

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona Mission Station,
Dear Highway Friends: 8-4-40

I thought you might be interested to hear of a recent trip George Sanders and I made to our Mbucu outpost. We went on horseback to explore the possibilities of that means of travel to this particular outpost. Previously we had gone by car but that is expensive as one has to go over forty miles to cover a direct distance of about fifteen miles. Gasoline is about 55 cents a gallon.

The Saturday we started off was very hot, with a clear sky. The glare of the sun was hard on our eyes without sun glasses.

The ride from Altona to Entungwini was uneventful and through open country or veld. We stopped for a few minutes to rest and to see Samuel Mavimbela, our native worker, at Entungwini. The next part of our journey was to Mfene, Paulina's home and outpost. This part of our trip was through a very rough and mountainous section. The horses twisted, turned and stumbled along the stony cattle paths leading along the face of the mountains rising steeply from the Pongola river. The path was so steep in spots that I got off and led my horse down; George stayed on and had the thrill of having his horse slide down one incline sitting on his haunches.

Paulina gave us tea sugared with bees honey and a porridge made of pumpkin greens, young pumpkin and a sprinkling of ground peanuts. She also reported that she was afraid her husband might take a second wife or be immoral. If either should happen she was wondering if it would be wise for her to continue preaching. Once before when he was immoral she left him for about two years. Later she returned and nursed him through a long sickness. She now has three children and feels she should stay and care for them.

After leaving Paulina's we forded the Pongola twice. The last time as my horse started up a short but steep bank the saddle girth broke and my saddle began to leave me. I hung on to the horse's mane for dear life and tried to keep the saddle on but it was of no use; the saddle left me and I slipped off the side of the horse. Fortunately the horse was a quiet animal and so I was not hurt. George thought the performance worthy of a picture. I can imagine it would have made anyone laugh.

The rest of the journey was up-hill and very rough and stony. We probably rode about twenty miles. We reached our destination just after sundown. Brother Charles Sanders, from Hartland, and three other workers were there to greet us. They had come by horse, bicycles and on foot.

The evening we had a nice little prayer meeting and at its close investigated certain rumors concerning the Mbucu worker. Most of them were unfounded or had been misrepresentations of the truth. The main finding was that the white man of the farm was not satisfied with a part-time worker who lived so far away. He felt a man should be on the spot to care for the church members; particularly the young people who were being led back into sin and heathenism. Sunday was occupied with investigations in the morning and a preaching and communion service in the afternoon. Brother Charles conducted his first communion service. Eight Mbucu members came forward to the Lord's table.

We were encouraged to hear that five per-

sons had given themselves to seek the Lord since our previous visit. We also made some progress in our plans to enlarge the church building which was in need of repair anyhow.

After the afternoon service all the white missionaries left for home. George and I returned by another route. The first half of the return trip was uneventful, but by this time it was pitch dark and a thunder storm was upon us. To make matters worse we had to go up through a wooded valley with a stream running through it and high mountains rising abruptly on either side. If it had not been for trustworthy and sure footed horses and frequent flashes of lightning, I don't know how we would have made out. As it was, passing through a wire gate, George's horse got tangled up in the barbed wire gate lying on the ground and I nearly hanged myself on a barbed wire stretched across the top of the gate posts. We also got slapped and scratched by the branches and sharp aloe leaves in passing up through the wooded valley along a cattle track.

How it did rain! Water ran down my back, down my legs, and down into my shoes. I felt like a drowned rat and a cold one at that. About six miles from home we stopped at a native kraal and I went inside a hut and got warm and changed some of my clothes. After that I followed George's example and draped my woolen blanket over me and kept fairly warm and dry. I thought of the Marysville church more than once during the rest of the trip as it was their gift that had bought the blanket. We reached home about eleven o'clock that night, wet, cold, tired and hungry. It took us most of the next week to recover from our experiences.

