Silhouettes of Life

by

Myrtle Rowe

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Publisher's Statement

I received an e-mail letter from sister Roseland Graves (daughter of the Dow Meritts, pioneer missionaries to Africa early in the twentieth century) encouraging me to reprint sister Myrtle Rowe's book, **Silhouettes of Life**. She felt it was especially important that it be ready in time for the Jabulani gathering of African preachers and missionaries in Richland, TX the last part of July 2002, and for the Namwianga Reunion in Searcy, AR in August 2002.

I want to express my appreciation to sister Graves for her interest in the reprinting of **Silhouettes of Life**, and also to sister Georgia Estes in Prescott, AR, who supplied an original copy from which this printing is being done. I pray that the new edition will be a source of encouragement to all who read it. To those who have worked in Zambia and other countries in that part of Africa, I am sure it will be the means of calling back many memories.

Myrtle Rowe, and others of her generation, lived in the kind of Africa that most do not know today. Times were hard and it was a challenge even to survive, but sister Rowe lived to tell her story. We deeply appreciate these spiritual pioneers who prepared the way for others to follow. Reading their stories helps us to understand their experiences, yet it is impossible for us from this vantage point of time to properly value the older generations and what they have meant to the cause of Christ in foreign fields, as well as at home.

Sister Rowe wanted her book to be read by the younger generations, to encourage them to go to mission areas. We pray that its reappearance will inspire a new generation to lift its eyes to the fields that are white unto harvest.

J. C. Choate
Winona, MS
June 5, 2002

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BY

MYRTLE ROWE

MYRTLE ROWE

Dedicated to the memory
of
My Mother and Father
Who pioneered but gave all
they had to their children.

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FOREWORD

In these days when we tend to be confused in a rapidly changing world and when we are inclined to wonder if our opportunities are equal to those of an earlier generation, a reading of the following chapters should prove very encouraging. The author describes a quality of poverty which was not uncommon in her day but is quite uncommon in this day. To her, obtaining an education was a real struggle. Her difficulties were climaxed by the loss of her husband a few months after what appeared to be a happy marriage. Undaunted she reared a son who never saw his father but who wears the name of the camp where his father died of influenza during World War I.

When her education was completed the author entered upon a missionary career in Africa which lasted for two decades. The author was able to meet difficulties and achieve accomplishments in Africa that would have been impossible and unthinkable to one who had not already been seasoned to hardships.

The story of the life of MYRTLE ROWE will prove an inspiration to every reader and I am hoping for it a very wide reading.

GEO. S. BENSON, *President Emeritus,*
HARDING COLLEGE.

INTRODUCTION

The seventy years spanned by the life of Mrs. Myrtle Rowe have been years of rapid transition and startling change both in the United States and in Africa. Mrs. Rowe's personal experiences with life on two continents during this challenging period, her keen observation, her sympathetic understanding of people, and her naturally appreciative and happy response to every situation make her autobiography an unforgettable record.

In these days when multitudes have bartered their souls for material gain, it restores one's faith in humanity to know that even yet there are some who can find their greatest happiness in simple, humble service to the "least" of God's children. How much the service of dedicated Christian missionaries has helped to uplift an entire continent and flood with light a people who for ages had sat in darkness we can never know.

Mrs. Rowe's autobiography should be read by everyone who plans to be a missionary in a foreign land; but even more, it will help broaden the vision and increase the sympathy of all Christian people at home and abroad.

L. C. SEARS, *Dean Emeritus*,
HARDING COLLEGE.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the following people who gave me valuable help in the writing of this book. I am grateful to Miss Ruth Browning, high school English teacher in Harding Academy, Mrs. Louise Buffington, junior high school teacher in the same institution and Mrs. Greta Schrade, a high school English teacher, for their part in reading the manuscript and suggesting improvements.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. L. C. Sears, Dean Emeritus of Harding College and Head of the English Department for many years, for his careful reading and checking of the finished manuscript. I am grateful to him and Dr. George S. Benson, retired President of Harding College, for writing the introduction for the book.

A debt of deep gratitude goes to Miss Marguerite O'Banion, the typist, who deserves much praise for her faithful work and her joy in serving. To all these I express my heartfelt appreciation.

MYRTLE ROWE.

A SKETCH ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Myrtle Lyle Rowe was born November 22, 1896, in a one-room log cabin near Salem, Arkansas, in Fulton County.

The farm was a forty-acre tract of land which had been homesteaded by her parents. A rail fence enclosed the land, and, there being no gates, the only way to go in or out was by laying down rails. Sometimes wide cracks were left between the rails so that children could crawl through the opening.

Water supply for the home was carried from a spring one quarter of a mile away on an adjoining farm. The greater part of the laundry was done at the spring where wood and water were plentiful.

The farm was cultivated with a team, consisting of a bay horse and a grey mule. During the second year after homesteading the horse died so the farming continued with the grey mule and a hoe.

PARENTS

Mrs. Rowe's father was G. Conda Lyle, son of Allen and Eliza Lyle, who lived near Salem. Conda, as he was known among his friends, was a farmer the early part of his life, having farmed in Arkansas, South Dakota, and Oklahoma. He later became a carpenter and continued that trade until his retirement.

He sometimes served as an elder in the church of Christ and was a good Bible student. He became a Christian early in life and continued faithful until death.

Her mother was Fannie Blue Lyle. Mrs. Lyle had seven brothers and four sisters. Three of the brothers and their father were gospel preachers of the church of

Christ. This father was John G. Blue and the brothers were Joe H. Blue, Roby O. Blue, and Perry Blue. Roby and Perry were school teachers and preached part time.

Myrtle's father and mother had only the opportunities of one-teacher rural schools to obtain an education.

EDUCATION

Myrtle's education began with a short while in a small rural school in Arkansas under her mother's former schoolmate. The remainder of her educational efforts are given in her own story.

She taught her first school at the Old Leader school house, near Atwood, Oklahoma, during the winter of 1915-16. She taught with her uncle, Perry Blue, both occupying the same room at the same time.

Myrtle was blessed with an excellent voice and loved singing. As she was the oldest child in the family, she was often left in charge of the cooking.

But while she was so doing she often kept a hymnbook near by. It has been said that she let a wagon load of bread burn while she was engaged in singing a new song or one she loved. This talent was one thing that led her to Africa.

A MISSIONARY

Myrtle had a burning desire to teach in a Christian school. This she did by often making a great sacrifice and doing without many of the necessities of life, even to food for her table.

This was the spirit that prompted, led, and controlled her when she heard the call, "Someone come over to Africa and help us." She forgot self and all that was most dear to her in the homeland, and offered her life, abilities,

and labors to those she knew not, in order that she might lead a dark and lost people to a higher plane of living in this life and at last a home in heaven.

Many are the babies that have been and will be born in the land of Africa, that are and will be fed and cared for by civilized Christian mothers, that would have been in want and despair, if it had not been for the missionary spirit and love for others that was manifested in the heart of Sister Myrtle Rowe.

Eternity alone can tell the good she has done, and her reward will be great when the Master says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

PERRY BLUE.

PROLOGUE

This writing was done with the hope that it will inspire young people to strive to achieve the worth-while in life in spite of difficulties that will surely come. Don't leave the Lord out of your life. Wealth means little. Build character and keep your chin up. Hardship makes for growth and strength. Never be afraid or ashamed of work. Life is like a journey and there will be some smooth road, but there will also be some rough. The best and newest, most expensive highways in the world have their rough spots. And so is life like this.

PART I

CHAPTER I

AS IT WAS TOLD TO ME

In 1849, John G. Blue and Margaret Catherine Mathis were born somewhere in Arkansas. They were united in marriage in 1868 and settled on a farm near Salem, Arkansas, in Fulton County, cleared the timber, and set to cultivating the lands, built a house, planted orchards, herded sheep, and reared twelve children to adulthood.

Another family came into the area from Tennessee and settled as neighbors of the Blue family, Mr. Allen G. Lyle with his wife Eliza, and they reared six children on their Arkansas farm.

In the Blue family was a daughter, Louisa Fannie, and the Lyles had a son, Gol Conda. These two young people were married on January 1, 1896, and settled on a small farm near their parents. During the next fifteen years or so, seven children were born to this union, three girls and four boys. The oldest, a daughter, Myrtle Gertrude, born November 22, 1896, tells her own life's story on the following pages.

I Remember

This journey began on November 22, 1896, at Salem, Arkansas. My earliest memories are of our log cabin days on a little farm where I spent my first five years, playing with my brothers and sisters, climbing rail fences, scrambling up to the top of big boulders near the house, racing in the gardens, and leaning on my father's knees as he sat in the shade of the trees, cracking chestnuts for his children.

Only a few incidents come to me vividly now, as the Sunday afternoon I stepped on a rattlesnake when I ran to chase the calves out of the garden, the severe treatment of drawing the poison out of my foot with turpentine and kerosene, how sick I was for several days, or the time I dropped an iron wedge on my toe. (I still carry the mark of that injury.) One of the most vivid memories: Mother went to a spring some distance from the house to do some laundry and left me with the younger children—two of them as I now remember. My little sister, Eula, got into the flour sack and was having fun carrying flour over the house in her hands. I tried to stop her, but she was having a big time and wouldn't listen to me; so I caught her and crammed her mouth full of flour.

When mother came and pictured to me the danger of stifling my little sister to death, I got a fright that I never forgot. Chills creep up my spine now as I think of the time my young brother, Homer, was playing with a knife, which I knew he shouldn't have. I took the knife by the handle and pulled it through his clinched hand, doing little damage fortunately. Again we were living in a lumber camp in a tent on Black River where Father was working. A rabid dog came into our yard where we children sat playing. Mother grabbed us and pushed us inside, seized her gun and took chase, going a few blocks and shouting to other campers. She killed the dog, then penned our own dog up. I don't remember what happened to him. I also recall visiting grandparents and the relatives' coming to visit us at our cabin.

When I was approximately six years old, Father left the little farm and took the family to Grandfather Blue's; then he left for South Dakota in search of a new home-

stead. Things were not as he expected, but he got work on a cattle ranch to make money to send for his family. During our wait at Grandfather's another baby sister was born, making five children.

