

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona M. S., P. O. Berbice,
Via Piet Retief, Transvaal, So. Af.
December 22, 1931.

Dear Homeland Friends:

It is a beautiful summer day in Africa, the birds are singing sweetly and after a greatly needed rain the earth appears fresh and beautiful. It is the worst year we have yet seen in Africa for drought, but God in His mercy has sent another refreshing and hope has revived in the hearts of the people. It has been so dry, very little ploughing has been done, and the seed that was sown has been greatly hindered by lack of rain, but the food has been saved by this welcome rain and if it will continue there will be a small harvest from what has been sown already. Some are ploughing now and we do pray that it will please the Lord to send His blessing upon the sower and his seed. It is so late now they cannot expect full crops this year. It is very comforting to see how the native Christians are sustained by their faith in God in such trying times. Even now they feel the effects of famine and it is discouraging to have no fresh green food to look forward to, but they are blest and strengthened by the Word of God and by His Spirit, and in the face of poverty have willingly contributed their sixpences and shillings toward a cow for the Christmas feast while others have given hens and goats and corn, so we trust that it will be a day when they will enjoy a good feast and have their souls blest as well. The Hartland feast is on Friday, Dec. 25th and Saturday Mr. MacDonald (and we hope George also) will come over here for Big Sunday (27th) and Monday will be our Christmas celebration. The dear natives are looking forward to it eagerly—it is always a time of happy fellowship and blessing.

On Nov. 29th, last Big Sunday, we had a full house and a very sweet service. Mr. MacDonald remained over until Monday afternoon as we had matters to discuss with some members and seekers and it was a very profitable time to all. Some of our dear Christian women were praising God for this church—they said, "There is Light in our church, yes, our church sends out the Gospel Light and we do thank God for it." Trifina Msibi testified Sunday that her soul was so full of joy it was as if she were rising on wings, soaring above the things of earth. Several babies were given to the Lord. One heathen man was quite willing for his wife to bring their only little one. They have been married many years and never had a living child until last winter, and they realize that God has answered prayer for them. Since then the father has come several times to service. They live very near and he never before would attend a meeting. "A little child shall lead them". We do pray for his soul.

On the day of the meeting we had appointed for the Christmas contributions (13th), one young woman sat looking rather downcast and did not promise anything, but as the meeting went on and God's blessing was felt, she stood up and said she would sell a new "iduker" (head dress) and give the shilling to the feast. It was like an electric spark for immediately several other women, who had not contributed and had intimated that they had nothing to give, sprang to their feet and promised a hen. This was a real sacrifice for them in this famine time but Belina's willingness to part with her new head dress made them want to sacrifice something also and their hearts were very happy when they left the service.

Belina is a very timid little woman naturally, but the Lord makes her very brave and her testimonies are a real blessing. She is a bright light in her neighborhood and is spoken of as "Belina, the faithful" by many. Her husband is not a Christian but has allowed her to present her three little girls to the church and the oldest one attends school here, and is such a diligent bright little creature, it would do your hearts good to see the progress she made in school this year. She is indeed a very promising pupil and loves school.

We had a very happy school closing on Dec. 11th. It was the first time we have been able to give the children the pleasure of a Christmas tree and it was truly a great surprise and pleasure for them and their parents as well. I do not think they could have been any happier than we were, but it was a real Christmas for us all. There was a beautiful picture of the Star, the Angel and the Shepherds watching their flocks, on one of the Picture Rolls which we get from Seal Cove—we were so glad to have this and hung it near the tree. Four dear young school girls repeated in four parts the story of the birth of Jesus and the visit of the wise men with their gifts just before the children's gifts were distributed by Isaya and also Philemon Ncube, who is the pastor of the Ethiopian children who attend this school. We believe that all who were present were helped to see what Christmas really means. The teacher said afterward "This has been such a happy day and I understand more about Christmas than I ever did before." The children's presents were inexpensive, but useful to them, and they each received a bag of candy and a Christmas card. Their little hearts were so delighted and the parents were very grateful. They were pleased to see their school progress and the lovely drill which the teacher had on the play ground before the exercises within, and the singing was certainly lovely and much enjoyed by all. The teacher is greatly appreciated. Join us in prayer for him that God may make him a great blessing to the Zulu people.

