

## MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona Mission,  
May 13th, 1942

You may have wondered how life on a Mission Station differs from life in the homeland. There may be as many answers to that as there are locations of mission stations and as there are types of mission work. I shall merely try to explain how life at Altona differs from what was our life in Canada.

Being located in a Native Area and about thirty-two miles from a railroad, our life is that of people who are largely cut off from direct contacts with the outside world. Except for seeing passing automobiles you might imagine you were living as our grandfathers were, in some of the pioneer districts forty or fifty years ago, nevertheless with a modern touch.

Mail we can get twice a week but we must send for it, six miles away. Telephone? No. We must go sixteen miles for that. Trains, aeroplanes and such like we only see rarely or when we "go to town."

The question of provisions or supplies is often a real problem as there are no near-by stores or telephones. Here we must make up a list of "wants" and go after them or send for them when there is an opportunity sometimes once in two weeks, sometimes once a month. What you forget or overlook you must do without until the next trip. The result is that we try to "lay in" sufficient stocks of essentials to do us for several weeks, especially of such supplies as salt, sugar, flour, canned meat and milk, etc. Salt, I have listed first, as it is one of our chief means of exchange for getting wood, corn, pumpkins, beans, eggs and so on from the local natives. Canned meat and milk we must buy as we seldom can buy fresh meat; and fresh milk at times is very scarce.

What about jobs needing the shoemaker, blacksmith, tinsmith, plumber, repairman and so on? For the most part you must forget you need such people. When you do, either try to do the jobs yourself or wait until you can get to town.

Suppose we are sick? We try not to think that we are sick enough to need a doctor. We just go to the medicine shelf and try to find something to dull the pain or ease the mind. To call a doctor from nearly fifty miles away would bleed our pocket-book (if we have one) of between fifty and seventy-five dollars just for a single "call." It is better to try and go to the doctor rather than calling him to you.

What do the children do when they are old enough to go to school? We can send them away to boarding school, if we have money enough and do not mind sending the children thirty-two or fifty miles away from home, otherwise, and this is the true picture, we try to teach them at home ourselves.

A car? Yes. We still have the old Studebaker we brought from Canada. Except for an occasional broken spring or axle and some rattles, "she" still does her duty when necessary or when funds permit. An old car that I bought for thirteen dollars or so and much effort and skinned knuckles on my part make up the lack of a nearby garage. With a yearly license of forty dollars, gasoline at seventy cents, and oil at nearly thirty cents a pint, we are not able to do much "joy" riding. The car merely serves us if and when we need to see a doctor in a hurry, when we must have provisions, or

when we need to go to a distant outpost, go to Hartland or to town.

A radio? Yes. We brought one with us, but we have not been able to renew the batteries since the original set wore out.

A daily or weekly newspaper? No. They cost too much out here. We only buy single copies when we go out for provisions or to town.

The war? Yes; we know that a war is on but so far we have seen little if any sign of it except as we see prices going up and certain supplies being rationed or getting scarce. When we get a newspaper we really get to understand that we are living in critical times.

We have a house to live in, beds to sleep in, chairs to sit in, books to read—most of the comforts of a country home—much easier conditions than the pioneer Sanders, Kiersteads and Sterrits—yet many inconveniences and irritations.

It is often very hot and uncomfortable, but when the thermometer does drop to fifty or so or we have a frost we sit around shivering and pile on quilts as much as we ever did in Canada. Houses are not built for cool weather; brick walls, draughty windows and doors, cement floors and corrugated iron roofs are meant for warm days not cool ones.

Domestic help? Yes. There is lots of cheap labour such as it is. Men at twenty-five cents a day, women at twelve cents, teen-age workers from six to twelve cents, and so on. One could almost have a servant for every job if it were not for feeding them, paying them, and worst of all busying yourself at keeping them busy. We usually have a boy and a girl helping us. The boy grinds meal, milks, chops wood, waters the garden, etc. The girl helps with the housework. A woman "comes in" weekly to wash and iron. These helpers partly free us so we can visit outposts, teach the children, make up medicine for the sick, and so on. We often feel they are more trouble than they are worth and that it would be easier to do the work ourselves, but our hands and time only permit us to do just so much work.

Does the warm climate and having native labour tend to make one lazy? It might if one is inclined to laziness, but so far we have had little time to see what effect it "might" have on us.

Do we have to contend with the Devil? He has his headquarters in Africa. We fight him every day. Pray for us.

Yours in Africa,  
EUGENT A. M. KIERSTEAD

## "DON'T" FOR CHURCH-GOERS

Don't visit; worship.

Don't wait for an introduction; introduce yourself.

Don't stare blankly while others sing, read, and pray; join in.

Don't dodge the preacher; show yourself friendly.

Don't dodge the collection plate—contribute what you are able.

Don't stop in the end of the pew; move over.

Don't hurry away; speak, and be spoken to.

Don't monopolize your hymn book; be neighborly.

Don't stay away from church because of company; bring them with you.

Don't criticize; remember to think of your own faults.

Don't stay away from church because the church is not perfect. How lonesome you would be in a perfect church!—Selected.

## HOW A FAMOUS POET FOUND PEACE

William Cowper, contemporary and friend of John Newton, at Olney, in the eighteenth century, was, in his early years, subject to great depression and fits of melancholy, bordering on madness. It is said, that on one occasion he hired a post chaise to drive him to the river Ouse, in which he had planned to drown himself, so as to end his sad and judgment-haunted life. For it was nothing else or less, than the fear of meeting God in his sins unpardoned and unpurged, that was the real cause of his depression. The driver of the chaise missed his way, and so God overruled events to keep him from his suicidal purpose. And it was while walking through the fields on his way homeward, thinking of what might have been, that he composed the hymn beginning:

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm."

But while this providence of God stayed his tendency to suicide, it gave no peace to his soul. He needed the knowledge of Christ as Redeemer and Saviour to give him peace. And this is how it came. Reading in Paul's Epistle to the Romans one day, he came to the words in chapter 3:24, 25, "Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood." Not by works or toils of his own, but through a personal trust in the blood of Christ, shed on the cross to make peace and atone for sin. That moment his soul was filled with peace and joy; and it was then, or soon after, that he wrote his best-known hymn, "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood," in which he describes his own conversion in the following lines:

"The dying thief rejoiced to see,  
That fountain in his day,  
And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away."

This is God's way of reconciliation and of peace, and there is no other. By the atoning death of the Son of God, peace has been made. In the gospel it is proclaimed to all. And all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are justified, and have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) here and now.—Selected.

## THE EAGLE

An observer of the habits of eagles has described how, one day, the young eagle stood on the edge of his nest looking down at the plunge he dared not take. The mother eagle had been tempting her offspring, but had failed. Then she rose above him and swooped down, striking the nest at his feet and sending his support of twigs and himself with them out into the air together. He was afloat now, but over him, under him, beside him hovered the mother on tireless wings, calling softly that she was there. Suddenly the young eagle lost his balance and tipped head downward in the air. Then, like a flash, the mother eagle shot under him; and when he righted himself, she dropped like a shot from under him, leaving him to come down on his own wings. "So the Lord alone did lead him," which is a wonderful image of the divine power absorbed in the calling out and the care of the activities of the soul.—James Robertson Cameron.