

## His Banner Over Us Is Love



Miss Alice Sterritt



Miss Helen Sterritt

by Vesta Mullen

The girls had their home built on the station at their own expense, living in a tent for six months awaiting its completion. An English lady of means whom they had met during an earlier visit to Durban, donated the windows and doors for the house and met the expense of a bedroom that was added later.

A marked increase in church attendance and in the number of seekers made it necessary shortly after their arrival to build a new church. The first amount donated to this building, a sum of \$50.00 was contributed by Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Phillips of Woodstock, N. B. The money had belonged to their only child, Reginald, who died at the age of six years. Without solicitation, money came in from homeland friends and Mission Board, from local offerings on Big Sunday\* and from a special offering taken up by the Zulus for a corrugated iron roof. Sixty-five pounds of the total cost of ninety-six was contributed thus and the balance was paid for by the Sterritt sisters. After it broke, Zulus happily responded in donating a second bell.

Before the arrival of the Sterritts at Altona, a school had been conducted by young teachers from Swaziland under the direction of Mr. Sangweni, but the undertaking was plagued with its problems, and during the construction of the new church building, classes were discontinued. School was reopened in 1931 and continued open each year until 1951, when the government policy toward mission school was revised under the Bantu Education Act. During the Sterritts tenure of supervision, attendance reached a high of 45 pupils. Zulu teachers were given board and ten shillings a month. The first government grant for the school was received in 1937, until which time the expense for operating the school was borne by the Sterritts. Daily Bible lessons were conducted by the missionaries and through the years many of the scholars were converted.

A dispensary was opened at Altona under the care of Alice and, while there was no resident doctor in the area, she was free to call on the government doctor at Piet Retief at any time she needed his help. He was called on several occasions to conduct small-pox inoculation clinics; at one such clinic he inoculated 900 children. The usual cases reported were pneumonia and malaria patients, burns and colds, and tooth extractions. Over a nine-year period, hundreds of maternity cases were cared for also.

By personal testimony, the girls found the evangelistic work the most thrilling of all their responsibilities. Visiting kraals (Zulu homes), carrying on outpost work, conducting Sunday services and Thursday "classes", (Weekly classes were held for Christians in which they studied the Bible, prayed and learned how to tell others about Christ. Here, **The King's Highway**

too, they gave an account of their personal work of the preceding week) and hearing the izindaba or reports of the African preachers and Bible women, all these made up the more definitely spiritual aspects of their labours. Assisting them in this work was Pastor Sangweni and later, following his death, Johanisi Dhlangamandhla, who acted as station evangelist, and a number of African pastors and Bible women. Along with the work at Altona, five outposts or preaching stations were administered from Altona — Emozane, Klip Vall, Kepanyawo, Misibi Kraal and Badaza. With the joys came the sorrows. There were the seekers who failed and the believers who backslid, but even more heartbreaking were the Zulu Christian workers who had to be "set aside" because of some sin that had defeated them.

With the silent passing of each Beulah time, the missionary sisters confess they breathed a sigh of relief, for with the passing years, both knew that the time of furlough was growing nearer; and though they felt keenly their need of a change, they knew that once home, because of age and ill-health, they would be unable to return for a second term. In June of 1937, after almost nine years at Altona, Helen and Alice Sterritt returned to Canada — terminating sixteen years of missionary service in South Africa. Of these years Alice recalls with wonder, "We had not one homesick day!"

For several years following their return, they carried on pastoral work in a number of our churches, these being Grey's Mills, Mercer Settlement and Millstream. In response to a campaign led by Rev. A. D. Cann, then pastor at Hartland, sufficient donations came in to build a missionary parsonage. Located at Hartland and named by the Sterritts *Ikaya Iami*, this house has been their home since 1947.

\*Big Sunday is a rather free translation of the African term *iSonto nKhulu*, whose more literal translation would be "a Sunday which is great". It came to be used to refer to those Sundays from time to time when the Christians from the outposts would gather at the mission station or other central meeting place to celebrate communion and administer the rite of baptism to qualified candidates. The term is still in use, and Big Sundays are times of spiritual fellowship and refreshing to which the Christians look forward.

ED. NOTE: The above article was prepared by Vesta Mullen in consultation with the Sterritt sisters, whose kind co-operation is sincerely appreciated.

### HOLY PASSION

"The scholar can impart knowledge, but he cannot impart life. That will come through high and holy passion — passion for soul-saving, for reclaiming men who have turned their back upon honour, upon veracity, upon love and loving-kindness. This sad and dreary world is crowded with unfortunate ones who need sympathy and guidance. They are longing for a word of encouragement, they are sighing for a Samaritan priesthood that abounds in deeds of good-will."—J. V. Morgan.

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stripes and had been fastened in the stocks, but their triumphant spirit made them sing the praises of God, and the power of God undertook to set them free and work the miracle of conversion in the Jailer's heart. (Acts 16) The same spirit is manifest in the old Apostle's "Farewell" written to Timothy from Rome. 2 Tim. 4:6-8. He was ready to go, the time had come, but he could rejoice over a life of victory and anticipate receiving the crown of righteousness from the Lord Himself. "THANKS be unto God . . . NOW."