

Young People's Department.

AFRICANER.

Africaner was a Hottentot who, before the arrival of the Dutch in South Africa, had pastured his flocks, hunted his game, and lived his life of savage luxury on his own lands near Cape Town. When the Dutch came they took possession of his lands and made him a subject, after a custom only too common to civilized nations in their greed for territory. Africaner and his people were starved, beaten, and robbed till they could endure it no longer. They demanded better treatment and agreed on a conference; but one of the natives, against the wishes of the leaders, killed a Dutchman and that brought matters to a crisis.

Africaner was declared an outlaw and a reward was offered for his capture. He withdrew with the remnants of his tribe to Mammaquand and there began a series of wars upon natives and foreigners alike. He robbed and burned the settlements and murdered the farmers until his very name struck terror wherever it was heard.

Not far from Africaner's kraal the English established a mission, although the proximity of the notable robber added not a little to their anxieties. Strange to say, he received them kindly at first, saying, "As you are sent by the English, I welcome you to the country; for, though I hate the Dutch, my former oppressors, I love the English, for I have always heard that they are the friends of the poor black man."

It was at this time that Africaner first heard the gospel, and he afterward said that he then saw "men as trees walking."

Troubles came, however. The wisest of the missionaries died and Africaner was led to believe that another had treated him unjustly. The savage spirit broke forth again and, calling his followers together, he attacked the mission station, burned the houses and carried off everything of value.

The mission was for the time given up, but later reopened, and in 1817 that noble worker, Robert Moffat, arrived at Africaner's kraal. The chief soon appeared and welcomed the missionary, ordering the women to build a hut for him. In spite of this, the outlook at first was far from encouraging, and it is a high tribute to the wisdom and the consecrated zeal of Moffat that he so soon won the confidence of the people among whom he settled. Africaner began to come to the services, and his regularity was finally such that Moffat says, "I might as well doubt of morning's dawn as of his attendance on the appointed means of grace." He had learned to read and spent his days over his Testament, and in the evening he would sit with Moffat on a great stone near the station and talk on creation, providence, and redemption until he would say, "I have heard enough; I feel as if my head were too small and as if it would swell with these great subjects."

Moffat bears this wonderful testimony of his character. "During the whole period I lived there, I do not remember having occasion to be grieved with him or to complain of any part of his conduct; his very faults seemed 'to lean to virtue's side.' He zealously seconded my efforts to improve the people in cleanliness and industry, and he who was formerly a firebrand, spreading discord, enmity,

and war among the neighboring tribes, would now make any sacrifice to prevent anything like a collision between two contending parties, saying, 'What have I now of all the battles I have fought, and all the cattle I took, but shame and remorse?'"

After several months' work in Mammaquand Moffat found it necessary to visit Cape Town, and it occurred to him to take Africaner with him. At first the chief refused to go, for he was an outlaw and feared the consequences, but finally consented if his safety could be assured. The English at Cape Town had invited him down several times and promised him entire freedom, but it was a question whether he could get safely through the territory of the Dutch farmers. Finally, attir'd in one of the only two substantial shirts Moffat had left, a pair of leather trousers, a duffel jacket, and an old hat, neither white nor black, the attempt was made, the chief passing as one of the missionary's servants.

The Dutch farmers were very hospitable to Moffat, and many congratulated him on getting out alive from Africaner's land, for they could not believe that this robber and murderer could be living a peaceful and law-abiding life. As they approached one settlement, Moffat, meeting a farmer, whom he had seen before, held out his hand to him.

"Who are you?" said the farmer.

"Moffat," replied the missionary.

"Moffat!" exclaimed the Boer. "It is your ghost! Don't come near me. You have been long since murdered by Africaner. Everyone says you have been, and a man told me he had seen your bones." When Moffat declared that he believed Africaner was a truly good man, the farmer said: "If what you assert be true, I have only one wish, and that is to see him before I die; and when you return, as sure as the sun is over our heads, I will go with you to see him, though he killed my own uncle." Moffat, knowing the Boer was a sincere and discreet man, turned toward the wagon where the chief was riding and said, "This, then, is Africaner." The Boer, with a look as though the man might have dropped from the clouds, exclaimed: "Are you Africaner?" Africaner arose, doffed his old hat, and, making a polite bow, replied: "I am." The farmer seemed thunder-struck, but on realizing the fact, lifted up his eyes and said: "O God! what a miracle of Thy power! what cannot Thy grace accomplish!"

Africaner's appearance in Cape Town excited considerable attention and served as a striking witness of the usefulness of missions from a merely political point of view. All were struck by his peaceful and gentle manner and his great knowledge of the gospel. While Moffat was in Cape Town it was decided to change his station, so that it was necessary for Africaner to return alone. This he cheerfully did, expecting to move his residence so as to be near his friend; but this was destined never to happen, although he met Mr. Moffat for a few days about a year later.

In March, 1823, Africaner died. When he felt that the end was coming he collected his people and spoke these final words: "We are not what we were—savages, but men professing to be taught according to the gospel. Let us then do accordingly. My former life is stained with blood; but Jesus Christ has pardoned me, and I am going to heaven. Oh! beware of falling into the same evils into which I have led you frequently; but seek God and He will be found of you to direct you."—*Missionary Herald*.