

GOOD NEWS FROM HOME, SHONGA.



LETTERS from loved ones are always welcome in the home land, but they are more so in a foreign land, therefore mail day is a day that is always looked forward to.

The picture shows the arrival of the mail at the Shonga station. We had waited six weeks for this mail, and when it arrived we were glad to receive a good batch of letters from loved ones. The mail carrier in this country is not the post man of America, who goes from house to house distributing his letters, but a sturdy African who has just returned from a weeks absence going for the mail.

There are two post offices in Northern Nigeria; one at Lokoja and the other at Zungeru. Shonga Mission Station is two hundred miles from Lokoja; but through the kindness of the post master our mail is left off at Patigi a village sixty miles from our station. To get our mail therefore we are obliged to send this sixty miles. It takes our man one week to make the round journey of one hundred and twenty miles, for often he has to wait till the mail boat passes up the river.

The man standing with a staff in his hand is our mail carrier, he has just arrived from Patigi, and our other children knowing that mail brings us good news from home, they come to see if it has brought them any thing, for often they receive small things from interested ones in the home land, and moreover they are always pleased to know how our fathers and mothers and loved ones in far America are getting along.

Mrs. Banfield is opening a package containing a lovely motto from a dear sister, while I am trying to sort out the letters to read first.



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Since this photo was taken, I am glad to say that we have a better mail service, for we now have another European living only eight miles away who sends in the sixty miles every week for his mail, and he is kind enough to take our letters for the home land to be posted, and bring back the ones that are waiting at Patigi for us from friends in America.

Mail from any part of Canada is sent out to our station for a two cent stamp.

It takes a letter after it is mailed in Canada, about six weeks to reach us, so no one need look for an answer to their letter in less than three months, and often it takes longer than this for in dry season it is very hard for the mail steamer to get up as far as Patigi, and the mail has to be put in a canoe and poled up the Niger one hundred and forty miles which takes about eight days.

Many of the natives who can read and write are taking advantage of the mail service and are corresponding with their friends in different parts of the country, where in old days they were obliged to send a special messenger or commit their business to some one whom they trust will deliver it when they reach that place in their travels.