

## MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Highway Friends:

Altona

As I look at the calendar I am reminded of the fact that I had not yet written to you, in September. It's so easy to neglect letter writing, so I always try to get my Highway letter written as near the first of the month as possible.

Quarterly meeting was held at Hartland last week. We cannot use the car, on account of the tires, so Eugene only was present from here. Of course I believe that most of our workers were present, Eugene has not returned, and I believe that tomorrow he and Brother George Sanders expect to go to Zululand. I have heard from several of the workers that they had a wonderful time in the Lord during the meetings at Hartland.

The work here at Altona is getting heavier all the time. It seems that one of us will need to stay, except during vacations. More people are coming for medicines, etc., and we have now ninety-eight children attending our native school here. The government is providing money to buy food to furnish lunches for the school children. The money provides for a woman to cook the food but I am finding it quite a burden to plan for them, give out the food mornings and generally oversee it. Perhaps I should not call it a burden for its lovely to see the children enjoying something nice to eat each day. They have so little change in their diets at their homes. I am sure it will be helpful. Today they had pork, cabbage and bread, and coffee for those who did not eat pork.

Sometime ago I was asked to write a Highway letter about a day at Altona. It doesn't seem that much of my doings would be very interesting, but I shall do my best to grant the request.

This morning I wakened shortly after five and began the day. My first task, like most mothers, was to see that the two little boys were properly dressed, etc., for the day. Our girl teacher is in the hospital with tonsillitis and I had only reached the dining room when the supply teacher came in, asking for an exercise book. I helped to prepare the breakfast and then had prayers before we ate.

After breakfast I went to my room, after first sending the little boys out to play until school-time, and I hadn't finished making my bed when a call came from the kitchen. I left my work and went out to find seven children waiting for me. One girl had four eggs, asking for sugar and another wanted sugar too and had brought three eggs; two children had money to buy pen nibs, one boy wanted a slate pencil and two others had money to buy lead pencils.

I hurried to look after these children and get back to my room. It was Monday and soon my wash girl would be here. We have no water at all here now so my clothes must be washed at the river, woolens, etc., I have water carried and do them here. I called my girl Joana to help me, but we didn't finish when I heard that people were waiting in the kitchen for medicine. I sent word for them to wait a bit and I would soon come.

When I reached the kitchen I first saw Moses Motha, a near neighbour. Yesterday afternoon his brother's child drank paraffin. They brought it here at once and we did all we could for it but Moses said it suffered

all night and was not breathing very well. I did what I could and told him that we should continue to pray about it and ask the Lord's help. I then turned to the next woman. I could see that she was suffering terribly. She was sitting just outside, by the door, with her shawl over her head and a dish of whole corn beside her. I guessed the trouble at once—toothache. I have done many things since coming here, that I thought I never could do, but so far I have never attempted to pull a tooth, even though the natives have many times begged me to do so. This was a back tooth with a large cavity so I put medicine in that I hope may ease the pain until Eugene comes. Then she said that she wanted to leave the corn to thank the umfundisi when he did take the tooth out. So I measured it for her and gave her a card stating that she had already brought something, and she left. I might say that rarely do the natives come to get a tooth out without bringing some little thing to thank with. That is one time when it is very easy for them to be truly grateful, and they appreciate the help. Every penny received this way we use to buy more medicines, etc.

I hadn't finished with this woman when another woman arrived with a baby on her back and five or more little naked children, all with wood, etc. The baby had a bad cough and the woman was not well so I found out all about her and gave her two bottles of medicine.

It was my day to cook for my boys in Piet Retief so I quickly turned my attention to the children. I looked at their wood and thanked them with salt. One little fellow had a few eggs asking for sugar, which I gave him.

Shortly before this the teacher's wife was asked to go out to a kraal to help a sick woman. She knew she couldn't get back to cook her husband's dinner so I said that we would do it for her.

By then the bell rang for school so Reginald came in for his work. I gave him a few minutes for study and started cooking, but I had only begun when the woman came for the school food. I gave it to her and went to teach Reginald but had only begun his spelling lesson when I heard I was wanted. I went out as soon as possible but it was only a boy for an exercise book.

I believed then I had an hour or more free to teach Reginald and watch a cake in the oven. I was just drilling him on four times tables when the teacher arrived. He said that eleven children would not eat pork and what could we give them. They were all to have bread also, so I suggested that the woman bring a pot of water and heat it on the stove in the kitchen, and to those children we would give coffee and two slices of bread. This seemed to be satisfactory to all concerned so I went back to my teaching and soon finished.

Then I hurried out to my neglected cooking only to find the yard full, it seemed, with little black naked children and wood. This is the time of the year when the natives eat mostly porridge and they come so much asking for salt. I think there were ten or more children, so I gave them all salt and returned to my work.

In between was the usual mother's tasks, looking after the wee boy, dinner, etc., etc. After my cooking was finished and dinner was over, the teacher's wife returned and I

heard the report about the sick woman. By then my head was feeling so weary I felt that I must rest a bit. I lay down with my Zulu Bible to prepare for evening prayers, but very soon I heard voices outside saying that the people were arriving from the Quarterly Meeting and Losaya came in with a letter from Eugene. She hadn't finished telling me about the services when Kenneth ran in saying: "Mummy, white men are here in a car." Sure enough, the new magistrate and this native area supervisor walked in. The magistrate soon told me that he heard that we were putting up a little hospital building here and he had come to look it over and if it met with his approval the government would help with the expenses of the building. You can imagine what a welcome surprise this was to me. I answered all his questions and he looked over the building and seemed favorably impressed and said we would receive help with it.

The men left and I was called again to the kitchen. A woman had brought a few eggs and wanted sugar; more children and a woman were waiting outside with wood asking for salt, also a little boy with a bad cough was asking for medicine.

I hadn't left the kitchen when one of our former teachers arrived. He is now working in the health department, so wanted to tell me about his work, etc. Before he left the bus arrived bringing the tile for the hospital roof. I gave oranges to four boys to bring it down from the bus stop. Beans, meat and bread came also for the school and had to be taken care of.

Eugene had sent papers to sign for the food committee so I sent for the chairman to come and while I waited I went out to see if the last of my clothes were dry, and met five people coming in. One man had a basket that he wanted me to buy for \$3.00. It was lovely but I couldn't afford so much. The others were bringing the child that drank the oil. I examined it but its heart seemed strong and I trust it will soon be better.

Philemon Mcubi arrived and we signed the papers. He was coughing badly, and I gave him medicine. Then came prayers, supper, little boys to bed, etc.

I have two little boys here going to school, also one girl. I have one girl to help me and one young boy to milk, chop wood, grind corn, etc. This week the girl teacher is here and so my native family is quite large. The teacher's wife does all her cooking on my stove too.

Well, it was with a feeling of relief tonight that I heard the children going to their rooms. My letters are ready to mail, the boys' food is done up, forms are made out and it's already for the seven o'clock bus in the morning.

I have been out and sprayed my good cupboard to keep the ants out. I have the food for the natives planned for tomorrow. I have sprinkled my clothes to iron in the morning. My little boys are asleep. Evening is advancing. The native children have been singing but all is quiet now. The day's work is done. The frogs only are singing their spring song at the river. I will not tell you the time but I must go to bed. I feel, as the natives express it, 'amadhla ami pelile nya,' or my strength is all finished, but God does give strength for the day. Most of us have some "thorn in the flesh" to contend with