona Msibi is doing splendidly. He recently travelled at night to pray with a dying man, whereas it is the native custom to wait until next day. The man who had called him said, "The time was when I refused to listen to the gospel, or even permit a meeting in my kraal. I said there was no resurrection, but now I know, for I have just returned from the dead. My spirit left the body and went to heaven, only to find the gate closed against me. A voice bade me go back and call for the members of your church to pray for me."

The following day Simona was again summoned to pray once more for this penitent. He also was given money to buy white cloth for a winding sheet that Mr. Mashutu might be buried as Christians are.

Before departing this life he exercised his right as head man commanding that all the people of his kraal become Christians.

Natives from two other societies, seeing that this man had become so changed tried to persuade him to advise his people to join their church, but he was firm, saying that the heavenly voice had commanded him to seek help from the church at Eutingwine, and he advised no other. There are now two young women of that kraal who have expressed their desire to follow Jesus.

Joseph Msibi, brother of Simona, is coming on nicely as a worker, as well as Kelina, their sister. But Kelina leans towards communion with certain spirits,

called "Omoya Wabafana," spirits of boys. This is a kind of spiritualism that has recently come our way and is sure to spread even among church members. For those who have these spirits, claim that they are able to heal sickness by imparting these spirits to the sick ones. Drugs also are used, pointed out by these spirits.

Simona related a recent dream which he claims is divinely given to warn his sister, Kelina, and others to have nothing to do with these spirits. Both Mrs. Sanders and I had dealt faithfully with the churches, and now this dream will have wonderful influence with our people. They are children, and need our prayers.

Ever yours in Jesus,

H. C. SANDERS.

P. O. Hartland,
Paulpietersburg,

Natal, So Africa.

March 30th, 1918.

To the Woodstock Sunday School:

Dear Friends: Another month is almost gone, and it is time again for our report. I had thought of making a daily record, but could not do it this time. However, I have been greatly blessed, and used of the Lord this month, especially in dealing personally with those who come to the Mission Station.

The meetings at the outposts and Station have been especially good, and we have had an extra lot of outsiders. Of the two "Big Sundays" with their splendid meetings, you can read in the "Highway," where Papa has two long letters.

In my last, I think I told you of the new outpost. We have had some one from there to nearly every service since then, and are trusting the Lord to help many of them to take the right path, in this, the turning point of their lives.

You will be interested in what Papa has to say about Petros Hlope. How his wife's people across the Pongola have asked for meetings to be held in their homes, and he has offered to go, if we can furnish him with a few helpers. We have four Christians near there, who will be glad to do so. I think this is just splendid of Hlope for it is a very long way for one to go—eighteen miles or more. We ask you to join us in prayer for him, these new seekers, and the work all over, for just now the battle seems hotter than ever, and the time is so short before Jesus comes.

I suppose you have heard of the awful floods in Africa this year, though this district has not suffered so severely as others near big rivers, yet all the gardens by the Pevan and Pongola have been swept away. This will make it very hard for a large part of our people. The excessive rains have spoiled a great part of the corn crop, so this will be a hard year all over the country.

The natives around here are learning to come to us for help in time of trouble, and seldom go away disappointed. Papa's medical practice brings them from far and near, and he has often been enabled to save lives.

Yesterday there came a striking case of gratitude, more beautiful because of its exceeding rarity. You will read of Joni in the last Highway as the wife of a witch doctor, and mother of four church babies.

For several years now they have had very poor crops, and she has had to go to her friends far and near for food for her hungry babies. Her brother came to pay her a visit lately, and was here yesterday to buy a three-pennies worth of medicine from Papa. It was so small that Papa asked him why not buy a sixpence worth. He said he would if he could, but had no more money. When he paid Papa, he gave him two three-pences. "What is the other tickle for?"

"For you."

"Why?"

"To thank you for helping my sister, Joni, so much during her famine. She says she would not be living now had it not been for your help. Many times when she could not get help elsewhere, she has come to you, and never in vain."

A little time ago, Miss Colpitts asked for something to interest some bright boys, so, as my own little brothers found them so interesting, I give some stories that I heard the natives tell.

On the last Sunday of the old year, Tabita and I started off to hold a meeting at our nearest outpost. My strong little donkey carried me up the long hill very well, and we soon reached our destination—one of the kraals of Zifo Bhekiswayo.

We found four young women sitting on the grass in front of the hut, hairdressing, snuffing and gossiping.

This hairdressing is an interesting proceeding. All the Zulu brides and married women wear an "isicole" until they become Christians and "deliza" (take down their hair). A ring about two inches wide is shaved round the edge of the scalp, and the rest of the wool is dragged, scraped and pulled back in a sort of cone shaped style. The hair itself is curly enough to stand alone, and with the addition of oil and red clay it is sewed up into this shape so it looks as stiff as any stove-pipe hat. It is a long, tedious job, and a woman can never sew her own "isicolo" properly, so, as we found them there, they help one another. There is one great advantage. When once it is well done, it needs no more attention for a whole month.

I drew near to watch them do one another's hair, and before the meeting folks arrived, found their conversation more interesting than a story book. After a little preliminary joking and gossiping with Tabita they began discussing the flooded river.

"Yes," remarked Pahlakazi, as she reached to Mrs. Zifo for a pinch of snuff, "It is simply fearful the number of people who have been carried away by the waters of the Pongola this year! The river is full of death."

"Even the cattle hardly dare go down to drink, lest the waters take them," added Mrs. Zifo as she took her baby on her knee.

I made some remark about the crocodiles taking the people, but "No, the crocodiles never bother when the river is full like this," said Mrs. Zakaria, as she carefully drew the long string through the tight drawn hair, and critically surveyed the effect.

Yes, it was in the winter, when I was about this size," pointing to her little three-year-old, Mrs. Zifo sat back to begin

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