Now, I was sure we would soon go to South Dakota. Mother always said we would go, when we got a letter from Father telling us to come. My brother, Homer, and I, hoping for that letter, went daily to the Wheeling Post Office, a walk of about two miles or more. One day the long-looked-for letter came. Whether it was from Father or not, I don't know, for we couldn't even read. Anyway I thought it was, and we stopped at every house along that two-mile road on our way home to tell the neighbors good-bye, for we would be leaving for South Dakota, maybe tomorrow, not to come back for a long time, going far away. Nobody cried when I told them good-bye, and I wondered if they didn't care or wouldn't miss me when I went away.

At last the day came for our departure, and Grandfather took us in a farm wagon to Mammoth Spring for the train. I had never seen a train before, so when the big, black, noisy engine came chugging in to the station I was afraid and clung to Mother's skirts. Tears flowed freely as I thought of the old "bad man" I'd so often heard about, reaching out and snatching naughty children. Then to finish it off a black man helped us on the train, but fortunately he didn't keep any of us. We were soon comfortably seated, gazing out the window as the train sped on its way to South Dakota. My first remembrance of ever eating a banana was on this trip as Mother fed us fried chicken, cookies, and bananas from Grandmother's lunch box. With several days on the train I learned to make myself at home.

We arrived at Pierre, South Dakota, about mid-summer in 1902 and went to a small hotel where we waited a short while for Father. He took us to a ferry where we crossed the Missouri River to Fort Pierre, with our cases, boxes, and what not. Father led us to a wagon yard, and there stood the farm wagon which was to carry us westward seventy-five miles to the ranch where he was employed. The wagon was well loaded and children were bedded down among boxes and cases. Four of us were in the back and the baby was in Mother's arms up front in the spring-seat by Father's side all settled for the long drive, a matter of some days. (I don't remember how many.) Well, as for me I didn't stay down. I had to see; so up I went to ride on top of boxes in the wind and hot August sun. But that was all right for I had a big, new, straw sailor hat with a long red ribbon streamer on it, of which I was very proud, and this was a good time to test out its real worth. All went well until I fell asleep, and the wind took my treasure. On awakening I had no hat, so a flood of tears burst forth and for a while my sobs took all the joy out of travel and I had to come down off that high perch. We passed no towns but only an occasional inn, country Post Office, or a small ranch house—only the long, dusty, trailing road across the lone prairies.

At our new home at last: a small dug-out room in the side of a hill near a creek, the roof of poles, brush, and hay, dirt piled well up to shed what rain or melting snow might come, a dirt floor, one small window, and a door to furnish light and exit. A crude log cabin sat maybe two hundred yards away which could be used only for storage space. Our furniture consisted of a four-cap wood

cookstove, a high double bed, a trundle bed which was pushed under the big bed in daytime, a table, bench, two simple chairs, and a small rocker which was used exclusively for rocking the baby. I had the privilege of using it a great deal, for Mother would have me sit in the chair; then she put the baby in my lap and I'd have to sit there until Loma went to sleep or Mother came to take her. There was a cupboard on one wall built up of boxes nailed together which served as a pantry and dish cupboard. I began learning to wash dishes at this time. When Mother prepared the water in a dish pan, she stood me upon a box so I could reach the pan. One night I put dishes in the cupboard, stacking plates on top of saucers, cups, or other small pieces, and in the night the dishes all tumbled to the floor and most of them were broken. Mother ordered a set of enameled dishes from Sears Roebuck in Chicago and all of us children learned dish-washing down through the years with that set of sturdy ware. We kept warm, and I suppose comfortable, in this one-room place through the winter, but I recall how Father often brought the shovel inside at night to clear his way out through the drifted snow in the morning.

Father's ranch job took him away from home most of the time that winter; he came home only on week-ends. This left Mother alone with her children and a gun for protection, not against people, but wild cats, coyotes, wolves, snakes, porcupines, or whatever came in her way. She even furnished our table with rabbit, for it was great sport for her and Father to vie with each other in target practice. It was several miles to the nearest neighbor, cattle ranchers. Father had a sister living about two miles away who had two children, our only playmates or associates for years.

The next summer we moved approximately five miles to another place which I thought was wonderful: a one-room log cabin on top of the ground, having a floor made of wide boards. Father and Mother ordered from Sears Roebuck in Chicago again more beds, chairs, a big cook-stove, and a tent to set up in summer as a second room. All freight came to Pierre and ranchers of our area took turns going for supplies semi-annually and to pick up freight. It was one such trip that brought from Sears, Mother's new sewing machine, our little red wagon, new boots, and even some groceries—rolled oats, wheat cereal, dried fruits, and rice. At the Christmas season a Santa Claus bag was included, and how it was cleverly kept hidden, while these boxes and crates were being opened, I'll never know, but parents just have a knack for doing things like that. (I'm warning children here now, keep watch on the doings of your daddy and mother, at times like this or they'll trick you.) Anyway when time came to hang our long black stockings they were stuffed to running over with nuts, Christmas candies, mittens, caps, overshoes and other *needed* things but very few toys. But one night that new sewing machine awoke me, and there sat Mrs. Santa sewing away. I peeped but didn't dare move. No mistake, I saw some dolls for which she was making pretty clothes. That Christmas we three girls got a doll each, the only one I ever had. I cradled it in a shoe-box size basket and hung it high over head swinging from a joist, well out of reach of younger brothers and sisters. Before another Christmas someone knocked it down with a broom handle and broke my china doll. I never had another. They told me I was getting too big for dolls.

This place was located on a main east-west road through the state on which settlers coming into the country traveled. They were usually bachelors or spinsters seeking adventure, living on their homesteads the required length of time, closing out and making a little money, after which they would return to their homes. But this movement furnished excitement for us. We children watched hopefully day after day to see if the next covered wagon would have some children. One day we spied a caravan slowly creeping westward in our direction, working its way down a winding canyon road beyond the creek bridge. We strained our eyes looking for children and anxiously ran down to the bridge to meet the caravan. We always hoped that travelers would camp on our yard, and they usually did. But the children, yes, today it happened: a boy and a girl in their early teens, along with several families were moving to homesteaded lands, as we were to learn later, fifteen miles west, making up a small community or small town, to be called Manila. Later a railroad came through about thirty miles away, hence another small town called Philip sprang up. Lands all around us were being homesteaded, but still no families with children. Father and Mother were getting extremely anxious about this for we were in need of a school.

The few years at this place helped us financially as Father worked for these bachelor ranchers and Mother washed, ironed, and baked bread for them and sold jellies to them that she made from wild fruits when they were in season. I trudged the hills and creek banks with Mother helping gather buckets of juicy wild plums, the sweet purple choke cherries, and bright orange-colored, very sour buffalo berries. These fruits made

choice jellies and jams, and other goodies that only Mother knew how to make. While practicing her pioneer hospitality Mother made use of every opportunity to serve meals to travelers passing through, furnished camp grounds, sold her baked goods to them, and made friends with any women who came our way.

Some of the sacred memories I hold of those years are of my awakening in the early morning to the tune of breakfast sizzling on the stove, Mother stirring about the room as Father sat nearby reading the scriptures aloud, or their singing together some familiar hymn. They hadn't been privileged to attend church services since leaving Arkansas, but they never left God out of their lives. Their faith led them to believe that the church of the Lord would come to South Dakota. But during all those years they met only one New Testament Christian of their own belief, except Father's sister who lived a few miles away and Mother's brother, Uncle Roby, who came from Arkansas and visited us a few months. Besides these there was one other who came along with a covered wagon caravan moving on Westward. They stopped on our yard, and Mother met them and invited one of the ladies to come rest at the house. They were busily engaged in conversation when suddenly both leaped to their feet and embraced in the midst of shouting and tears of great joy. Mother had asked her about her religious affiliation; when she said "church of Christ" Mother said, "I am of the same. You are the first I've met since I left Arkansas," and this was what brought such joy to both of them. This impressed me, and I could never forget how much God meant to Mother. I knew this devotion was what led her to always gather her little

brood around her as we went to our knees in prayer at night for my father when he was absent from us on any trip, herding or rounding up cattle from the lone range, or plowing through snow blizzards to save cattle.

Those people settled on lands several miles west of us. During the ensuing summer months we drove in our wagon to their settlement a few times on Sundays and had church service, fellowship, and basket dinners, at which time Uncle Roby, who was visiting us, preached. As time passed these people went their ways, Uncle Roby returned to Arkansas, and there were no more services.

Father finally had a few cattle, a team of horses, wagon, and a plow; so he took a homestead several miles away, built a one-room log cabin, and dug two underground rooms. We moved again. By this time we had a new baby brother, a barrel churn that I could operate by using its long windless type of handle and a new washer with like action. Later Father bought a claim shack from someone who was leaving the country, moved it to our land, and set it by the log cabin. A large new wood heater, a beautifully designed platform rocker, and two beds graced this big family room. I thought we had an abundance of space now.

But my parents continued seeking for school possibilities. Some Catholic families who had several children, came into the country and settled about three miles from us, but they brought their teachers with them and set up their own school. They built a little shack in their midst, sodded up the outside wall, and used this as a classroom. We were invited to enroll, but we went only a few weeks when Mother realized it wasn't what she wanted, so she took us out. All I remember about this

learning process was working arithmetic on a slate and the teacher drilling us on memorizing the catechism.

