

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Hartland, P. O.,
Paulpietersburg,
Natal, So. Af.,
Dec. 2nd, 1928

Dear Friends:

In our district, and I am glad to say elsewhere too, the torrid heat and long drought has at last been broken, and refreshing rains have fallen. It came just in time for planting some places, but I learn on hight veldt, too late to plant the long season mealie, Hickory King. However, some can still plant other varieties, and hope for a crop to ripen before frost.

Here are some of the headlines in the papers concerning conditions of the country previous to these rains:

"Serious drought conditions prevail throughout Natal, Zululand and Transvaal."

"Many districts report that rivers and springs which have never been known to be dry, are now without water. Plowing in many cases is impossible; in others it is of no avail, as rain is necessary to give the crops a chance of growing without being retarded."

"In the thorn district near Greytown the position is acute. 'We are watching our stock die by the hundreds,' said one farmer as he drew attention to the dead cattle lying among the thorns."

"One farmer, near Estcourt (in a northern district) reports the loss of 90 head of cattle. Such a season has never been known in the district."

Throughout East Griqualand the position is becoming serious, and despairing reports are also received from many districts in Transvaal and Zululand.

"Crop shortage feared."

"Ploughing a month behind," etc., etc.

This last November has been the driest and hottest we have ever experienced in the 25 years of our living here. Hills and valleys looked liked the fall rather than early summer, and the people's gardens had nothing growing in them. All plowed fields remained brown when they should have been a flourishing green. This dry time on top of an exceptionally dry winter season made things look very grave indeed and the conditions were so widespread.

Then came the rains and lo, all has been changed. The brown hills are turning a summer green, ploughing is going on apace and everybody is smilingly happy as the strain has passed.

Next comes news of floods in Cape Province from unprecedented heavy rainfall. Rivers in Spate, people in cart and wagon have very narrow escapes, and some drowned, horses drowned, houses unroofed, cloud-burst at another place and 200 yards of the main railway torn up and washed away.

One river has been so flooded as to sweep away stock and sheaves of grain till the debris "stacked 12 ft. high," and causing great loss to farmers. Some people were marooned on an island till rescued, etc., etc.

Now such items of news will show you that Africa too has shared in the abnormal droughts or storms like other parts of the world. Not that these things are new in this land—I guess they have always been more or less common, but they have been on a much larger and more serious scale.

Cape Province has not yet recovered from

the drought of from 1924-1927, when hundreds of well-to-do farmers were ruined.

Should not such things cause us to arouse ourselves, trim our lamps more attentively and watch out more earnestly for our coming King? He told us these things would come to pass in the last days.

God certainly is blessing our work in every direction. The native workers' reports have much of encouragement and the seekers which they have reported are moving forward, slowly but surely. Several expect to be baptized on Dec. 23.

Special answers to prayer in several cases of late also strengthen the faith of the tested ones so they are proving God to be true.

A man across the Pongola lost three children in one month. One, the young girl Paulina and I visited when at Bucu. She charged her father not to cry for her. The path before her was bright. She died in Jesus. She had been sick for years but found Jesus long ago. But these deaths have affected the heathen father and made him think he should not delay in his conversion. The young woman at Bucu who gave up beer is so happy over her deliverance she cried for wonder and joy over the power of God.

Felitia brings word of further victory at her place in some who have been weak going on to strength and one very much tried one trusting God.

Befa is always having experiences in her section down by and across the Pivaan river. This last is so interesting I will state it in a few words.

When her meeting was going on, outside near the cattle kraal, they were all startled by policemen (black) coming up, asking where certain people were, and when they were pointed out to them, hand-cuffing them and marching them off to jail.

The charge is murder, and here are the bare facts: Two boys of same father but different mothers, got into a row. The mother of the smaller one held the older one while the younger one ripped open his abdomen with a knife. She had been drinking beer, so hardly knew what was going on. She was at the meeting when arrested.

Here was Befa's opportunity, when the excitement cooled down, to preach unto them Jesus, and show the evils of beer drinking and how God can save them from it.

Another instance: A woman in one of three near-by villages died when only a week or ten days sick. She had visited and prayed with this woman and again after her death. Many of the people came, the husband much broken up, and seems to see the shortness of time and his need of hastening to become a Christian.

Filemona Nkasi has had a deepening interest and spoke about several heathen testifying in meeting consenting to their need of Jesus and crying over their sins. He is in another section of country due East from this station, and across the Pivaan. The head-man of a large kraal has consented that all of his people seek the Lord if they wish.

Martha, his wife, has a small place, but heathen, and said much the same thing. Three or four heathen spoke in the meeting of their sins and need of Jesus.

A widow in Jostina Nkasi's place has been passing through very great trials, but last Wednesday spoke of having victory. Also several others are going forward nicely and some two or three are ready for baptism.

There are other things to report on this line, but I want to tell you how we cleaned our church.

Some 18 or 20 women and girls gathered on a certain day and clay washed the walls in 2 colours. Tops in a very light blue-grey, the bottom of a red-orange, which looks fine. They washed windows and door and all seats and cement floor. Also beat and shook all the skins and sacks and washed the latter. Each had her work allotted to her so all went on smoothly and so happily.

We cooked the big pot full of sweet potatoes so when they were done, all gathered around an immense dish heaped up with them and had a lunch.

When through we read and had prayers. But perhaps the most profitable part of all was bits of conversation with each, and on some helpful thing to aid them Heavenward.

Afterwards we painted the door and now are all ready for Christmas.

Our hospital hut is a most wonderful place, I find, for personal work and oh—I can't tell you how many have been helped there.

The latest is a man who visits his sister, who is a patient there and making another lengthy stay. He was a Christian, of many troubles and weakened so he went back to drinking beer.

Lately he became much condemned over it especially after a little talk he and I had over the absurdity of him professing to be a follower of Jesus and yet bound by beer when Jesus came "to destroy the works of the devil."

Recently he has gotten complete victory and rejoices in God's power to save. He told me last night he wished he could stay right here for a month as we always talked to people about Jesus, and he felt he would learn a lot.

"... here a little and there a little." Yes, truly, many opportunities to reach souls which makes one so happy to lift up Jesus and reach out the helping hand to these down in the mud of heathenism.

Yours in Jesus,

MRS. H. C. SANDERS.

MARRIED

Graham—Watt

At Castalia, Grand Manan, on December 31st, 1928, by Rev. H. C. Archer, at the residence of Chas. Watt, his daughter, Fannie Fern, was united in marriage to Cecil Stuart Graham, of the same place. They will reside at Castalia, N. B.

MANY THANKS

We want to thank the people of Royalton and also a few from Knoxford, who gathered at our home on the eve of the 21st of December, bringing their tokens of love and appreciation, which amounted in produce and cash up to the sum of about forty dollars (\$40.00). We pray God's blessing upon these dear hearts. They believe in keeping their preacher well fed, etc., whether the price of potatoes is high or low. Then we want to thank the people of Gordonsville, who at the close of our Christmas service with them presented us with a purse of money. God bless these dear people for their kindness. Many thanks again to those far and near who have remembered us with cards, letters, various kinds of presents, etc. The blessing of the Lord be upon you, wishing you a Happy New Year.

H. S. AND MRS. MULLEN