

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona M. S., Transvaal, So. Af.

Oct. 27, 1936

Dear Homeland Friends:

Again, I will send a few lines from this portion of the field. Many sad things have happened since my last letter.

Two heathen girls were drowned at one time in a deep pool on Klipvaal. They were sent to bring corn from a distant kraal and stopped at this pool to wash their bodies as they started off. They were about a mile and a half from their home. I have often seen this bathing place when I have ridden in that section, but never knew it was so treacherous a spot. One slipped on a rock and fell into the deep and dangerous depth, clutching at the other to save herself—both were drawn into the sort of whirlpool and drowned. Some little boys who were herding the cattle saw it all but were unable to help. They screamed to the older people at the nearby kraals and soon a crowd gathered and efforts were made to get them out. The man who finally succeeded was almost carried away himself. They had a hard time indeed and then they had to carry the bodies up a steep hill over a difficult path to get them to their home for burial. They were daughters of one man but of different mothers, and the kraal is a grief stricken one at this time which affords a good opportunity to preach Jesus unto them.

Philemon Nkosi from Hartland was here one week-end and went there to have prayer. We hear that they speak much about that man of God who came to them. We appointed a meeting there for last Sunday. Talida was to go but was sick and just as Helen was getting ready to go Philemon came again, so went there for the meeting. He had seventeen people and they greatly appreciated the service. We hope to go again soon and trust some souls may be won for God from that heathen kraal. Sorrow brings many of them to repentance.

One of our women is very sick—we can hardly expect her to live. We firmly believe she was dosed with poison in her food by a neighbor, and is slowly dying from its effects.

Another sad event is a case of murder about ten miles from here toward the Badaza section.

A woman from the Entungwini branch lives there and Trifina has sometimes gone to have prayer at her kraal. Last year her half-sister who married there gave herself as a seeker but never progressed. Lately her baby died—a suspected poison case.

On last Big Sunday the woman came here to meeting for the first time and we were so glad to meet this young and intelligent looking woman. We hoped that her baby's death had aroused her heart to really seek the Lord. She was really a nice looking woman, and had taken down her heathen head dress and clothed herself as a Christian. She stayed all night with her own sister, Losaya, a true Christian and a great comfort to us, whose home is five minutes walk from here, and on Monday came to see us before leaving for her home. On Friday the little child of her sister wife was found dead in the spring near their kraal, face downward. The child being too young to walk, a case of murder was at once suspected, and the father reported it to his landlord, who took the matter up to the police court. The district surgeon was called and the post mortem showed that he child had been held face downward until it died.

Trifina had gone that Sunday to have ser-

vice and bury the baby—and was there during the inquest. The police gravely suspected the woman of whom I have written, as the mother of the baby was absent and this wife was supposed to look after it when she was away. The whole kraal was put under arrest and it was indeed a sad time. After burying the baby Monday afternoon Trifina returned home and the people were to go up to Piet Retief next day under arrest. That evening the woman called her mother-in-law and said: "It is not right that this whole household should be arrested for my sin, so I confess that I am guilty of the death of this child." When the police came next day and heard her confession they took her away at once by motor cycle and the case was tried last Friday. We have not heard yet what sentence was passed. May the Lord help that poor woman.