Then another attempt was made. A small colony settled about six miles from us (somehow we seemed to be sadly isolated from these colonies coming to take up land). They had children and a teacher, so they held school sessions. During that fall our family had a treat going to that little school for a community spelling "B." I can still see quite vividly my parents standing in spelling lines. Both were good spellers though they had little formal education. Near Christmas time the children were having a program one night. Quite recently, Father had bought an old black pony and a two-wheeled cart especially for use by the children. Brother Homer and I wanted to go to that program. Yes, we knew the way, so our parents allowed us to hitch Kitty to the cart for the trip. Kitty never did any harm to anyone and was a calm, easily managed animal. Mother helped us into the seat, wrapped us well in our warm hoods, heavy coats, fur-lined mittens, high-buttoned black leggings and overshoes. As she kissed us good-bye, she and Father cautioned us, "Now, Homer must be the driver." He was as calm and easy-going boy as Kitty was a pony, so both worked together exceedingly well. Kitty was nicely behaved in his hands. It was a clear, beautiful evening, and a thin layer of crusty snow covered the prairie. As we drove away I must say I felt entirely self-sufficient going out all on our own. The smooth rolling of the cart over the crackling, crusty snow gave us a delightful ride. I thought the program was great as those six or eight children stood near the big, round, redhot heater saying their speeches and singing their songs. The

teacher gave them a treat of stick candy, and we got some too. With the program finished the teacher tucked us snugly into the seat of our cart again, carefully wrapping our feet with the patchwork quilt Mother had provided. Off through the snow glistening in the moonlight we proudly glided toward home. After going some distance, I decided Homer was letting Kitty be too *pokey*, so I took over the reins and slashed this snail-pace-pony to a fast trot. Something happened. The cart stopped with a sudden jerk, but Kitty never slacked her pace; in fact, she was motivated to go into mobilized action. In the moonlight I could see the black spot vanishing from view, and I could hear the crusty snow breaking under the fast moving hoofs. On further examination we discovered a lone, standing fence post there on the prairie, lodged between the wheel and shaft of the cart. Only one thing to do—walk home another two miles and only hope we would arrive before our parents realized Kitty had come without us. As we trudged along, breaking the crust under our feet, my conscience constantly reminded me that I had been disobedient to the parental admonition given at the outset of our trip. When we arrived at home there stood *calm* Kitty waiting for us. Mother never discovered it until we opened the door and walked to her bedside; then Homer told the story.

Well, there was the undeniable fact that this school was too far away for us to attend, so another possibility presented itself. There was a requirement of seven children in a district before the government would help set up a school and give a teacher. Then came Darrell Barnhart from Indiana, homesteading a few miles from us. He borrowed a horse and rode over the district to

see how many pupils he could find. Mother had four of school age, so if he could find three more we could get a school, and he was a qualified teacher. Well, he found the three and secured the role as teacher. He acquired the use of a claim shack about a mile from us in which to hold school, and he boarded with us.

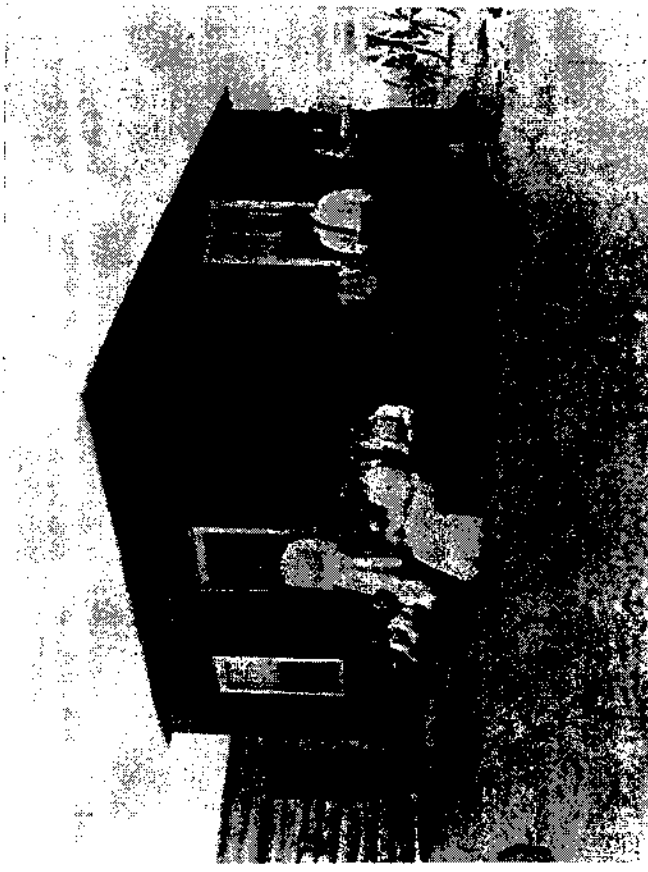
This was a winter of new experience for Mother's protege. I don't know what grade I took for all the knowledge I had thus far obtained came through parental efforts at home when they ordered books from the educational department in Pierre. With Mother's close supervision I had learned to read, write, and spell, and I was successful with some phases of arithmetic, especially the multiplication tables. They tell me I went to school my very first in Arkansas when we were staying at Grandpa's. I remember of no learning process, but only that a young aunt took me to school with her one day and they played a cylinder record, a talking machine with a big horn on it; I cried because I was afraid. I thought a man was surely hiding in it.

During the time Mr. Barnhart was with us that winter, he taught me to read and sing the musical notes in the key of "C," from a song book of his own. Then for Christmas Mother ordered me a hymn book from the "Christian Pilot Publishing Company" (in Arkansas, I think). I loved it and obtained great pleasure from it. I still have the book with my name and the date, December 25, 1909, written in my own handwriting. Mother sang with me on hymns that she knew. Also that winter I began to dream of becoming a school teacher. Whether something special inspired me or whether it was only childhood imagination, I don't know, but it never left

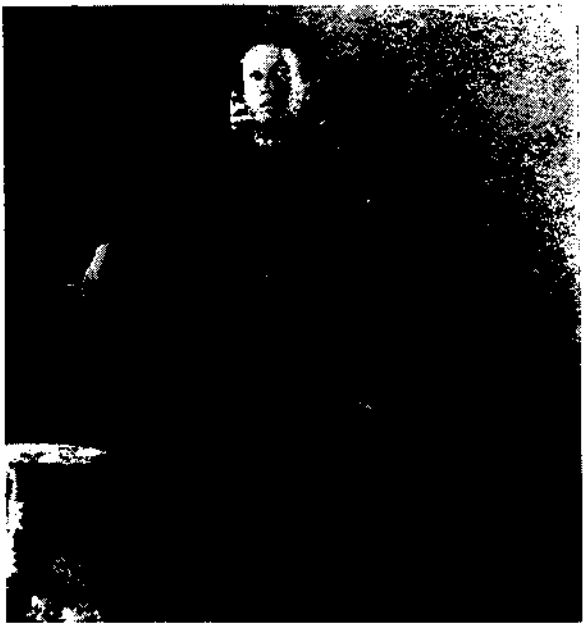
me again. Yes, and one special thing, my deep, dark, secret—my first crush, Mr. Barnhart. He didn't know it, and I'm sure he didn't have any crush on me, but I had a crush on him. Be sure I kept it under my hat.

At the close of this school year two families left the country so we were left with no possible chance of school again. Mother could go no further with the formal instruction for her brood. So she and Father sold out all they had and loaded the farm wagon again with boxes, cases, and six children. A neighbor drove us to Philip where we got a train bound for Oklahoma; there Mother and Father had friends and we could have access to school and church.

I was old enough that emotions swelled up in my breast and tears overcame me as we drove away from that homestead. I reflected some hardships I had experienced even though I was young; I had cared for the house, cooked, watched over the other children (I was the eldest), cared for a sick mother that summer, helped bring wood from the nearby woodlands, carried water, herded cattle (riding Kitty), worked in the garden, then last, but not least, struggled through knee-deep snow for a mile many times that year to be in school, but I loved it all. As I gazed through my tears back beyond the garden, I could see the little mound grave of a baby sister who lived with us only a few minutes after birth that year Mother was so ill. I recalled how she had directed me in carrying on from her bed, a chair, or even from a pallet in the shade of the house on hot days. With no doctor's services closer than several days' drive Mother had almost left us. Now, I didn't know what was ahead, but I loved what I was leaving behind. Over the hill we rolled, never to see that homestead again.



South Dakota Homestead of the Lyle family. Myrtle stands in the door.



Myrtle Lyle—age twelve

Brothers and Sister of Myrtle. Back row, left to right: Homer, Norman. Front: Loma, Orvin in the red wagon Santa brought.

The Ryan School near Manila, South Dakota, which we attended for a short time. (Made in November, 1908.) Myrtle is wearing the light skirt and dark jacket.

CHAPTER II

TRANSPLANTED

Our train pulled into the station of the small town of Stuart, Oklahoma, one Saturday evening late in September, 1910. Friends took us in until Father could find a house and get us settled. Sunday morning we went to church, a real congregation, the first since we left Arkansas in my early childhood. There was no preaching, but all service was conducted by the men of the congregation. I was intrigued by the whole performance but hardly understood what everything was about. Also, I had never seen so many beautiful clothes and hats before. Soon thereafter I had to have a new hat as nearly like that of Mother's best friend as I could find: a brown stiff felt sailor with imitation ostrich feather tips standing up all around the crown. I kept it on my head with two long, big-headed hatpins. I imagine it cost all of $1.50.

As finance was running low all of us had to join our friends in cotton picking, a strange, exciting experience, for we had never seen growing cotton before. Being with other children in itself was thrilling. For Mother the foremost thought was to get her children in school. I looked forward to that day with great anticipation, but Father said we must pick cotton while we could for money was low.

Shortly before I was fourteen in November I was enrolled in school in the fourth grade. How happy I was to get books and begin learning, even though I was much older than the others in my class. But I didn't mind that until I saw that little girls didn't play with

me as I had expected, and my age group didn't want a fourth grader in their games. So there I was, standing around on the school ground alone because I didn't know how to play ball. In class I was happy for I had books and could work all around those little children. The teacher was kind to me, and I loved her. I determined to catch up with those older girls and boys. I had to help carry family responsibility again because of the illness of my mother. But after several months a new baby brother was born, and Mother soon took up her family duties again. I studied late hours at night after I had my supper dishes washed. Chopping cotton took precedence over school in late spring before school was out, so I had to go to the field again. It broke my heart to miss my classes, but what could I do? My being the oldest of the children, Mother felt that I should stay in school; therefore it was worked out so that I didn't miss too much. In the end I think I was double promoted.

In July of that summer during a revival meeting I was baptized, in a beautiful lake near Stuart, Oklahoma. That was the greatest day of my life.

