

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE.

Hartland P. O.,

Paulpietersburg,

February 6th, 1923

Dear Highway Friends:

Just a few lines to let you know we are all well at the Mission Station. Paul and wife and Baby Hope are back again from Durban; they are all well and little Hope is truly a lovely baby, so bright and good, and growing every day. It is nice to see a white baby once again, the first one we have seen since coming here.

The new church is a continued comfort, the thatched roof makes it so cool.

Sunday, Feb. 4th, was Big Sunday, about three hundred were present; we had good services; two were baptized and taken into the church. Over a dozen stayed to the after-meeting; these were all christians.

It rejoiced our hearts to see a heathen man who is coming into the light, give a testimony. His name is Shayainkomo, which means 'Strike the cow.' So many of these natives names sound so peculiar to us.

Shayainkomo and wife had been sent to jail by the Zulu chief for witchcraft, and while there he began to seek the Lord by prayer. He found his prayers were answered in a number of wonderful ways, for instance, after he began to honour God he received better food, and more of it as well; also his daily work was changed to lighter and better work, etc.

He gave God the glory for all these mercies and acknowledged Him to his fellow-prisoners. He is now having prayer in his home and allowing his two wives to become Christians. To God be all the glory! We praise Him for this.

Speaking about native names, a woman just came now to see us, and asked for a piece of soap to wash her young baby with; on asking her the name of her baby she tells us it is Endhleleni, which means on the path.

We have had four native weddings here since Christmas. They all come to us for a snapshot of the wedding party after the ceremony.

So many of these native girls take great pride and pleasure in having a nice white wedding dress and veil made for the occasion.

The bride always dresses up after coming to the station; they dress in a donga, about seven minutes walk from the church. The bride with her friends, then walk to the church, where the groom and his friends are waiting.

The bride is usually very timid, and when asked the usual questions during the ceremony, her voice is so weak it is almost a whisper. It really is quite amusing. The married couple never walk off together.

A heathen man came to us the other day, asking if we would buy some Amabele; we said yes. So on the following day his youngest wife came to the house with it on her head, the weight was thirty pounds, the husband follows behind, brings it to us, weighs it, we give him the money which is two shillings and a six-

pence. He thanks us, then gives the money to his wife as it is her grain; then she thanks us and asks us for a box of matches, as the baby cries in the night. After she has received the matches, she thanks us very many times, then returns home. The Amabele when ground makes a very nice dark cereal. Beer is also made from the grain.

Another heathen man comes to ask for prayer for his wife, who has a bad cold. She is a seeker and gaining in her faith in God.

We go to her kraal, and find her body in pain. She rejoices to see us; we read and have prayer with her, sing some hymns and on leaving advise her to send to the doctor for medicine, but she prefers to trust the Lord instead. May the Lord honour her faith indeed.

While the Doctor and Mrs. Sanders were at Utrecht, there was a young native girl carried here on a large girl's back. The young girl while cutting wood for a Dutch woman had cut her foot which bled very badly.

The woman was very much frightened, but applied a tight bandage to stop the flow of blood. We expected that stitches would have to be taken, but we were glad to find it was unnecessary.

We kept the girl with us for a few days, so we could dress the cut. Early one morning we were awakened by hearing a number of voices in the kitchen. We arose, dressed and found that five women and one man, relatives of the girl, had come to pay her a morning visit, to inquire after her health. We talked with them for a while, and assured them that the girl was doing very nicely.

This is the season now for peaches and grapes, the peaches are very plentiful, much more than last year.

We planted some corn and squash seeds, which we brought from home, and in less time than six weeks the squash were in blossom, but a rust has killed them now.

The corn is doing well, and is about ripe, after being planted about ten weeks.

Beans also are ripe which were planted six weeks ago.

The hot weather is still on. We will begin to notice a difference in March, then it will be getting cooler.

I trust the Lord will richly bless you all during these winter months in the homeland.

We are always so glad to get the Highway, and read the home news.

The Lord is blessing and keeping us and we are content and happy here, for which we always thank the Lord who doeth all things well. Praise Him for his love and care! He is always near. Our Friday night prayer meetings are a blessing. Pray for us.

Yours in Christian love,

HELEN M. STERRITT.

Hartland,

Paulpietersburg,

Natal, Feb. 12th, 1923.

Dear Friends:

This letter is written that you may be more truly and intelligently our fellow-workers in prayer. You will remember I spoke of our Christmas feast and service

across the Pongola and how my heart was burdened for the unreached heathen.

Last Saturday Paul and I went over the Pongola River to seek a site for a mission station in the Transvaal and to be present for the 'Big Sunday' next day. We got away early in the morning and travelled on horse back for seven hours, stopping for the night at the home of a Dutchman, whom we had befriended over a year ago. They were very kind to us, reminding one of the words, "Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days." They came from Cape Colony and are working two big farms on shares for a very wealthy Dutchman, living in Paulpietersburg. They plant corn, potatoes, etc., but specialize in tobacco. In their Kaffir corn garden were nearly forty married women weeding, and all belonging on these two farms. What impressed me was that nearly all wore the badge of heathenism, the "isicolo," or the steeple-like mode of doing up their hair. With this goes a skirt of cow hide and a possible blanket for the shoulders. Whereas, the Christian women wear a handkerchief as a head-dress and clothes like European women, that "hide their body," as they say, "and honors the Lord."

For nine years we have had an organized church only six miles away and now have several members and one evangelist on these very farms.

In our Sunday service there were more than usual, one hundred and twenty present, most all well dressed and so-called Christians. But, oh, the indifference to the appalling need at their very homes! The condition of heathenism on these two farms mentioned is typical of what lies beyond—the unreached. They might have heard the gospel, but are sitting in darkness until some one God-sent goes to them and "compells them to come in."

It may a thankless task as they are satisfied to remain as they are and wish only plenty of tobacco, beer, dancing, etc., with the bare necessities of clothing and food.

All the land is divided into large farms of from 1,000 to 4,000 acres and owned mostly by farmers who live far away on "high veldt," and send their flocks of sheep here for winter grazing. The Government still owns a few of these farms, one of which we visited in the afternoon, thinking it might possibly do for our hoped-for mission station. It is situated four miles from a point we call the very centre of our work in the Transvaal; but it is on the needy side, that is down the Pongola valley, away from civilization and evangelized natives. With God's blessing our work may so extend in this needy direction that some day this very Government farm, Altona, would be the central point of our Transvaal work.

Many times we have tried to get a site on some central farm, but found the Dutchmen invariably unwilling. Always we have found closed doors and yet we could not doubt but that God would in His own time open to us a door that no man would shut. So now we are repeating our requests to farm owners and, in addition, asking the Government for a place to plant our second mission station.

Our Paul has returned to work again