

rooms, each of which serves as house, barn and stable. A family, stores of hay and grain, and cattle being quartered in each one. I wish I could clearly picture one with its arches of stone, supporting mud roofs with mud floors, granaries, rough mats, absolutely no furniture. At nights only a smoky oil light to illumine the darkness. Men and women, old and young, inhabit the room. Water has all to be carried by the women from a fountain *half an hour* below the village, hence cleanliness is at a discount. More than one man in the church has taken human life in self-defense or otherwise. Four of the members are blind, and others will soon be in the same sad condition. The poverty and suffering of many is pitiable to behold. Yet the church at Alma is not a discouraging one; there are some bright jewels in it who have withstood much persecution in years past.

Sunday was a pleasant day. Saturday afternoon we had held a meeting preparatory to communion; so we rose early Sabbath morning. At 7.30 we went to the church. There was first a meeting of the members to examine candidates for admission. Then came the communion service, in which I helped. Three were admitted, the service lasting till nearly half past ten o'clock. The church is a new building of clean whitestone, with a battlemented top, the inside plainly finished. The roof rests on two rows of arches, which run lengthwise of the building. It is bare of furniture, only a table for a pulpit, a chair, and a few mats on the floor. These are in daily use by the teacher and children who comprise the school. In one corner stands the common bier, a heavy wooden one, used at all funerals. The congregation numbered 120, all seated on the floor, the men and women being separated by a curtain. All left their shoes as they entered the door, and the collection of them in all stages of worn-outness was a unique finish to the open doorway. I have not seen a gathering that was more poorly dressed and in the main of sadder faces. They listened like hungry people, and surely God must look in great pity upon them. The elder, who passed the bread and wine, wore the roughest and commonest clothing, his head covered by a black sort of scarf, kept in place by a double circle or fillet of rope. His feet and legs were bare to the knees. But that took nothing away from the meaning and sacredness of the service. Babies cried and were carried out and in again, and once during the service two were seated, playing, inside the bier that has been used at so many funerals. To-day, Tuesday, we went out hunting, not for partridges, but for small deer, known here by the term "waal." In Ps. civ : 18, the word is translated "wild goats," which is an error. There was an exciting time when two were started, and when deer and hunters went flying through the bush. But the deer got away. Still later another deer was driven from cover and brought down by three shots. It is a great prize and repays us for all our hunting.

Now let me describe our "dwelling" here. We occupy the room belonging to the teacher. It is 15 ft. by 12, with a mud floor and very dingy walls. The roof rests on two long, heavy beams, across which are laid rows of crooked sticks, then layers of moss and thorns, then earth. All day long, but especially at night, the dry mud is dropping down, covering everything with dust, which is whirled about every time the door or window is opened. I find lots of mud in my hair every morning. The door is about five feet high, so one must either duck his head or bump it when entering. Two windows, without glass, afford good ventilation. Both windows remain shut most of the day on account of the strong wind, and we get our light through the open doorway. I know the meaning of "darkening one's doorway," since, when any one comes the room is darkened. The east wall has a "yuko," or clothespress, without doors, or shelves, or anything, except back and bottom. In it are piled our beds and bedding, when not in use. On the north and south walls are very rude shelves, on which are piled in beautiful confusion jars and bottles and cooking utensils, dishes and oil cans, tin boxes of salt and sugar and powder, bellows, old bags, and below all a smaller shelf with a row of books. Below the clothespress are small compartments in which are earthen jars containing olives, and molasses, etc. In one corner of the room are three or four "pockets" of mud, a jar resting in each one. In another corner a large wooden chest, in which the teacher keeps his treasures, clothing, spoons, etc. At this present moment its cover is piled with our books and papers, saddle bags and canned goods. The end of the room near the door is a sort of combination, pantry, cellar, garret, kitchen and coal-bin, not to mention the guns and old saddles. The rest of the floor is covered with coarse mats, and my "corner" has a thin bed spread on the floor, on which I am sitting and writing. I have drawn the tiny, low, round table over my knees and am writing by the dim rays of a smoky light. When we go to bed we get out and set up our traveling iron bedsteads, spread our beds and bedding, and go to sleep with the mat sifting into our ears. In the morning we go outside, down the rough stone steps, and Dr. Ham pours water on our hands while we wash. Stationary washstands, bath-tubs, etc., are unknown luxuries here. For dishes we have several plates and bowls, two cups without handles or saucers, three odd tumblers, and knives and forks. But what fun we have in and through it all. Ibrahim makes "soup," which is dry, and we eat it with a fork. He has to inform us when the stew and rice are warm, for we should never discover that fact unaided. Yesterday Mr. E. stuffed and cooked a partridge he had shot, and I made "tomato sauce" for it, a dinner we "two missionaries" most heartily enjoyed.