In the fall of 1911 we moved to Atwood, Oklahoma, into a two-room house near school. I picked cotton again and was late starting to school, but when I did begin I worked exceptionally hard. During those first years at Atwood I was in school a few months each winter, and Father worked nearly as much arithmetic as I did. I sat near his bed every night to work arithmetic. (Our family room was Mother's bedroom in the two- or three-room houses which we occupied on the various rented farms.) He lay looking at the ceiling in thought as I read problems. He did mental work telling me what to

try, and I did pencil work. Father seldom went to sleep until I finished my arithmetic. He was a stalwart to me. When I finished the eighth grade and was given that diploma in the spring of 1913, I felt that it was a partnership promotion and his name should have appeared along with mine. Father had never received a diploma of any sort, because his opportunities had been very limited for receiving formal education when he was young. He was a good thinker and read a great deal.

The passing of this government-set, eighth-grade examination, and receiving that diploma was all without any fanfare or graduation exercises, but it put me with my age group, which was most important.

Both school and church friends meant a great deal to me. Our place of worship was the little one-room white building on the hill with its bell tower reaching into the tops of the big oak trees surrounding it. It looked like a temple to me. We had Bible classes sometimes, all meeting in our respective corners to recite our memory verses. I don't remember who the teachers were, except I still see my father standing before a class of men in one corner giving out what he had gained by his own study. I thought the singing couldn't be better in heaven. The harmony that made the air vibrate with its beauty, as it came from those country voices, old and young, thrilled my very soul. I learned how to read those shaped notes and joined in on the harmony parts, seeking every opportunity to sing. There is where an occasional singing school gave me a boost.

There were many young people in the area. The coming summer revivals and singing schools gave us something for which to look forward. Wagon loads of families or

young folk followed the "big meetings" from one community to another, attending services usually under brush arbors lighted by farm lanterns and kerosene torches. Often on trips like this Uncle Perry, with his girl friend, accompanied us. I'm not sure whether I was sent along to chaperone him or he to watch over me, but I think it must have been the latter.

I found it exhilarating, and I felt a nearness to God to go from these brush-arbor, night services with a crowd down to the river or creek, watch a line of ten to twenty people, some being my closest friends, all hand in hand, wade out into the water to be buried in baptism, while the big round moon and God looked on from above. These were beautiful experiences.

Say, did you ever sit in the back of a horse-drawn farm wagon going to church with your boy friend and swing your feet freely while you chatted? Did you ever have a mischievous young driver slash the team to jerk the wagon, giving your boy friend a sudden tumble to the ground, and by the time he could pick himself up and brush dirt off his clothes, he had to make quite a dash to catch the wagon again and jump in by your side? Plenty of life centered around that little church building on the hill.

Mother always taught us girls never to slight a boy in public but to go on with him and tell him privately "no more." On this one occasion the boys all gathered around the door after a night service, each deciding on the girl he would walk home. Well, I saw Harvey at the door, and I wondered, "Now who is he after?" I was suspicious; no girl wanted to go with Harvey, not a bad boy, but neither was he handsome. I wormed my way around the people to escape, but he wormed his way too, and we

met face to face. We got out the door, and I led the way, stepping at a lively pace—nearly a mile to go. We accelerated at such a gait that my mischievous brothers couldn't keep up with me. I knew I'd never hear the last of this episode. When we arrived home Harvey soon had his "no" and was long gone on his way. When asked how I got home so quickly I only answered, "Harvey had good speed."

As summer was drawing near its close, the thought of school was again bearing down on me. Atwood had no high school, so now what could I do? I lost some sleep thinking it over, then approached Mother. Would they allow me to go to Holdenville, about fifteen miles away, and find a place where I could work for room and board and attend high school? There would be a small fee to pay, as Holdenville was out of our county. Could Father do that? No family ever worked harder, from the head of the house to the least who could carry in stovewood, with less monetary reward than did our own little band, but we were a happy, healthy household. We had to count carefully all our spending from one harvest time to the next. So now what about that fee? At first my going seemed out of the question, but on reconsideration, it was finally agreed and I was given money to ride the train to go find a place to stay.

I walked across the river sandbar and up the railroad track to a siding where I flagged the train and rode on to Holdenville. I walked the streets, going into every store making inquiry. I found a young lady who wanted someone to help her elderly mother, so she asked me a few questions as to types of work I could do. The one I remember best was could I cook cakes? I assured her I

could, which I proved to her later. So she took me into her home. I hurried back to Atwood, got my clothes, returned, and entered school.

My room was a tiny nook in the attic, but I was thankful for it. Of course Mother was eager to see what my set-up was, so she came to visit me when I'd been there about a month. She took me by surprise, and I assure you I was glad to see her. I was ironing with an electric iron, a new experience for me, and, while I visited with her, I let my cord lie on the hot iron and burn out. I feared I'd lose my job, but I didn't. I don't remember how Mother came, but she returned home that same afternoon.

Everything wasn't exactly what a young girl would desire, especially since I had no young associates except those at school or church. This "young" lady with whom I lived had reached the spinster age; her mother was old and in ill health, and her grandfather, living with them, was quite old and feeble. I was confined quite closely with them all the time except for bare class attendance and time to go to church. This made it a lonely life. They were kind to me, but I had more work than I could do. I stayed the first semester, then found another place.

I liked the school and the teachers were kind. I made some good friends, but my work kept me from any extra-curricular activities; there was only school, return to work, late night and early morning study. I overworked and took sick about a month before school was out and had to go home, but I got my credits by test on entering school in later life. That freshman year was difficult for me. I had never read such books as "Tale of Two

Cities" and "Ivanhoe," and not many others, in fact, so these two were almost more than I could appreciate.

The following fall I wanted to try again, but crop failure hit and Father couldn't pay the fee for me, so I had to figure out a way. I would go to the one-room school a half mile from where we then lived, review the eighth grade, and sit for County teacher's examination in the following spring, get a certificate, and begin teaching. So this was my next undertaking.

This review was not difficult, but it was very important as these were the subjects on which the examination would be based. Recess periods of play didn't interest me, for I found other things to do. My experience at Holdenville with "Tale of Two Cities" proved to me that I needed to read, and that winter *"I put at it."* We didn't have books at our house, except the necessary school texts and the Bible; therefore I went to neighbors and friends in town, and the teacher, borrowing whatever I could find. I discovered myself interested in history; so I read more of this type. In June, 1915, at the age of eighteen I travelled by train again to Holdenville where the expected examination was held. It was two weeks or more before I got the results, a long anxious wait. At last it came. Yes, I was granted a county certificate good for two years, but I must attend the teachers' summer normal to qualify for a higher certificate by the time this expired.

Now I had just what I wanted, and truly I was happy. The next thing was to find a school within the county. Uncle Perry, who was an experienced teacher, perhaps could help me. Yes, that was it. I saddled a horse and started out to see schoolboard members in an adjoining

community. In a matter of days I had signed a contract to begin teaching in the fall term for $25.00 a month. This was big money for me. I had never seen this much in a lump sum, especially in one month. Next I had to find a place to board; so visiting the farm women nearest school was a joy. A nice lady about a half mile from school agreed to give me room and board for $10.00 a month.

Well, now I must get myself a new dress to wear for beginning my newly acquired adventure. Since I had no money, Father went on my note at the bank for $25.00 to use in getting ready to teach. That new dress really lifted my morale, a black cotton gimp jumper dress with a white blouse. It was homemade at a cost of perhaps $1.50 or $2.00. Since a teacher must have a watch, I ordered one from Sears Roebuck for about eight or ten dollars, a lapel watch, having a long chain. New shoes must come too; they were very pretty high top, grey button shoes. All ready for school.

Our family must have been the rolling stone one hears about, for we moved almost every year, but the changes were for better, giving us improved lands and more favorable living conditions. We remained around Atwood for several years, and the time had come for me to finish my preparation for launching out on a career. This provoked thought, for when I was once out on my own I would miss the close family ties for months at a time, and probably for most of the year. I knew teaching and going to school would call me away most of the time. We were seven children, and I was the first to break the family activities. With my winter work fully planned, I put all I had into helping and enjoying family ties for the

next few weeks. Mother helped me make underclothing and some needed cotton dresses. At this time we lived about six miles from the church and these next few Sundays would really bring to an end that regular weekly program of church attendance at Atwood.

Our Sunday home activities ran smoothly under Mother's supervision. Everyone was out of bed early, each child having his chores to do. Eula and I prepared the family breakfast of hot biscuits, home-cured ham, and streaked gravy, eggs, Father's own sorghum molasses, and butter. Mother laid out the clean clothes for the family of nine and lined up the bathtubs and bathing schedule. Father and the boys did outside chores of feeding stock, milking, currying and harnessing the team for the six-mile drive in the farm wagon.

With everyone ready about 9:00 A.M., we took our places in the wagon, little ones sitting in the wagon bed on quilts, older ones on our improvised seat (a board across the wagon bed) and, of course, Mother and Father up front in the spring seat. The road was rocky and crooked, hence it was a rather bouncy ride and sometimes hard on hats and pretty parasols as we dodged tree limbs or fought the wind. But these times will ever be pleasant memories, for when I left home that fall it was never the same again.

Uncle Perry was the principal of that two-teacher school in the Leader community where I got my first experience. There were the two of us, but we taught in the same room. Maybe the arrangement wasn't everything to be desired, but I think it must have been good for me. Uncle Perry could keep an eye on me, and, as a result, he was a great help through the years, *teaching*

me how to teach, for I certainly didn't know how to even begin. I'm sure I was a poor excuse for a teacher, but I loved it and wanted to learn. With his years of experience he knew what to do or say to help me, and I appreciated very deeply his guidance. I loved every pupil, every hour of work, my landlady, and even a young man or two.

It had been a profitable year for me as I paid off my bank note and saved enough money to go to teachers' college that summer. I had been privileged to go home a few week ends when Father would come for me on horseback, leading a horse for me to ride home.

As soon as school closed I visited the family for a few days, got my clothes ready, and took the train to Ada, Oklahoma, about twenty-five miles away, to enter teachers' normal. I secured a room, with three other girls, where we had cooking privileges with a friendly, hospitable, middle-aged couple. I unhesitatingly admit that we girls had a jolly time that summer, and I added some credit to my mere high school beginning. In fact, I made enough that I was granted a higher teacher's certificate and didn't need to use my *one-county* certificate the second year. I also made some lifetime friends that summer, a move which turned out later to be more than friendship.

