

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

P. O. Hartland,
Paulpietersburg,
Natal, Jan. 29th, 1921.

Dear Children:

Let me tell you of our Christmas across the Pongola river. Our meeting house is built of large rough stones like your ordinary stone walls. The doorway is very narrow and there is no door. Two little openings, one on each side wall, does for windows. The walls are from five to six feet high and support rough poles to which a grass roof is tied. This building, which your father would consider unfit for his sheep, is where we hold the services, and where I tried to sleep.

I had gone over on horse back early Sunday morning, planning to stop one night, so as to be with them for the Monday, Christmas feast. I keep a folding cot over there and some quilts. These I now had spread out to air in the hot sunshine.

A girl of the kraal, daughter of Asiena, waited on me. Her name is "Muhle," meaning good or nice. She is about 12 years old, the step daughter of Johan, who recently died. Her mother now holds meetings, visits and prays with the sick, doing the work her husband formerly did. Muhle has a little sister called Daina, who always goes to church with her mother.

About 12 o'clock our meeting went in, and you should have seen the lot of babies. The mothers brought them tied on their backs in little blankets or goat skins.

There are only a few roughly made stools for the preachers and principal men to sit upon, while all others sit on the floor. Mats are very scarce, so each one pulls some green grass or breaks off a few branches when they get near the church, and use these to spread on the mud floor. The mothers arrange these branches, then untie the blanket that fastens in front of their neck, so the precious infant can be pulled out of this sacklike baby carriage.

As a rule babies do not disturb the meetings much. But, ones like Daina, three years old, must of course, run about a little. She was dressed as becomes a preacher's daughter, and seemed delighted to show off her single garment to the best advantage. So back and forth she went, holding and flourishing the skirt of her dress with both hands. Soon another little girl, about her size, but with no dress, joined her in the parade. It seemed to be a game of their own for each time they came back to the doorway they both would scream. Their mothers did not seem to notice, nor did any of the congregation, for the natives don't have 'nerves.' So I made the best of it, reserving my sermon until the game was finished.

Daina became weary, went around to her mother's back and tried to climb on to her baby-carriage. The patient mother took her black shawl, passed it under one arm and over the other shoulder, tying two of the corners in front. Daina crawled up under this, behind, with arms clinging, to mother's neck and legs encircling her waist, while the bottom of the shawl was drawn tight under the child to support her. This should have been tied in front to make the support firm, but was neglected. Diana squirmed and fidgeted in pro-

test, but soon forgot her game and troubles in sleep.

All the babies were now quiet and I had a good chance to "preach the word," which I did.

The meeting was a long one and Daina awakening, refreshed but very warm, remembered her dress and her game. She struggled, slid down and out and was off for another spree. But her partner to the little game was still weary and resting with her head on the knee of Daina's own mother. She pranced back and forth alone but found the game so tame that no squeal would come. Even a troubled look was on her face, for there was her mother caressing that other child. She was even improving the time, as were several other women, in searching out something in that other child's woolly head. Again and again Daina would return from her trip across the church and look so worried about her mother's doings. Finally she came to a stand still right in front of her mother, and tried to make her see how she felt about the matter. But mother was obtuse and kept on with her search from temple to occiput and then the other side of the head. Tears were getting very near, yet Daina made no sound. She scratched her head with her little chubby hands, made like she had caught one and put it between the thumb nails, just as mother did. But Asiena did not or would not see until tears came in earnest; then Daina got her place and the other child was pushed ruthlessly aside. Now little Daina's head was on mother's knee and she was again happy.

When our long service was over most of the people went to their homes but some of the young ones remained at the kraal, about 60 yards from the church, and sang all night.

"Muhle," my little cook, now came, asking what I would have for my supper. I gave her some rice I had brought with me and told her to cook also a fowl that had been given me some months previously.

About nine o'clock she returned with two iron pots, a white enamel plate and mug. Rice in the little pot and fowl and soup in the larger one. The feet and head had been nicely cleaned of feathers and was at the bottom in native fashion.

One talkative little girl confided to me that she would be afraid to sleep alone in such a building, with no doors or window shutters, and especially as the top of the roof was open the whole length of the room. But it is now mid-summer, the time of gardens, all cattle and goats are shut in their pens at night. In winter it would be different.

I managed, in spite of the singing, to get some sleep, and in the morning Muhle gave me warmed over rice and fowl.

Our 15 x 20 ft. church was too small for our Monday's congregations, so we held an open air service, in the hot sunshine, with just a little shade near the church. One idiot was present, a man who stood up, raised his arms and shouted, every time I looked his way, and some times when I did not. So, of course, I had always to face the other direction. But, on the whole, the meeting was helpful and souls were blessed.

Near the close, I sent some young men

to get the two gross of safety matches ready. Then all the people filed up the hill from the church to the kraal, receiving each a box of matches, first the men, then the women, followed by young people and children.

A big fat sheep and a lot of fowls had been cooked with crushed corn, like rice. This was dished out in every obtainable pan and pot, etc., so all could get some meat and more "stamp" as the rice like corn is called.

Muhle says she needs new clothes and wishes to come to our station and earn some money as soon as she can finish weeding her own little garden of corn. You may hear from her again, as she is one of the best natured little native girls I ever became acquainted with.

Please remember to pray for these little sisters and brothers of yours who have so few privileges.

Ever yours in Him,

H. C. SANDERS.

Dear Brother Baker:

The religious part of our mission work is going on well. The revival continues and souls are constantly getting saved, sanctified or otherwise blessed.

I am not planting much this summer, and plan to start brick-making soon. In fact building has already been started.

We are having a long drought that threatens to lessen the crops and, if it continues, will mean famine.

We are counting on your prayers. Love to all,

Yours in Jesus,

H. C. SANDERS.

FALSE SOOTHING SYRUP.

O brother, wasn't it awful when your barn burned and you went to look up your insurance policy, and found it had run out! You knew you had once had it insured and so felt reasonably confident.

Now, many a person's salvation policy has run out, and he doesn't know it. He never paid any attention to keeping up the premiums.

Our spiritual life is held by a faith tenure. If your faith is not laying hold of eternal life with the same grip and earnestness as when you were converted, something serious has happened to you.

Let no one deceive you with the false soothing syrup of "once in grace, always in grace." Observation and common sense as well as Scripture tell us that is not true.—The Drawn Sword.

The Revised Mandarin Bible, which has recently been completed by the American Bible Society, is said to go to more human beings than any other translation. Several hours spent on each verse—and there are 33,173 verses in the Bible. One member of the translation committee did not have a furlough from the task for twenty years. The work cost \$132,000, without counting the sums paid by missionary societies to the translators. This new version has been printed in China, the first copies having been distributed in February, 1920.

Don't pity the people who wear out; think of the good times they've had. Pity only those who rust out.—Selected.