

## MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

## A TYPICAL NATIVE KRAAL OR VILLAGE

This one is a large one and three important men live in it.

The head-man has four wives and some 12 living children. There have died a number of children.

There are three young men and three young women of marriageable age and the rest are of various ages, from infancy up. One wife has twins, dear little cheerful things with a smile for me when I speak to them, though I am the first white woman they ever saw.

A wife usually has three huts. The largest and best is the sleeping room, and where the head of the house always or nearly always eats. The second is the kitchen. Here the cooking, grinding of corn and other food is done, and the wife and children eat here. Some kitchen huts are large and comfortable, and full of interesting things; others small, crowded and stuffy.

The third hut is the store house. It usually has sort of a stockade around it which serves as further store room for the larger vessels for grain, beer-pots, pumpkins and citrons, etc., etc. The store-room contains everything that needs to be taken care of. The amabele heads are stacked on top of a platform of poles and the corn-on-the-cobs too. This platform makes a protection from mice and white ants. Goat skins hang there till wanted to sell or for a garment. Gourds, from which various kinds of dishes and containers are made are placed here and there, or a dipper finished is ready for use. Pumpkins, squash and citron lie beneath the raised platforms and if they have had plenty of them, the yard outside has stacks of them everywhere a place out of the way can be found.

Grass braided into rope hangs in big bunches, a new broom, new table mat on which the meal falls as the girl on her knees by the grinding stone on the floor, grinds it. All sorts of odds and ends are in these store rooms. Stuck up in the crevices of the roof are heads of sweet reed, corn, amabele and other seed are stored here for time of planting.

If a wild buck has been found or a goat or beast been killed, the meat is hung up here till wanted. Strange doors are the safeguards of all this store. Often it is just built up pieces of wood something like the bars to make the gateway of a pasture fence. Sometimes it is a very flimsy affair of woven corn stalks or coarse grass.

Fowls can usually find a way in, but they are not allowed full range. Fowls, by the way, must forage for themselves, both for food and water, as so often I do not see any provision made for them, but do see some kind of care of dogs, cats and pigs.

The hen with a family of chickens always draws near the door-way of the hut when the house-wife sweeps out the house as there are fine tid-bits of food left by the children when eating. Seldom does one see a real hen-house; they roost in the trees, if there are any, or on the edge of the cattle-yard fence, or even on the top of a hut, usually not a sleeping hut though. When the cock crows the time of the day or night the cattle yard is always prominent. Usually it is in the front and the first thing to be seen. It may be built of stone, and I have seen some fine native built ones. Nearly al-

ways it is circular in shape. It may be of wood and wire—only small ones have I seen of this material. A very common material is wood stakes and different kinds of little wand-like shrubs or vines woven in and out of the stakes. These stakes are tall and of all sorts of crookedness which proclaim a kraal as far away as one can see these stakes of the cattle yard.

Many of these head men in certain sections have large herds of cattle and goats, fifty or more of the latter is a common flock and furnish meat and skins for the needs of the kraal.

Let me tell you about a living or sleeping hut. It is almost always round and the best ones are built of small poles bent into a dome-shape and so closely are they tied together one can scarcely get one's fingers through them. Two quite stout poles make supporting pillars in the centre and a raised circle made of the clay where the floor is pounded in, is the fire-place—there is neither chimney nor window, but the smoke finds its way out of the door and percolates through the thatch.

This thatch, by the way, is so neatly done that it certainly is picturesque and the village of houses looks not unlike a dozen or more giant, thatched, old fashioned bee-hives.

The young men have a hut to themselves, and hang up are all their finery, their dress suits, sticks, knob-kerries, tiny shields used in running and dancing, etc.

A frame work of wood makes a good rack in which many fine native hand-woven mats are placed. These are the pride of the hut.

Stuck up in the roof one always sees some tambukie grass. This is their store of candles or lights. When anyone wishes a light one of these is drawn out, set a fire to and its blaze is as good as a candle, but as it so quickly dies away it is quite an art to keep the light going by snuffing it and as it burns short to light another by it.

The door may be of planks, but usually it is a piece of wicker work and so built it can be locked.

There is one thing to be said about these small houses; they are a fine shade on a hot day. One does not stand up much in so low a house. One crawls in and sets down on a grass mat.

However "Be it ever so humble there's no place like home."

It is a glorious thing to be able to meet these people in such lowly surroundings and teach them about Jesus and His beautiful home in Heaven. To carry the blessed invitation to these hidden away kraals is the missionary's delight.

Brethren, pray for us!

Yours in Jesus,

MRS. H. C. SANDERS

Hartland P. O.,

Paulpietersburg,

Natal

Dear Friends:

This is my account of my Ekuvumeni trip.

We left home about 2 p. m. Aug. 12th, and after descending the mountain, arrived at Pondo Zulus kraal more than eight miles from home, about dark.

Our pack donkeys were not a little troublesome as the packs kept slipping, but though slow, they arrived safely, and I was glad they had carried the loads and not girls and women as last year over this same road.

Though the folks did not know we were coming, they soon had the same hut I had last year ready and we made ourselves comfortable.

It gave much less care to have a boy to look after the animals, as they do sometimes stray or get into mischief if not watched.

Saturday morning visited the women's huts, spoke to each as she was grinding the meal or preparing citron or other food. Some very interesting things in one woman's store hut, several especially nice skins being here, a beautifully prepared gourd dipper and several other articles. These "careless ethiopians" certainly do have a care for some things.

As it was winter, many sheep were met with on this and adjoining farms. Also a Mr. and Mrs. Smith were living on their farm for the winter months, so I had two European families to call on.

Befa and I walked as it was only about a mile and a half. We found the same family, Labuchagne's, as last winter in the same poor little house and spent an hour or so with these people. Not many visitors get down there so any one calling is welcome. I was able to get some fresh eggs—I did not bring enough with me.

Returning to Pondo's we had lunch, got my horse and started off kraal-visiting. Found some who have lately become seekers, talked with and prayed with them, endeavouring to encourage them on to Christ.

In the way of our returning, a woman called, "Befa, come here." "No, I am on my way back, you cross the donga and come to meet us." "But you must come here as I have something for you to see." So, we crossed over, talked with this earnest seeker, and found a nice fat fowl all cooked for us. She and the man she is living with have not yet been married, but hope to soon make all necessary arrangements and have this done. Her husband has been a backslider for years.

We met a nice looking young heathen girl from a large kraal, near Adumbe. Her father does not want any if his folks to become Christians, but already three of his children are interested and hungry. This is the third member I have met and had a chance to say a word to each.

At a kraal we met a young woman with great trouble. First, before she became a seeker, she chose a man, proposed to him, but he already had a wife. After she got conviction for sin on her soul, she knew the thing she must do was to separate from him. This she did. Next one she chose was a professing Christian, so, though of another church, she felt he would be alright. Now, she finds out he has another girl too. What will she do? She says she is willing to give him up also, but most of the marriage cattle have been paid so it is rather complicated. However, we could tell her if she did not want this man who had deceived her, she could refuse him in court, for there is a law that no girl can be forced to marry a man she does not want. However, only a very strong character will be able to stand out against all the pressure of influence that will be brought to bear upon her will and make it bend to her owner, who has received the lobolo cattle.

One old woman at a kraal was left in charge of two babies. Their mothers had gone to town. It is true each baby had a small girl to nurse him, carry him around on her back and feed him, but they were smear-