At the end of the summer a school vacancy occurred in the community of one of these new girl friends. As I was free to circulate in several counties for teaching, I lost no time in contacting the school board in the area where my girl friend lived, and signed a contract for that winter term, beginning after crops were gathered. A $35.00 check monthly that winter put me on top of the

world. I boarded with the girl friend's family, R. N. Skelton, for $12.00 per month and walked two miles to school. This was a three-teacher school but only two rooms, so I still had to share one room with another girl teacher.

My girl friend and I had a good time that winter, and I enjoyed going out *kodaking* on many Sunday afternoons with other young people.

March was rather rough, for that was when my friend, Meda, and I got measles. Her mother put us both in the same bed while she waited on us. That was also the time of Oklahoma sandstorms, and one hit right when we were in bed. Sand came into the house, sifting on our bed and faces. What could be worse for measles? Mrs. Skelton took sheets and made a tent over us by stretching them from the high bed headboard to the footboard. We came through the sandstorm none the worse off, and we were soon back in action again.

In January another thing happened which was of great importance in my life. Mrs. Skelton's grandson, whom they had reared, came home from Western Oklahoma where he had been working, to help his grandfather put in the crop. By the time school closed I had come to the realization that I was really in love. This young man was of the most upright character and a specimen of the finest manhood. So now I would be losing sleep again, making another decision. I was nearly twenty-one years old.

My plan for further education and teaching was altered. I taught a summer term in a school nearer town (Konawa, Oklahoma), boarded in town, and walked two

miles out to a two-teacher school with two rooms. At the end of this term, in July, I returned to my home at Atwood to prepare for marriage in September.

I made two street dresses and my lingerie, tea towels, pillow cases, sheets, and a white damask tablecloth. Mother took me to town and bought me a blanket and some small items. Together, we quilted two quilts. This completed my hope chest.

Bridal showers were not in vogue then. My fiance came to see me in August and we completed our plans.

The school in Oklahoma where I was teaching when I met William R. Rowe.

On the campus of the teachers' normal, where I was in summer school. Ada, Oklahoma.

CHAPTER III

WILLIE

That's what he was affectionately called by all his friends. William Robert Rowe was born on October 8, 1892, in the home of Doc and Jennie Skelton Rowe somewhere in the area of Konawa, Oklahoma. A little girl was born to this family also, but she was taken early in life. While Willie was still very young his father died; then in a few short years his mother passed, leaving Willie a lone orphan. At this time his kind, tender, maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. R. N. Skelton, with whom I had boarded, took him and reared him to manhood. They were fine, upright, hard-working people. Willie was what I called handsome: nearly six feet tall, black hair, soft, blue eyes, kind spoken, quiet spirit, and a friend to all who knew him. This was the boy to whom I was engaged and whom I met in Oklahoma City for our wedding.

Going on the train I was accompanied by my brother Homer and my young sister Eula. This adventure was made on September 17, 1917, and we were united in marriage in the home of a Christian minister, surrounded by only quiet, peaceful, simplicity as he placed a wedding band on my finger. Homer and Eula returned home, and Willie and I spent a few days at the state fair then in progress before our return to Mountain View, Oklahoma, where he was working at this time as an auto mechanic. But both of us were more interested in setting up housekeeping than seeing the fair; so we stayed only three days and boarded the train for the little western Okla-

homa town. That first home was a neat, three-room house, and we furnished it with all new but simple, homey furniture from front door to every pantry shelf. Love reigned supreme, and everything was perfect happiness. God had been good to provide all we needed. To wash, iron, and cook for Willie was a delight I had never experienced.

War Clouds

The great European conflict of 1914 had come to be a world struggle, and the United States was now in it. Young men were being drafted weekly, but it didn't seem too evident that married men would be called into service. Still, that thought came to me repeatedly even in my dreams. Would Willie have to go? Well, we hoped not, and his classification was remaining stationary, which was in his favor. Clouds got thicker and the clash sharper in January, 1918. In the spring he was reclassified, which gave us deepened fear. Would cruel war tear us apart and break up our happiness? We could only pray and live in hope.

In May that awful day hit us. The call to service came in the mail, and I, crying my heart out, took it, and ran to his work, to show it to him. He stood stunned for several minutes; then both of us returned home. All our friends soon knew it. He had only a few days to report at his post. We broke up housekeeping, stored most of our things, shipped a few, and took the train next day for Konawa so he could see his folks. I would be near my family and return to them when he was gone. By this time my folks had moved to Maud, Oklahoma, only a short run on the train from Konawa.

Our trip was a sad one, and on arrival at Konawa he had only one night to spend with his people, after which he departed for his station. Words fail me when I attempt describing that day. It was over, and he was gone. I felt so alone! When he could get settled in camp wherever they sent him, I would join him. I went to Maud to my family to await a letter telling me to come.

Before he was through all his tests and shifting from place to place (over a month of this) one of my letters carried very special news to him. Just what we wanted—a baby was on its way to our house. I hoped for something to hasten the coming of the day when I could go to him. He was finally settled in the cavalry camp at San Antonio, Texas, and he would find a place for me as soon as he could get leave from the Army post. I couldn't wait. I'd go find a room. I wrote him when I'd be there, not realizing that he wasn't free to go and come as he wished at any time.

I arrived in San Antonio the latter part of June, but he wasn't there. I took a taxi to go to his *post* address. The driver took me as near as he was allowed, and I took my cases and started walking the remainder of the way. Another soldier's wife who knew the rounds met me on the sidewalk and offered to help me. I told her I wanted a room and that I must find my husband. She knew just what to do. She knew of a vacant room in the same building where she was living that she was sure I could have for the night. We were on our way to the place when we had to stop and wait for a company of soldiers to pass. They were stepping to the hep! hep! marching of the sergeant leading them. Suddenly there appeared before me not ten feet away, Willie. It took

me by such surprise that I threw everything I had in my hands, purse and all, to the ground and burst into that line of soldiers, throwing myself into the arms of my husband. The men went around us and marched on their way. We chatted hastily after our tears, and the girl with me, who by this time had gathered up my belongings, told him of the room where he would find me in the evening. With this he hurried on to his company to finish his day and I went to the room. In about two hours we were united and went out for supper together, and he spent the night with me.

The next day I set out in search of an apartment; God must have led the way, for I walked right into a place where the lady of the house was leaving town for a period, so I could have her house and just be at home for an indefinite time. I was there until about the first of August, and Willie was allowed to come home every night and each week end. I found sight-seeing that I could do during the day, and we went together on week ends enjoying each other for several weeks. But one night he came home with sadness on his face. He had heard a rumor that they were going to be shipped out somewhere, but he had no idea where, maybe overseas. We made our plans as to what I must do in case he should be confined to quarters some evening and unable to come home. In less than a week it happened, but he hastily got out, hurried to me, helped me pack up and get to the train which was due very shortly. He put me on the train bound for home, and he hurried back to his quarters.

I was to wait at home until he was settled again, at which time I would return to him. Unofficial reports

were that they were being sent to Oklahoma. Army secrets are pretty well kept. I returned to Maud, Oklahoma, and my parents to wait again. He was brought to Fort Worth, Texas, to await further orders. No workout, drills, or practice of any kind was being done, so he knew it was only a temporary stop. Three weeks passed, four, five; still no move.

Just at this point in September a man who held an important office in Washington, D. C., came to our town. My friends told him about me and he said very assuredly, "Her husband should be home with her. The draft board, only, has done this. The law does not require him to serve. I can get a discharge for him." One of my friends got us together at her house, and he told me the story and assured me that he could bring my husband home to me. I felt happy at the thought, but still a little pessimistic, and said, "But if that be true, why are so many young husbands in service?" He answered, "Draft boards are doing it, and these men don't know the law concerning who is exempt." He left town and his last words to me were, "I'll send your husband home to you." I wrote Willie about it and he, too, felt doubtful, but said, "We'll just be quiet and wait and see."

Three weeks passed and no word came, so in my impatience I wrote President Wilson. This was about October 1, 1918, and that terrible influenza epidemic was taking thousands of lives both in service and in civilian life. Sad homes were all around us. About the second week in October Willie's batallion was shipped to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, he thought for permanency, so he wrote me to come. My family and my doctor were afraid for me to go just at this time because of the epidemic

and they prevailed on me to wait a week to see if conditions would be improved. I consented.

Before the week was passed a telegram came from the Fort Sill base hospital saying Willie was quite ill with influenza pneumonia. Now I knew I could not go see him with any assurance whatever of returning and would perhaps be put in the hospital myself. Father said he would go to Willie and do what he could and send me daily telegrams as to Willie's condition. He did this and always assured me that it was needless for me to go. His doctor said I would be allowed to see him but for only a few minutes. Both he and my doctor advised strongly against it.

On October 25, 1918, the Lord took Willie from me. A telegram didn't come that day or the next. I tried to think maybe he was better and they stopped telegrams because of expense. But that wasn't it. Father was on his way home and the doctor was waiting for him to arrive at my side. Willie was being shipped to Konawa for burial. When Father arrived at home, I was sitting by the cookstove on that cold, rainy October day, with my head bent over in my hands. A friend who was trying to give comfort in those hours came to the kitchen door. I looked up and saw what was written on his face. I said, "Has a telegram come?" He replied, "Sister Myrtle, you must be brave." This was it, and they put me to bed.

The following day, October 28, my family, his family, and the cold body of the one dearest to me arrived at Konawa, Oklahoma, and the funeral procession led to the front porch of a Christian family with whom I had boarded while teaching near town. Why on the porch?

Doctors and city authorities everywhere were insisting on having no public meetings except in emergency, and then in open air, because of the epidemic. Hardy Baugh spoke words of comfort and two songs that were used, somehow, have had deeper meaning to me because of that day. "In the Sweet By and By" and "What A Friend We Have in Jesus." The U. S. Flag draped that casket before me, and I could hardly realize that his cold body was within. A few chairs were set out on which relatives and close friends sat while others stood nearby during the service. It was a short, touching admonition filled with love, sympathy and emotion, after which we proceeded to the cemetery; Mother, Father, Uncle Perry and Aunt Clara were close by me. He was laid to rest near his mother and other relatives who had preceded him in death.