We are still continuing the fight and are trusting for greater things.

EUGENE A. M. KIERSTED

Altona M. S., So. Africa,

Dear Highway Readers: April 6th, 1940

Greetings in our Captain's name. It is good to know you are praying for us and the work. You may not now realize how much this means to the work. Many are the victories won by those who are not seen.

In my last letter you will remember my request of special prayers for two of our outstations: Entungwini and Klipvaal. Also for our one-footed Native preacher of Entungwini, "Samyeli Mavimbela." He has more confidence in his horsemanship now and goes about alone, whereas at first he had to have some one to go with him.

On the day before Good Friday, Samyeli attended our weekly class, then gave me his report of the work for the last three weeks, and also asked for some medicine. By this time it was 4.45 p. m. and rather late to start for home, and I suggested for him to stay over the night as I would like to accompany him the next day to have prayers in some new kraals he has been working. He said, "this will be O. K."

I was late in starting and did not get away till about eleven, an interview and interpreting having come up. The weather sounded bad with the thunder rolling no wand again, but did not look so threatening so we started.

After a three mile ride over fairly even, though rocky bush country, we stopped for prayer at the kraal of one of our church-members, Tatita Mtshali, who lost her husband a few days before. As we rode on from there the heat was more trying whenever the

sun appeared from behind a big cloud as we were now facing west.

The path from there on led down to a little mountain stream with a smooth stone bed and up a slippery steep bank which was the base of the high mountain where our next visit was to be. It looked so steep and rocky Samyeli thought it too dangerous to try, but he did risk it after he saw how well my horse "Buzz" took it. All went well, up and up we went with many a rest. This gave me a good chance to eat my lunch from a well used paste-board box. The poor horses were dripping from perspiration before they got a quarter of the distance to where the next kraal was, at the very top of the mountain. Near the top we came to an extra bad stretch where Samyeli got off and climbed over it on his hands and knees. He would not even trust his crutches on this stretch of about 40 feet.

At the top we met the man of the kraal going to see his goats. He had lost a number of kids which were taken by an eagle. We called the children from the gardens where they were keeping the birds from eating the kaffir-corn. About twelve natives came into the hut where we were seated on an old mat. We had a good time speaking on the Word. When an opportunity was given to those who wanted to pledge themselves to seek the Lord three stood up and a fourth took the same step when I went back for something I left. Half a mile to another kraal down one side of this big mountain the Lord helped us to get an old woman named "Bad-year" to take the pledge. Then up towards the top again where we had left word we would have prayer for a sick baby. Here a girl of about twelve also chose to seek the Lord.

By now it was dark and it was overcast as far as the eye could see when a flash of lightning lit up the sky. Light patches of rain could be seen here and there. Samyeli had about two miles to go to his home and I went about the same distance to a nearby farmstead where I was given a friendly welcome, supper, bed and breakfast. The rain which started soon after my arrival lasted off and on all night till eight o'clock next morning. Thanking him for his hospitality I left for Samyeli's kraal; but he had an attack of flu and looked bad. From there I rode up and over a mountain-top alone, then around a shoulder of another to where three kraals and their gardens nestled on the back of a third.

At the call to prayer I got seven to a hut. In this place a beer-drink had just finished. While singing the first hymn two women toppled over and started snoring. In all this an old man who had got help by medicine I had sent him some days ago stood up and gave himself to seek the Lord. He was a man of about sixty who once had a black head-ring on.

The Natives from there had asked me to come over one day to shoot the eagle which was very destructive to their flocks "Just yesterday." they went on to say, "it took a large hen after having walked about the kraal." I went on foot to its nest, about a mile down the side of the mountain. It's nest was over four and a half feet wide and a foot less deep. We stayed there in the bush under the big tree where its nest was till dusk, but did not get a shot at it. As Brother Eugene had taken ill the day before, I thought it best to get back to Altona. By the Lord's help I got there four hours later. Brother