

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Hartland, P. Q.,
Natal.

Dear Friends:

Let me tell you about a little Thanksgiving and Christmas celebration all in one.

A young couple, belonging to our church here, have two children and the mother still lives, but had come through much ill-health and trouble.

They were so grateful to God for His blessing of these two children and, for the restored health of the mother, they decided to make a little feast, call all their friends and neighbours and have a thanksgiving meeting on Sunday, New Year's Day.

They gathered, from our teaching that it were better to choose a week day, but when they mentioned it, to their friends, they at once began to make excuses and said: "There are so many needs we cannot leave our gardens for one day now so, unless you have it on Sunday, we will not come."

It was all talked over then, that the goats were to be killed on Saturday; the mealies prepared for stamp, the drink mealies (corn) also prepared; wood gathered for cooking and everything done, that could be done on Saturday. So only the fires made and food cooked early in the morning Sunday.

They came for a last consultation unto us and, only by chance, did we understand it was to be on Sunday.

Now, what was to be done? It was Saturday noon, things were about ready, people far away had been called, etc. It looked like it could not be stopped without much harm being done and no good come of it.

Well, we did our best, instructed these two from the Word, and I finally decided the Lord would have me go.

These church members need so much teaching and helping to understand the lessons taught. "Line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," and so often having to repeat and repeat lessons all over again to the same ones till, finally, the dawning light is accepted and they walk in it.

Again, these Zulus were a wild people, especially this section of the country, with no civilization. Salt was such a luxury that only on rare occasions did they have it. Sugar, more so, and matches a scarce article. If one's fire went out one must borrow from one's neighbour and I knew of a case where a smoking cob was very carefully carried over half a mile, because the fire had gone out and this borrowing from a neighbour was the only way to rekindle it except by the slow process of tinder and flint.

Now, they are reaching out trembling hands and trying to take hold of the better ways European. Table and chairs, instead of the floor, and mats, a bed, knives and forks, plates, cups and saucers and tea or coffee—they have already learned to read and write. Now comes the introducing of birthday, wedding and Christmas anniversaries.

Till Jesus came to them, through the light of the Word and the foolishness of preaching, no record was kept of births or marriages and no one knew his or her years, save as they had been born the year of some big happening, such as locusts came that year, and ate all their food, or a big scarcity of food, so people died of famine, or a war. Then the person asked

could say: "I was born the year the locusts came," but could not give the tale of years.

Christian marriages is establishing milestones along the pathway of so many people, as they may have their certificate laid away carefully in the box that contains the wedding dress, the husband's best clothes, and other precious things of the household. Or if not, the Umfendisi has the record with him and can easily refer to the time of year as well as the year itself. So, too, each Christian mother now has some way treasured up by which she can know the time of her children's birth, if she so desires.

Some few build more permanent houses out of stone or sod, or even sun-dried bricks, and I have no doubt these would now spring up everywhere only for their king just squatters having to move so often.

Civilization goes hand in hand with Christianity, but woe to the church or the individual who chooses the former at the expense of the latter, for these folks are about the biggest imitators one ever saw and can so quickly put on the veneer.

Let us go back to New Year's Day. I was burdened. I did not want to tear down the little advancement these two were making towards better things, but most of all I did not want them to advance in civilization at the expense of grieving the Lord.

Paulina being home (which is very rare), we saddled our donkeys and got off in good time and arrived at the village before many had gathered.

In the hut we found the owner and two of his men friends eating their breakfast on a table—and the wife's shawl was the cloth—chairs, dishes and nicely cooked food, with cups of tea. What a change from the old heathen way! Food in an earthen clay pot, sitting on the floor and those eating also sitting on the floor, eating either with the hands or a wooden spoon.

We had a beautiful congregation of 80 odd and as huts were too small, held it on the open hillside—God's beautiful temple, with the clouds for a canopy, the hills (mountains) for a glorious background and the luscious grass for a carpet.

God gave the message on the Sabbath, God's law, His blessing on those who keep it and punishment for those who break it and "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in My love."

I felt like a mother with her children all around her, instructing them and, oh, how my heart yearned over them in their striving after a new way!

There really was a little tree loaded with tiny parcels, a match-box, an inch or two of a bar of soap, a tea-cup of salt, were the usual things.

How happily they clapped their hands as they received these simple gifts and how delighted the little tots were when they received a stick of candy.

All went off well. Then followed the feast. They were gathering in groups for this as we left.

The man and wife each thanked me for my message and for my coming and as I moved away I had a sweet touch of His peace steal over my soul.

There had been several fine testimonies in the meeting. We held short talks with some heathen who are just beginning to want to follow Jesus, and I feel sure no more celebrations will be held on Sunday by those who were there who really want to follow Jesus.

Yours in Him,
MRS. H. C. SANDERS.

Hartland, P. Q.,
Paulpietersburg.

Dear Highway Friends:

A very Happy New Year to you all. We trust the blessing of the Lord will be upon you all in a great measure in the homeland this coming year.

My prayer and great desire is that this year will be the year of greatest blessing to me, since coming to this land of Africa.

I often think of the words of this hymn, "Where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." It is true, Africa with its hills and valleys and wonderful cliffs is very beautiful to look upon, but dear friends man is indeed vile.

But I thank the dear Lord that His blood avails for all, and these lost black sheep that wander over these hills, were remembered by Him on that dark day when He gave His life for us on the cross. Praise the Lord, yes there is hope for them. I do thank the Lord and take fresh courage when I think of His great love to all the world. I count it a great privilege to be here in Africa to tell these people of the wonderful truth of the love of God to all mankind—Psa. 12:6, Rom. 8:32. Paulos Whlope, the man who was saved three years ago at Lindeni's Kraal, had quite an experience last spring when he was away from home. He had to go a very long distance from home on some business concerning cattle. He was accompanied by his heathen brother. They had to make their home in a heathen kraal. These people were on a big drunk and would not cook any food, but just drank beer day after day. Paulos had to stay at this place for five days without food. Evidently they were trying to make it hard for him, as he was a Christian. They would not even cook porridge for him. He told me many times things would grow dark before him from hunger, but he would drink water and go away and pray, and tell the Lord he was ever trusting Him, and he knew he was right in His sight, and he knew he would get food some day, and he did not fear. He told us he was not even tempted to drink beer. This shows what the power of God can do for a Zulu man, when he is all on the altar. Praise God.

My heart is still very much burdened for the young people of our church. I want the dear Lord to still deepen the burden on my heart. Yes, very much. Some of the young people are becoming engaged. This is the biggest matter in the world to a Zulu. Faithful Samuel has been laid by for some time now, with a badly swollen foot. He has much trouble at times with his feet. Poor man, he has in the days past worn his feet out, walking long distances for the sake of the Gospel. He is indeed a faithful preacher. He is very quiet, yes, and very homely, but he is taught of the Lord, and is strong in Him and he is a diamond in the rough. You would all be justly proud of him if you saw his every day life for Jesus. Alice borrowed his horse last Sunday and we started off with Dr. Sanders and Joeli to cross the Pongolo river for big Sunday, and to be there for the Christmas feast and service on Monday. There were several expecting to be baptized and some babies given to the church.

We started off with some strong doubts as whether we could cross or not, as we had heard of heavy rains up country, which always fills the river up. Nevertheless we all started. Joeli also riding on horseback.

On arriving at the river we found it very full, indeed, and a very strong current also; so much so that Dr. Sanders and Joeli waited for a good native man to cross with them.

We waited to see them cross safely, and