That same week two letters came to me, one from President Wilson and one from the man who was going to get the discharge for Willie. Both were instructions and forms for completing the action. I saw now that it would have gone through, but it was too late. Had this happened, I'm sure my life would have been different; maybe for worse, maybe for better; only God knows. I *do* know that God's will is best. I willingly resigned myself to Him and knew I must plan to face life again alone. From Washington came a kind of death certificate, as an expression of sympathy, and a record of his service and death. On it was written the following lines in gold which I had penned and sent to them at their request.

Our wedding picture—1917
William R. Rowe, Myrtle G. Lyle.

REMEMBRANCE

We miss thee from our home,
dear Willie,
We miss thee from thy place,
A shadow over life doth stand;
No sunshine from thy face.

We miss thy kind and tender hand,
Thy fond and earnest care.
And home is lonely without thee—
We miss thee everywhere.

Myrtle Rowe and son, Don—1919.

CHAPTER IV

A SILVER LINING

Heartbroken, sad, and lonely expresses it mildly. It seemed as if my tears would never cease. On November 11, 1918, came the signing of the Armistice. People were shouting, crying, ringing bells, and blowing horns while whistles were shrilly screaming. Yes, people were expressing their happiness that the war was over. I was glad the war was now history, but I was not happy. I buried my face, weeping aloud, "Willie won't be coming home to me as other young husbands return to their wives. He has already gone home. Grief eats my heart out when I think of the joy as other families are reunited."

I had one thought now; "I must get a hold on my life; I simply must drive tears from me. There is another life that I must protect besides my own. I must live for that jewel, Willie's child." The town of Maud, the church, and my family were all kindness personified. There were no other war widows in the town; so people lavished their sympathy and kindness upon me, doing all they could to make my life bearable. In my effort to be patient I prayed daily for that little life that I knew would be my comfort. In that small measure I would have Willie. Never shall I forget the loving, tender, touch of my father's hand when he would come into the house and see me in thought and tears, and say in his kindest way, "You musn't do this, Daughter, come dry your tears." He was an understanding father.

On January 14, 1919, my precious baby was born, a perfect nine-and-a-half-pound boy given me by God to cherish, guide, and love as he would grow to manhood. The time had come, and I had a deeper desire to put away my grief, lift my head, smile, and sing again. Deep love and joy leaped within me as I held him close, wrapped in his soft blankets, and rocked him in that special rocking chair as I sang "Rock-a-by-Baby-in-the-Treetop." That was my special lullaby. In March he was very ill for a week and came close to leaving me. I had a good country doctor, and he brought to life again my baby boy, Doniphan. He grew into a happy, cubby, curly top, who had a smile for everyone who would put out a hand to him. When he was about three years old I expressed my deep feeling in writing the following words, telling a story that was on my heart:

SILVER LINING

The noonday sun was high overhead,
Yet darkened by the dreary clouds.
A soul stirred on a cold damp bed
All pillowed soft in soldier's shroud;
He said farewell with his last breath,
As angels beckoned from on high,
And slipped across the stream of death
Where I would meet him by and by;
There on that rolling golden shore,
This painful death would be no more.

The message came over the wire
To one whose cheeks grew wet with tears,
Yet, one whose faith would never tire,

As brighter days removed her fears;
She grieved awhile when left alone
But braced herself for future years.
Though Death slipped in and soon was gone
New hope would light the way with cheer;
Now she would let God have full sway
And murmur not along the way.

She plod along the winding road
From dawn until the last sun's ray;
An angel helped her bear the load,
Then gave to her a child one day,
To cheer her on through life's long mile;
She gazed upon that baby face,
And then her lips would form a smile
For in her child she saw God's grace;
A ray of light in her son's eyes,
Remembrance straight from paradise.

As days passed by I saw in store
The man that some day soon would be
An image of the one before,
Whose love would always be with me.
He bade me think of that glad day,
To cast my eyes up toward the star
Where we, too, would soon soar away,
And join the one who'd gone afar;
Up there we'll clasp his hand and say,
"Dear Daddy, we are here to stay."

When Doniphan (we call him Don) was about nine months old, I knew I must get out on my own and not depend on my family any longer. They and my friends

had done all they could, but I could not sit in self-pity to be waited on. I had a life to live and another to guide. With a prayer in my heart, I determined to press onward and face my lot. I knew God would be with me. I was receiving some government compensation for the present, which would give me a start, but it wouldn't come always, so I must make the fullest use possible while it lasted. I thought it would be wise to get into a prosperous town and buy a home and perhaps I'd get it paid out before the government income ceased. I could also find some work to do to help myself. Ada, Oklahoma, seemed a good choice and I would be near my family and Willie's. I went there to investigate and, in the end, thinking of renting one or two rooms to students, I bought a lot and had a five-room house built near the college. I moved into it in the fall of 1919 and let out rooms, which helped me keep soul and body together and stay home with my baby. Being near the college would give me a chance to do more school work when Don was a little older. It seemed to be a satisfactory set-up. But somehow I couldn't content myself with what I had. (Just here I think God took over.)

In 1921 Leroy Elkins was traveling in interest of the reopening of the Christian College at Cordell, Oklahoma. The former school of this little western town had moved to Harper, Kansas. The new junior college to be opened at Cordell was known as Western Oklahoma Christian College with Ira L. Winterrowd as its president. Mr. Elkins knew me quite well, so he approached me about going there to school. The Ada College was only two blocks from me. What should I do? My heart so longed to go, but could I rent my house and take my two-and-a-half-

year old baby and go to Cordell? I still had that longing to teach, but I knew more preparation was very necessary. If I could manage to rent the house, letting it pay for itself, I could use my other income to finish school if I could get part-time work. I was convinced this plan would work, so taking action was next. My family moved to Ada, leaving the farm, and took over my house. My plans were complete.

CHAPTER V

A BABY AT COLLEGE

The last week in August, 1921, I had my trunk and suitcases ready to go. I boarded the train for Cordell. I really had no plans as to what I would do on arrival there, for I had no friends in the town with whom I could advise. But I was on my way and something would work out for me. One family was there with whom I had slight acquaintance. I also knew she had lost her husband during the influenza epidemic. When my train pulled into the station I felt almost lost, with no one on whom to lean, but hoping to learn where I might find a room, I took a taxi to the home of this one family. What could have worked better for both of us! She had a two-room housekeeping apartment for rent. I moved right in and settled with her for the winter.

I went to Western Oklahoma Christian College as soon as the doors were open, enrolled, making early acquaintance with the president and dean. I started to classes, leading or carrying my child who made friends faster than his mother, for he was a friendly little fellow. Students and teachers alike wondered how I'd go to school. I took him about a week, just letting him play around where I could keep an eye on him. Certainly this wasn't a very smart thing to do, but classes were small, so that left room for him too, as I thought.

President Winterrowd wondered too, along with others, how I would get along this way, but his kind understanding led him to do something about it, and he helped me

work out a plan. He put me in contact with the wife of the custodian who also needed help. We agreed on an arrangement whereby she kept Don when I was in classes, and I went by her house each day after school and ironed for her; in this way I kept her ironing well done up. All her family went to school except a little girl Don's age. They were agreeable and played together well. I went through the year this way, having nearly a mile to walk to school, but she lived on my way, so it worked out satisfactorily.

As I had previously done only a little more than one year of high school, I enrolled as a sophomore and carried all they would allow me to take. There was never a kinder group of teachers brought together. Some of them have been my life friends from that day to the present. I can't refrain from naming some of them because they have meant so much to me: President and Mrs. Winterrowd, Sallie Ellis Hockaday, Byron Fullerton, George O'neal and others. Kinder people than Mr. and Mrs. Winterrowd never came into my life. She was my voice teacher and he my Bible teacher, so it gave close association. They were always looking out to do or say something encouraging and to give me just the lift I needed at the right time. It was during this time that the first spark of mission work came into my mind. I just didn't know a Christian school could be so different from others—always sympathetic and containing so many good things, as I found here. I had gone to the Ada Normal and had been with students, both in and out of the classroom. When I lived near I kept students in my home and learned much about the whole influence. It was a blessing that I had discovered this new place.

I was accepted in the group of teachers, mainly because of age. The younger people became my friends, but naturally, being a woman with a child, I sought out the more settled people as my closest friends in my school life. Today as I reflect back I see myself in my near ankle length dress, wearing a brown, stiff-brim, felt, sailor hat, books in one arm, leading Don with the other, pressing against the strong western Oklahoma wind, making my way along the short cut across the meadow to college. The wind got my hat, so I put down my books, left Don sitting on them, and I ran after the hat as the wind took it rolling across the grassy slope. On retrieving it I carried it in my hands and proceeded to school. I wasn't the only one who wore a *dress-up* hat to school. It was the style, and so nearly everyone did the same. You know all of us like fashion.

This routine continued for two years. Then my family moved to Dallas, Texas, and I knew I had to do something with my property in Ada. I had no desire to live there any more; so to sell it and buy in Cordell was what I decided to do. I secured another Christian lady to keep Don, and I got a part time job as saleslady in one of the stores in town, which helped me make ends meet. I was taking voice, piano, or other music courses every term and I participated in mixed chorus, college quartette, some dramatics, and carried a heavy college load. I sat in the classes of some of Oklahoma's best teachers, both men and women. It was only a small junior college, no Ph.D. instructors, but they were the finest Christian characters and were well qualified for the job they were doing.

I carried a cold lunch to school and studied while I ate my sandwich. One day I was deeply engrossed in reading a term paper of a classmate while munching on an apple. Bending over the paper left the heavy collar of my blouse standing loose at the back of my neck. A prankster came along with something in his hand and dropped it down inside my collar. It fluttered and I thought, "A mouse?" I jumped and flung myself all over my chair, shouting, "O, don't!" It went into my sleeve which was buttoned firmly at the wrist. I knew it couldn't escape and I panicked. Roy and a girl tried to get my arm to unbutton the sleeve to free the little fellow. Roy was really frightened by now, for I was hysterical. He kept telling me, "It's just a bird, Mrs. Rowe. It's just a bird." I calmed down in a near faint, and he unbuttoned the sleeve and the little bird fell to the floor also about to faint. In later years when I saw Roy at a church service where he was preaching, he reminded me that he never forgot that episode and neither had he tried such a prank on another woman since that day. We both had a hearty laugh together over it.

