

Gaberones, (1911)  
Bechuanaland.  
16-10-31

Dear Mrs Jones, I am sorry that I have  
been such a long time about  
answering your letter re. Wayfaring  
work at Gaberones Village, but I first  
wanted to get to the bottom  
of the matter before I wrote to you.

The native teachers came to see  
me and they all say that the  
chief here is very suspicious of the  
Wayfaring Movement because he thinks  
that it's some Christian movement  
that will strive to convert  
those of his tribe who do not  
belong to the Church.

I suspected it from the beginning  
that the excuse he gave about  
the boy's schools was only a  
way to put the teachers off —  
I didn't like to write & tell  
you that before I was sure  
that my suspicions were correct.  
Anyway, Mr Sullivan and  
and I will both speak to the

Chief on Tuesday & then we will explain to him what the aims of the Wayfarers are etc.

As regards the girls who attend the boyale schools — it is very improbable that any of their parents will ever allow them to join any movement in which the school-teachers, the missionaries or other social workers take part.

If any of these girls who have at one time or another been to these circumcision schools wish to join the Wayfarers I don't see why they should not be allowed to do so. They are forced to go attend these schools by their parents and there is a possibility that the good things that they learn in the Wayfarer classes will help to give them a clearer & better idea of sex and things in general.

If on the other hand an enrolled Wayfare attends a circumcision school I don't see how she can be allowed to remain a member because the two things can hardly go together.

(I don't think that a case like this is likely to happen, but it is as well to be prepared for these things).

I'll tell you all we know about these boyale schools for girls and please don't mind if I write very plainly about these matters, but I think it's the only way to explain things properly.

At these schools the girls go out into the veld for some time. While there they all undergo a minor operation. The hymen is cut or broken down with a sharp instrument by some of the old women who act as doctors the same as witch doctors do for the boys.

Very often the girls develop bad swellings and I have heard of a few cases where the girls have developed ulcers. This I think must be due to the fact that instruments used are not properly sterilized & that being out in the wild they don't have sufficient clean water to keep those parts clean.

As far as I can understand the idea of this dilatation is to make child-birth easier. To me this dilating seems a very unnecessary thing because when they get married they'll tear the hymen just the same and dilatation will follow naturally.

Apart from this little operation they are instructed in all manners of sexual matters. This instruction could be quite useful if it were delivered in a clean healthy fashion but this certainly is not the case. Birth control, how to bring about abortions and how to excite passion in men are among the

Chief things taught. While at Moeludi a few native women who joined the Church spoke to me openly about these things and needless to say I was astounded at what I heard.

While we were at Moeludi an attempt was made to start these boyale schools again but many of the parents were very much against it. Many of them said at the time that they would rather not have their girls in a regiment than have them attend these schools.

I think the reason why some of the old chiefs are so keen on these schools is because it's an easy way to collect money.

All girls or boys coming from other stads or tribes have to pay so much per head & this goes towards the private funds of the chief. The chief again pays the witch-doctors for conducting these schools.

I saw Mrs Rey recently and she is very keen that the different Wayfarer Branches should have a camp somewhere in the Protectorate and get together for some kind of a conference. That would be great & I wish she could try & get it through.

Amongst the Bakgatla tribe it's very seldom that the mothers speak openly & plainly to their girls about sexual matters, child bearing etc. and I have often wondered whether it won't be a good idea to have 1 lesson on advanced hygiene once a quarter for the older girls & touch on these things.

It certainly is a very delicate matter but it's awful to see some of these girls simply full of the most awful thoughts possible.

The head teacher here A. Kgasa tells me that he has a hand book but I would be pleased if you

could send his wife something on  
First Aid, some health-posters, some  
of those posters dealing with the  
life history of the fly or the mosquito.  
I'll write & tell you  
again how far we get  
with the chief. & I have  
promised to help them with  
the work here.

The teachers asked me about  
Pathfinder work but I couldn't tell  
them anything much. I believe  
Lieut. Hope is very interested in the  
movement. Would it be possible  
for you to send Mr Kgasa some  
literature or give him the name  
of a gentleman with whom  
he could correspond about  
the matter? There are a few  
boys in the school here who  
would join the pathfinders I think.  
If ever you wish to come  
up this way again I'd love  
you to come & stay with  
me. Goodbye, yours sincerely, Tilly Malan

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