

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

Paulpietersburg,
Natal, South Africa,
Sept. 16th, 1920.

Dear Friends:

Let me tell you of our trip across the Pongola.

Last Saturday we left home to spend Communion Sunday and a few days more, if possible, with our church at Emozane, where Simone Msibi is our evangelist.

It was a little before dark when we arrived, but they had made ready a nice hut for us and gladly welcomed us among them.

Our carriers with our food, etc., had not arrived, nor the girls with their bedding, and we began to be a bit anxious as to how we could manage through the night. However, just as dark was closing around us, all arrived and we soon had things a bit comfortable about us.

In the meantime we had some talk with the different ones in the village and gained bits of interesting facts from one and another.

From seeing several cattle skins lying about for various uses, we learned cattle sickness had swept through the village last year and taken away six or more of their precious stock. In another village about five miles beyond they still are losing beasts, in spite of dipping every five days.

It was interesting to mingle with the house-wives and watch the cooking operations going on. Citron cut up, seeds removed, were stuffed in one good-sized, three-legged camp pot. Stuffed full, high above the top, was placed over a fire and the girls were tending to it. In the huts one heard grinding going on and by peeping in could see the girl or woman on her knees before a large scouped out stone, having in her hands a long, round stone with which she crushed or ground fine the kernels of corn she had placed between these two stones. The peculiar motion given to the whole body during grinding is most interesting. In the middle of the hut and not far from the grinder was a fire kindled and a pot busily boiling away. Its nearness made it possible for her to tend the fire at the same time she was grinding.

The men were loosening dressing from the cattle pen or kraal so the following days they could load a sledge and draw it out to a garden not very far away. In all my years in Africa this is the first time I even saw men really fertilize their gardens. Usually they are not enterprising enough, but leave the cattle pen alone. When they move they will likely plant there tobacco or pumpkins the first years, afterwards corn.

But I must not fill up the letter with interesting bits of everyday life, suffice it to say these people take life easy, "The careless Ethiopian, etc.," and each has his or her daily routine. The women usually do all the planting and weeding—most men help a little in this by times and if oxen are possessed, they do the plowing—they also carry all the water, go long distances to bush or forest and carry all the wood, any grain needing to be shifted is so done on her head and most any and everything that is work is done by her.

Certainly she must do so while raising a family and it is so common a sight one ceases to marvel to see a woman busily hoeing her garden with a two or three days old baby on her back. The women live out their little lives very fast, and in a short time the bride grows to look old and faded.

Sunday was a good day. Large crowd present. I did not count but I judge over one hundred and twenty-two were baptized and several babies were presented to the Lord and a number of heathen gave themselves as seekers.

It was precious to mingle with the people and speak to individuals about their souls. One was reminded of the multitude Jesus fed with so few loaves and fishes. These people, too, were hungry, were awakening from the long night of heathen darkness and eagerly coming to the glorious light we held aloft.

Many good testimonies were given, some of victory after a struggle and all seemed to get helped.

The day was long and hard and Dr. Sanders was very tired when night came.

Kraal conditions seldom make for comfortable nights but we are always glad for such opportunities.

Monday we set off on our horses to visit a young chief who lives about five miles away.

Hills, hills to climb but finally we reached a beautiful long and wide plain of fertile land where hundreds of bags of corn can be raised.

On our way we called at two villages and in one found two hungry women who are seeking God. One is about seventy years old but smart, and to Dr. Sanders telling her she must be sort of a shepherd to the others of the kraal and see that they followed Jesus, she readily assented and in a few words told us how much she wanted to be a christian. She is grandmother to a very nice girl who is with us for a time. Also this girl's mother is very anxious to be a christian at once.

Passing on we at last came to the village of Tsherula, the old chief whose son had desired to have a school, and meetings and wants to build a church.

Now all welcomed us and though busy thatching and building (they had lately moved) they soon had a hut ready for us and came into a meeting a little later on. We found out the following: Tshesulu is about seventy. He is of royal Zulu blood and rules a large territory both in the Transvaal and Zululand.

He has had over twenty wives and many children; forty lived to become young men, forty also young women, many who died in infancy and childhood were not counted. However, out of so many young men few are left today and this young man, who will be chief in his father's place is the only son of his mother, who was the daughter of Mpande, a famous aristocrat of the Zulu race. Therefore, though he is barely more than a boy, he has been chosen from among his father's sons as the one to fill his father's office.

As so many of his father's children had died and since he came of such royal blood, his mother took him far away in Zululand to another village of his father's

and brought him up there. It is somewhere near Eshowe and this boy was taught to read by some missionaries. A short time ago he, on leaving there, was admonished to go on and become a christian and the missionaries prayed with him most earnestly.

His own mother died about two years ago. Now on his getting to his father's kraal and not far from Simone Msibi (whose wife is one of his half-sisters, therefore of royal stock) Simone went there and held a meeting, learned the desire of the 'Inkosana,' to possess a Bible, to have a school, to build a church, to have a teacher among them, he came, not long since and told us all about it. Hence our visit.

Well we had a good talk with the young man, admonished him, marked some passages in his new Bible, held a fine prayer meeting to a crowded hut, had a little talk with the old chief and promising we would do all we can to help him with the desires of his heart we left him.

One thing more. When death kept claiming so many of his numerous children this old chief has at last grown tired of calling witch doctors and enquiring of the evil spirits why? why? why? do they die? He now does not resort to them when in trouble.

He is rather a fine looking man, having a good shaped head, rather a refined face and I should judge was about the average in intelligence.

Returning home to Simone's village we made plans for leaving the next day for our own home. But Simone stayed to Juliana's kraal to pray for her (she is not very well) her mother and old grandmother of whom I have spoken about, and five backslidden girls who had been sort of believers before from an Ethiopean church, are themselves afresh to seek God. On their return to us the next day they gave us this good news.

There is much more I could write but my letter is already long, so I will close with a few words about the great need.

Beloved, a great door and effectual is opened unto us there and we must enter it at once or lose one of the best chances we have yet had in Africa to reach hundreds of Zulus. You can see because Simone is in or belongs to this "king's household" in an indirect way, he has more influence than any one else. The customs of the Zulus have failed to satisfy the old chief in times of his trouble. The young man has already been under a different influence and his heart is tender. In one year all may be changed.

I am asking all who are interested in this work to become interested especially in him and join us in very special daily prayer for him. Ask only this, nothing less, that he becomes a lowly follower of Jesus. To most of you this does not appear difficult but that is because you do not know Zulu customs. It will mean a war to the teeth in the enemy's camp.

No Zulu chief has so small a household as one wife and this is the greatest stumbling block to him or will be. Pray that God may be able to have his way in this case and the devil be defeated.

If this young man leaves the gods of

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