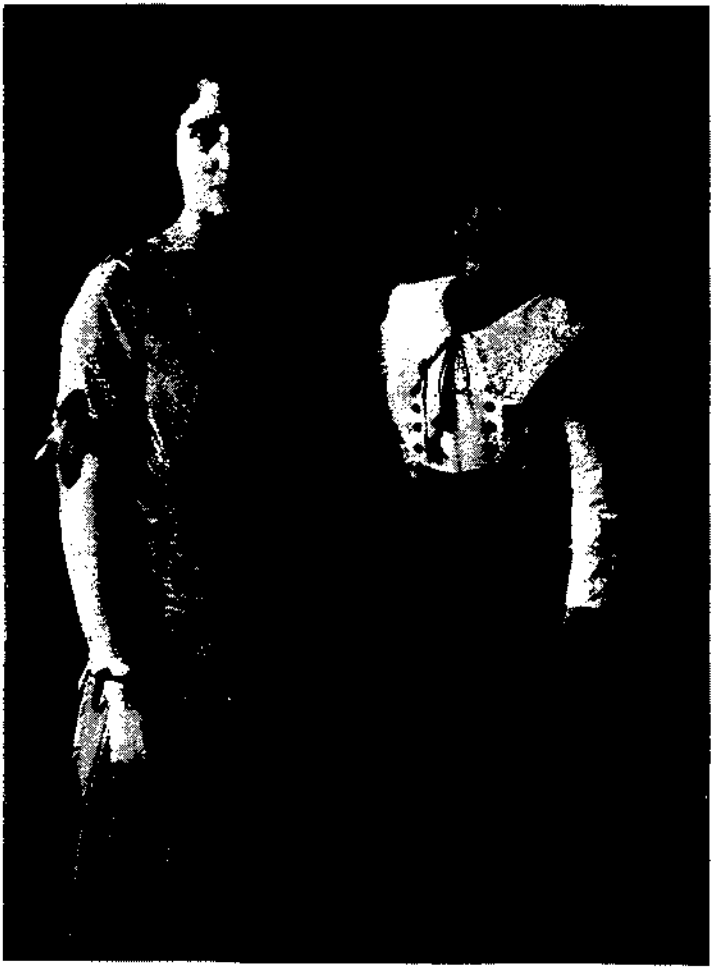
In the spring of 1923 I graduated from high school at Western Oklahoma Christian College. The next two years were taken up in serving as college librarian, finishing the junior college, and working at the store. I made my regular summer visits to see my parents, who were by this time in Dallas. I could never stay away from them too long at a time, since also they were naturally very close to Don, their first grandchild, and the only one at that time.

It was during these years at W. O. C. C. that I began to learn what mission work meant, especially foreign

efforts of the church. Such men as F. B. Shepherd, and Don Carlos Janes visited the school and told stories of missionaries like J. M. McCaleb. My heart would burn within me when I heard how people needed the gospel around the world. I never before realized that Matthew 28:19 had never been fully carried out.

I graduated in June, 1925, and Don also started to school that same fall. The year 1925-26 I remained with W. O. C. C. as librarian for twenty-five dollars a month and worked in the store when off school duty. In the spring of 1926 I knew I must get more work; also Mother was quite ill that May, so in June I went to Dallas to be with her and find more work. I felt that it was necessary to be near her at this time.

The junior college at Cordell, Oklahoma,
W. O. C. C. where I first attended college.



Mother and son, Don.
Graduation picture when I finished W. O. C. C.—1925.

CHAPTER VI

OPPORTUNITY IS GOLDEN

Mother had just gone through a serious operation and I was needed to nurse her until she could be on her feet again. She was at home from the hospital but in bed most of the time. Then the latter part of July I suddenly took quite ill and had to have a major operation. Don and my baby brother, then about fourteen, were left with the duty of looking out for each other and Mother, who was much improved and supervising the household again while Father was at work. My illness slowed me down for several weeks, but I wasn't long in getting back on my feet and securing housekeeping rooms for Don and me temporarily. As soon as I was strong enough I set out to find work and a house I could buy. I had sold the Cordell property.

In September I began working as saleslady for Sears Roebuck and Mother kept Don when he was out of school. I was still so weak that when I stooped to do under-counter work I was constantly holding to the higher shelves to pull myself to my feet. Next I bought a five-room house and converted three rooms into an apartment to rent. My work at Sears continued a year; then I went into clerical work for a furniture company. I did better financially, but I wasn't happy in it and also Don needed me. I wanted to go back to teaching.

Two years of the clerical work and I returned to teaching. Friends helped me plan for opening a private Christian school. Several families in the church wanted this for their own children, so I started a preparatory

school in the Bible class rooms at the church building where children could get both academic and Bible training. I got together such materials and equipment as the church and I together could afford. We opened school with twelve pupils in the first four grades. With the help of one mother we had a happy school year under those crowded conditions. The following year the church bought a five-room house next door to the church building and converted it into classrooms for school and Sunday Bible classes. Enrollment about doubled. We added fifth grade and more applications were coming in each term. I had to get another teacher to help me. Also a music teacher moved her piano into one room where she could teach. This was a drawing card. I was very happy in this growing work and was better able to keep my home, be with Don, and do what I was most interested in, Christian education. No doubt you readers would know some of those very pupils today, leading a successful life, if I were to name them. This was the beginning of the Christian Bible school work in Dallas, Texas, today. There were many fine Christian young people in Dallas churches, and I enjoyed life there.

But another change was in the making for me. Here I was teaching again, beginning a work that was growing rapidly, and would soon require more teachers, buildings, and equipment, and more preparation scholastically. I was thinking in terms of more college work but didn't know just how to get it. I didn't want to see this little school close while I went to school.

Sometime in early 1930 a letter came to me, as though right out of a blue sky, from J. N. Armstrong, President of Harding College at Morrilton, Arkansas. How he

ever knew where I was or anything about me I'll never know. He had been in my home one time when he was in a meeting at Ada, Oklahoma, the only time I had ever seen him. He was making me an offer in his letter which follows:

> Dear Sister Rowe:
>
> Would you like to come to Harding College to teach and work on your degree? We'll arrange to give you a period or two daily away from your classroom, at which time you could work on your college hours. Our term begins in September when we would want you. May we hear from you soon?
>
> [Signed] J. N. ARMSTRONG.

I thought this was the best thing that had ever happened to me. God knew my wishes and heard my prayers.

By this time I had a young woman of the church helping me full time, so I talked it over with her and asked her if she would like to take over the work of the little school and go on with it. There was also other help in the school. She agreed to this, so at the end of the spring term in 1930 I was free to go to Morrilton and she was free to promote the school we had going.

During this period of teaching I had bought a car, a Rio Flying Cloud, the first I ever owned, which seemed a must in that particular work as the street car mode of transportation just was not sufficient. So the last of May, 1930, Don and I began preparation for going to Harding College. I rented the house, loaded the Rio with what I could, and we set out in July. I hadn't been to

Arkansas since childhood, so it seemed good to think of the possibility of seeing grounds I trod so long ago. From Dallas to Morrilton was a long drive for us (400 miles) so we spent one night on the road at a tourist cabin near Hot Springs, Arkansas, and arrived at Harding campus the next day in the afternoon. That Rio had done its duty, no car trouble on the road.

Words fail me when I attempt to tell the thrill that was in my heart when I drove into the Harding grounds. I inquired for President Armstrong and was told that he was away in a meeting but that Mrs. Armstrong was there. A student working on the campus took me to her and, after our self-introductions, she apologized for her appearance. She didn't need to have bothered, for neither was my appearance tops. But here was the wife of that college president sitting flat on the floor in the girls' dormitory with paint buckets, brushes, rags, and scrub mops all around her. She was happy as she explained to me the big job in which they were involved. She was directing the work of freshening up, repairing and re-arranging buildings and furniture in preparation for the term opening in September. The whole campus was alive with students who didn't have money to pay their way to college, but they had strong bodies, and so were working their way. I thought, "This is the kind of people and place I want. I'll get into this job with them."

Mrs. Armstrong sent for the dean to come talk to me; this was my first meeting with Dean L. C. Sears who also was clad in work clothes. Everyone worked at Harding. Some boys were sent to help me unload my car and settle in one of the dormitory rooms for the

present. I was permitted to prepare our food in the home economics room. Don and I were happily situated for the summer.

The next morning I got into clothes fitting for the occasion and went to join Mrs. Armstrong among the paint cans and mops. From then until the opening day of school I scrubbed, painted furniture, washed windows, or did any other work that came my way, and I really enjoyed it. Don had plenty of room to play and run on the campus with some other children also living on the grounds. When school opened and girls were arriving at the dormitory, they were delighted with all the array of colors they found in those dormitory rooms. Old dilapidated furniture they left in June had been transformed into pleasing pastel shades throughout the building; any one room was fit for a queen. First arrivals got first choice of the color schemes. I was permitted to have a choice also.

Since Don was still only a child, he was allowed to stay in the girls' dormitory with me that year, because my salary was to be quite small. According to our agreement it was mainly an exchange of services. We had our meals in the school dining hall and fees and tuition without charge. So with this arrangement we entered school. I took a class from 8:00 o'clock to 9:00 A.M., starting out with Shakespeare under Dean Sears, another class from 1:00 o'clock to 2:00 P.M. under B. F. Rhodes in History. My extracurricula was voice and mixed chorus in the music field and dramatics under the capable direction of Mrs. Armstrong. All this work came at hours when I was free from my teaching load. I shall ever remember and appreciate the very kind, capable teachers

I had that year as well as the following years. How grateful I am today!