Dear friends, polygamy is indeed the curse of Africa. Oh, how many deaths are caused by these plural marriages. Hatred always follows, jealousy reigns and results such as these take place. To kill is so often the aim of the revengeful native heart, and many a person with whom we talk face to face has caused the death of others. Not many do it as openly as this poor woman did. Evidently her heart was filled with jealousy because of this living child of her sister wife while her own was in its grave, and she may also have suspected her as the cause of its death. The sin of polygamy brings fearful results, and how foolish and wicked a thing for one who has been enlightened, but it is the hardest custom of all for the Zulus to separate from—it is indeed a stronghold of Satan in these native hearts and causes many a soul to separate from God. Many a young girl will hesitate to give up her young man if he chooses another after she has become engaged to him. Yes, hesitate until she weakens so greatly that her heart refuses to do so, and she tries to console herself with the thought and fact that as she was the first chosen she has the rightful and superior place in his heart and home. Then follows disappointment, sadness and gloom. How we feel for those poor deluded ones over whom Satan has gained such an advantage. How grieved I am to tell you that our beloved Agnes, like Demas of old, has forsaken us, "having loved this present world." She is today living with her heathen brother-in-law as his wife. She has indeed "erred from the faith" and will "pierce herself through with many sorrows." Of this we are sure and our hearts are made to wonder how one so enlightened and beautiful as she, could take such a plunge into the darkness of heathendom. But here shows up again the strength of the custom of polygamy, dear friends. She needed not to follow that custom; she herself was the one to decide in this matter, but she has no son. Now if she takes this brother-in-law and has a son he will be the one to receive all the cattle for her daughters, thus she will be enriching herself (?) in this world's goods. Also, to marry and bear children is the only honor known among Zulu women. She is supposed to perpetuate and honor the name of her late husband by taking his brother, having been bought by the cattle of their kraal, she belongs to them according to Zulu custom. But these heathen customs bring no happiness or blessing to the women of Africa. Jesus alone lifts them up and gives them a place of recognition and she has renounced all the light and freedom that Christianity could give

her because this man has made himself agreeable to her. She has deceived her own heart and how she will suffer for it.

There is a big ache in our hearts because of this sad loss to the work, and the downfall of her soul, and we miss her fellowship greatly. She was a dear sister in the Lord and many are hurt by her fall.

We had three days meeting over the week-end of last Big Sunday, and had hoped for a large attendance, but the weather was so cold and wet we did not have as many as we wished for.

Owing to the illness of George Sanders, Mr. MacDonald could not go over until Saturday afternoon with some of the Hartland workers. We had two very precious services Friday and Saturday and the dear Lord caused us to realize His presence in a very sweet way in the midst of our sorrow concerning Agnes. Sunday cleared beautifully and we had a full house. One young man was baptized and several babies presented to the Lord and we had a good service. This young man has been faithful ever since the Lord gave him a vision of hell and a glimpse of the beauties of heaven three years ago, and has only been waiting to have an old matter fixed up with the parents of a girl whom they wanted him to marry—but he did not want this half-heathen girl and has patiently waited until now he has been set free from the "lobolo" (payment of cattle) so we thank God for this victory.

We also praise God for the prospect of having Johanise Nkosi back with us soon again. We wrote you that he was called by his landlord to work six or nine months, but has been sick so much since he went there that his landlord has let him off. The dear Lord saw the great need of him here and has taken this way to return him. He is improving now at his home and we hope to see him before many weeks. Truly "the Lord is good to those that wait for Him." We were wondering how we could carry on much longer without a station evangelist, and no one from Hartland was free to come, though Aloni and Philemon have come over sometimes for the week-end and we have been grateful—but God sees the need of workers, especially do we need a native man—and has undertaken in His own way, which is always the best way, so our hearts rejoice in His mercy and care. How good He has been to us—a loving Father indeed.

We have had some very hot days, but also some lovely rains which have revived us when we were wilted from the heat and we do trust that it may be a season of much rain—it does help so much.

Our Highways have not reached us lately and we greatly miss the homeland news. We trust to get it next post—its absence makes a great lack.

With Christian love from us both.

ALICE F. STERRITT

THE ANSWER

Why must I weep when others sing?
 "To test the deeps of suffering."
 Why must I work while others rest?
 "To spend my strength at God's request."
 Why must I lose while others gain?
 "To understand defeat's sharp pain."
 Why must this lot of life be mine
 When that which fairer seems is thine?
 "Because God knows what plans for me
 Shall blossom in eternity."

—Author Unknown.