

## His Banner Over Us Is Love



Miss Alice Sterritt



Miss Helen Sterritt

by Vesta Mullen

Helen, now twenty-one, and Alice, nineteen, resumed their normal way of life at Grey's Mills, with this exception—they were now radiantly happy Christians. Encouraged and helped by fellow Christians from Kingston, they began to hold weekly prayer meetings in Grey's Mills community church. Out of these meetings over the next two years, emerged the Reformed Baptist congregation which was officially organized as a church under Miles Trafton on July 17, 1907.

Both Helen and Alice worked for a number of years as practical nurses in the area surrounding their home community. Alice did not receive her call for mission service until seven years after her conversion. It came during family prayer at the home of friends in Saint John. Her almost passionate fondness of her St. John River valley surroundings rose up to condemn her as she saw a vision of unsaved heathen in physical and spiritual lostness. Her call that day to Africa was very clear, but so anxious she was to be sure, that she asked God for very definite leadings. Many times during the next few years the Lord had to reassure her with these words, "But, my child, I called you". And in faith she answered, "Yes, Lord, and I know You'll get me there."

Settled in her mind that God wanted her in Africa as a missionary, Alice went "up to Boston" to train for a nurse. Entering Framingham hospital as a student in 1911, she graduated in three years a registered nurse, following which time she was employed for two years as hospital supervisor at Swanscott. The next step in her preparation was to enroll at Eastern Nazarene College for the Christian Worker's course which it offered. She worked her way through the two-year course by taking private duty cases. Up to this point she had shared her call with no one, but during her first year at the college, at a special missionary service, she stood with other students and announced publicly her intention of becoming a foreign missionary. News of her announcements reached "back East" and eventually to Dr. H. C. Sanders in Africa. He wrote her promptly asking if she had considered joining him and his family in their work, and telling her that they needed help.

While at her conversion, Helen recalls that a woman prayed for her that she someday might become a missionary, yet she did not share Alice's call for many years. After Alice went away to train, Helen remained at home assisting as she could, and continuing to do practical nursing. At Alice's suggestion that she improve her qualifications in the nursing field by coming to Boston and taking a course, she enrolled at Swanscott Hospital and The King's Highway

stayed on to work after completing her training. It was at this time that she received her first word from the Lord telling her that He wanted her "to work for Him". Coming home to the room she shared with Alice, over two years later, she found the above-mentioned letter from Dr. Sanders lying on the table. Not waiting for her sister to return, she opened it and read of how help was needed at Hartland Mission Station. God spoke to her through the need of which the letter told. Clear at last as to what her call was, she immediately told Alice and, tearful but rejoicing, the girls realized that their common call would unite them still more closely to one another. Circumstances made it possible for both of them to return home for a brief visit before the opening of the fall term at E.N.C. When told of his daughters' decision to go to Africa, Mr. Sterritt's only response was, "Are you going to leave your poor father for a pack of heathen?" But he did nothing to hinder them; rather he tried to help, in his own way, thus further confirming the promise he had made Helen when she became a Christian that he would do nothing to stand in her way. Perhaps he felt this was God's way of filling the place he had left unfilled when he failed to respond to what he believed was a call of God upon his own heart as a young man.

Coming home to Grey's Mills in the early summer of 1920, following the completion of Alice's college studies, the girls began their preparations to go to Africa. A tour of the churches of the denomination was made and passage was booked on the "S. S. Corsican" for March 5, 1921.

After an uneventful crossing of the North Atlantic and a few days' stopover in London, they made the second lap of their voyage aboard the "S. S. Kenilworth". From Durban, they travelled by rail to Paulpietersburg where they were welcomed by the Sanders family. They arrived at Hartland Mission Station April 29, 1921, and for eleven months, until their own home was built, they lived with the Sanders, studying the Zulu language, teaching, assisting with the medical work, and helping generally in the home.

Except for two trips into the Transvaal, the Sterritts remained at Hartland assisting in work there until 1928. Several years earlier, land had been granted to the Reformed Baptist Mission Board at Altona Native Reserve for a mission site. In order to hold the grant for that purpose, Isaya Sangweni, an African preacher, had built on it a house for himself and a combined church and school building. During their visit to this area in 1927, both Helen and Alice felt strongly God's leading to take up residence there. Somewhat discouraged from the opposition which he had faced alone so long, Paster Sangweni welcomed the arrival of the white missionaries to establish a mission station.

To be continued

### SMOKE SIGNALS

Some 4,500 boys and girls between 12 and 17 take up the smoking habit every day of the year.

Condensed cigarette smoking gives lung cancer to dogs. Five researchers from the New York Medical College Metropolitan Medical Center have reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association that dogs are a species in which this type of cancer usually does not develop.

"The adult market is pretty well saturated", said a tobacco trade journal some time ago. "The only way we can expand is by appealing to a lower age level." (American Temperance Society).