Helen's three sewing classes were very pleased with their work and it was greatly admired by all, for the natives take such an interest in this kind of work. One class had made each a small patch work quilt, another class a very pretty cushion cover while the little ones had made an apron for themselves and each child was indeed pleased and Helen felt it was time and labour well spent, for it had taken much time and planning to get it all finished. It has been a good school year and we thank God for the teacher we have. He has many gifts and we do pray that he may use them all for the glory of God.

I think I have not written since we have received from the Government an extension of land 34 x 34 square yards. We are so thankful for this token of God's blessing and feel that you will be glad also. We wrote asking permission to build two school lavatories outside the mission acre. They replied by giving this much extension of land. It was a happy surprise.

Pray for us dear friends that His will may be done through us in this place where He has placed us.

With Christian love and sincere wishes for the New Year, I am

Yours in His will,

ALICE F. STERRITT

"Where there is no principle there is no true piety."—*The Wesleyan Methodist.*

Hartland, M. S., Paulpietersburg,
Natal, So. Africa. Jan. 4, 1932.

Dear Highway Friends:

We trust you all had a happy New Year and that it may bring rich blessing to you all. Since I last wrote we have had two communion services and three feasts. The latter were well attended in all three places. Faith has written a little about the feast at Hartland I need not mention that. On the 26th I went over for "Big Sunday" at Altona, where we were interviewing candidates for baptism till one o'clock Sunday A. M. We had a good day Sunday, baptizing five candidates. Both the indoor service and that down by the river were good. I am sorry not to have a picture of the crowd returning from the baptismal service. I hope to have some taken some time, for though it would have to be done on Sunday, it would be an inspiration.

The church was crowded with earnest listeners, among these, quite a number of raw heathen. The messages and exhortation of the Native Workers were exceptionally good. We Missionaries felt it would be good to give the Native Workers a good chance so we spoke very little ourselves. We had a number of Workers from this side the river over for the week end. Samuel for the first time since his leg was removed three years ago, Johan Kuene for his first visit. The people in the Transvaal part of our work are always very glad for a visit from the Natal Workers, and of course ours are to see them at Hartland.

Monday was a good day. From about six o'clock in the morning the folk were busy preparing for the feast. The crowd was so large that they could not get into the church for the afternoon service so we thought it advisable to hold two services, one indoors and one outdoors at the same time. Much interest was shown in both these services and good messages given by all. I think on the whole it was the nicest Christmas celebration that they have had over there since I came. I was not feeling very well, and so kept quiet all the forenoon. Again and again the peals of laughter and mirth rang over the fields as these happy people went busily about their preparations. We could truly say it was a glad day. I trust the Sisters will write more fully.

We returned Tuesday, then on Thursday went across the Pevaan to Filimon Nkosi's section for their Christmas. We left at sharp twelve, and arrived there about five-thirty, having travelled over the roughest and worst journey we have in our circuit. It was bad enough before but recently there have been some barbed wire fences put up which cut us off from the little good road there was. Three hours and a half of this time was spent in descending and ascending mountains, most of them steeper than the roof of an ordinary house, and all covered with rock. When you are going down these mountains you think going up must be better for you get so sore hopping from one big rock to another. Then going up you get so out of breath that you think going down is better after all, and end up hardly knowing which is the worst. However, when you throw yourself down upon a big rock for a rest, and let your eyes feast on the gorgeous scenery you soon gain fresh courage; one would have to be dead indeed to the beauties of nature who did not enjoy these trips. Just as we reached the top of the last hill it began to rain, and by the time we got to the kraal we were thoroughly drenched. This proved to be the heaviest rain they have had in this lo-