As Don grew up I had to rent a house and move out of the girls' dormitory, and manage to rent out rooms to help defray expenses. A severe drought had hit the country, upsetting the economic conditions. It had its effect on the college so that the administration was having financial difficulties, which led to extremely low salaries. Some of my other income had also reached an end. It seemed, sometimes, as if I could hang on no longer but I loved Harding College; so we lived by swinging to a bare shoestring. This covered the years from 1930 to June, 1932, when I graduated, receiving my B.A. Degree. Then until 1934 I was full-time teacher, receiving a few dollars more than previously, enough to keep going.

During these years I was having many opportunities to learn more about the mission work the church was, or was not, doing. I was deeply interested in some of our missionaries on the foreign fields, especially George and Sallie Ellis (Hockaday) Benson in China (she had been one of my teachers at W. O. C. C. at Cordell, Oklahoma). During these years Rio Flying Cloud did mission work. I used it to take many preacher boys, who had no transportation, to their appointments to congregations in the surrounding area. Wherever I went I tried to help in the work. One place especially was Russellville, Arkansas, where there was no congregation. I carried carloads of young people Sunday after Sunday, and helped in personal work and Bible classes until we established a congregation in that place and in Dardanelle, where we had a nucleus of six church members. We entered homes

from the most lowly to those of business people, ate with them, visited, and taught them, using the best means we knew to get the gospel to them. Sometimes there wasn't a steady chair on which to sit; sometimes a meal consisted of cornbread, beans and fat bacon and gravy. There were no screen doors; flies were fanned with a home-made paper brush. If one lit in the milk, I would just fish him out and go on drinking. If one or two got stuck in soft cake icing or pie filling, I fished them out and continued eating. These people were humble, big-hearted Christians, whom we loved even though they had little of this world's goods. About this time the George S. Benson family came home from China, on furlough, intensifying my interests in mission work abroad as well as the feeble efforts I was making at present.

There were other joys, too, during these years. Petit Jean Mountain was a favorite place to go for picnics or all-day outings for any group of young people, especially for club activities. I had my share of these good times and happy associations. I used that Reo to transport many of Harding's young people to their picnic grounds. The falls, river, and mountains furnished a perfect setting for a happy day of activity for college students. A mother who often went with me called me a mountain goat. I loved climbing boulders and wading water. On one of these occasions young people were climbing along the rock ledges leading in behind the fifty-foot high waterfall, so I thought I'd do the same. As I drew near that small cave-like shelf behind the water pouring from above, the ledge became very slimy slick, and I saw I was in danger of slipping and going into the pool below to be churned to the bottom never to recover

alive. My heart pounded heavily, and I feverishly grasped at the rock wall. It was impossible to turn back, I had to go ahead. I made my way through it, but there was only a little uneasy sleep for me that night as I lay the whole night long reflecting on the daring thing I had done and what could have so easily happened, and what would have become of Don. On later trips to Petit Jean with young or old I prevailed earnestly on the fearless, venturesome youth not to run so close to tragedy.

In the early part of 1934 a great change was facing Harding College for the near future. What was in store for her no one could foretell. Was it for better or worse? There seemed to be the appearance of greater opportunity, but who could tell? Some were fainthearted, others ready to brave what would come. We all admitted that her walls were bursting from growth; dormitories, classrooms, dining hall, kitchen, and even the campus was too small. What must be done?

CHAPTER VII

THE EXODUS

In the spring of 1934 an unbelievable offer came to President Armstrong for a college plant in Searcy, Arkansas, that far surpassed the Morrilton plant, and would give room for Harding expansion over a period of several years. It seemed impossible that such an outstanding offer could have been laid at our feet except as an answer to the prayers of godly people. After extended deliberation and special petitions to God, the transaction was closed, and the great exodus began as soon as school was finished the first of June. I made my usual visit to Dallas to see my parents but it was of short duration this time as I had my own breaking up at Morrilton to do and the moving to Searcy.

On my return to Harding I saw moving vans scattered around town. The college campus was all topsy-turvy with big trucks backed into doorways of every building, teachers' homes, and several school patrons' residences, loading to go to Searcy. I didn't need a van, for my house was so scantily furnished that I sold or discarded the less valuable pieces, bought a small two-wheel trailer and loaded it, hooked it to the Reo, and Don and I joined the "EXODUS SEARCY." That Morrilton-Searcy road took a beating all summer with the many trucks going to and fro. When the Reo pulled into Searcy we unloaded at Patti Cobb dormitory where we spent the next two months.

It was truly a hard summer for the plant had been vacant over a period of years, and it took a lot of work to

get it in readiness for occupancy. All hands, from the president and dean down to all our children, had a job to do putting things in order and getting ready for opening school in September. Sometimes it looked like an impossible task, but everyone knew how to do some portion of work, and teaming together was what it would take. Harding had that team-work spirit. It would have been interesting to a complete stranger to observe all those who were able to swing mops, brooms, and paint brushes, the waxers, window washers, and lawn mowers, then to learn that their rank ranged from Ph.D. professors down to high school students laboring feverishly side by side. Things were humming everywhere. The property had been vacant so long that everything was covered with layer on top of layer of dirt, and spiders had their intricate art work swinging wherever one looked. The dark halls literally vibrated to the tune of millions of mosquitoes.

As boys ascended the beautiful old winding stairways of Godden Hall (a dormitory which has given over its stately position to the humble goldfish pond) to the very attic, their shouts rebounded as they announced the discovery of beautiful old pieces of furniture, antique chairs, chests, mirrors, an organ, stools, bedroom water sets, and even some decorative wall panels. A store of treasures had rested in that dark, lonely attic only waiting for this very day. They were carefully carried down and in time each piece was made to live again with repair administered and new upholstery applied. I had never seen the like except in story books or antique shops.

The date for opening school was near at hand and things were under control, so I got busy on my own

personal preparations. The renting of a very old house, moving into it, preparing a part for renting as an apartment was the task before me. This accomplished, put Don and me at home again and ready for school on time. The apartment was occupied, and I took a girl in to the room with me, a close, long-time friend from Dallas. She helped me with my work, and in return I gave her room and board.

Don was now enrolled in high school and took band and piano. Voice, chorus, and dramatics filled my time when I was out of classroom duty. I was teaching three grades, but I thought I had a wonderful place in which to work. Since Cordell days I had continued doing as much music as I could work into my schedule for it was always my most gratifying outlet and a source of inspiration to me. It wasn't my aim to make it a career, for I hadn't that ability, but it gave me comfort and was worth more than words can express. Those periods of chorus or voice practice were satisfying to my tired mind at the end of any heavy day's work.

The elementary classroom accommodation was the best I had ever been privileged to have; a sturdy, four-room brick building, well ventilated and lighted, with fair seating. Though I had a heavy teaching load I was exceedingly happy in my work. Each day about 10:00 A.M. we teachers took our children to Godden Hall up the narrow stairway to the small auditorium on the second floor, to the front seats to join all Harding students and faculty in a period of worship. The chapel programs were planned to be inspirational first of all. This was often followed by some clean entertainment, which classes in the elementary school were sometimes permitted to give.

It was also on this stage in Godden Hall auditorium that we had our annual spring operettas or some sort of entertainment with the elementary pupils. It was a satisfying experience each time when the production was completed. Children can do such delightful things with their imaginative minds working and without having nervous prostration or being self-conscious.

Pranksters even enjoy trying a hand at times which can be slightly annoying, but pranks can work to their own disappointment. On one of these occasions the primary teacher and I had worked all day making a beautiful fairyland stage for the operetta *"Golden Whistle."* We went to eat supper and dress for the evening, then returned early to get our children into their costumes. When all were ready, we marched to the auditorium to begin the program. What should we find but a whole ball of string which had been unwound and threaded through, under, and around all our setting? It naturally didn't take long to cut it all out and also to find the guilty boy, one of my pupils. We calmly drew him out of the line, took him to the front seat in the auditorium and made him sit and watch the other children perform. No more trouble with Jack. The next day I asked, "Jack, why did you do that?" He sadly answered, "I don't know why I'm so mean." Another time we were giving a similar program in which there was a white bunny rabbit hopping around on the stage. It looked so real to a little fellow visiting this particular fairyland that he stepped forward to pull the bunny's tail. To his complete surprise the little ball of cotton came off in his hand. Of course the audience enjoyed this accident with a response of hearty laughter.

The old bell in the Godden Hall tower was another source of thought for mischief-makers. A sudden awakening at the most undesirable hours of the early morning brought out prefects hastily mounting stairs as if in a pajama parade in an effort to catch the prankster, only to find an imprisoned dog, pig or some other innocent animal chained to the bell rope. The bell was finally removed.

In the spring of 1935 I sold my property in Dallas, bought a lot near the campus, and erected a small house with garage attached, and moved into it in the summer. Don and I did most of the inside finishing and made ourselves quite cozy for the coming winter. At this point also the Reo Flying Cloud was in need of too much repair, so I put it in on a new Chevrolet, which gave us much peace of mind and confidence when we did driving. In January, 1936, contract was let for building our main home on the lot and we moved into it in March, though it wasn't entirely finished. With hammer, saw, paint brushes, and wallpaper we did much of the finishing with our own hands. We lived by a big wood heater for several winters, but with most of the modern conveniences we were comfortable.

I tried to be both father and mother to Don who was now a teenage boy, and our home was open to the young people at all times. The environment at Harding was my greatest answer to prayer for the sake of Don. He had every chance to choose his associates from the best of families, those with Christian ideals. I appreciated Don's choice of friends. I had the highest respect for his chums and I made them my friends too. College students were in our home nearly every year, renting rooms or

apartments, for I had to supplement my low salary in this way. As Don was now in high school I was giving him the advantage of the extracurricula that he wanted—voice, orchestra, and chorus. I had bought a saxaphone for him when he was rather young, and he had been playing it and the piano for several years. He had used the sax in band but decided he preferred a clarinet. At first I objected to his making the change, but I gave in and he took his beautiful sax to Little Rock to make the trade. Can you imagine my consternation when he returned home with two used clarinets? I exclaimed, "Why, son, what can you do with two clarinets?" He unhesitatingly replied, "O, I'm going to let Harry play one." Well, he had a very big heart and a friend so close he would have given him the shirt from his own back. So both were happy with their clarinets and I graciously and sympathetically accepted the matter. Then later I got him a cello which he wanted for orchestra, and he loved it. Among the happiest memories of that period are the times Don and I sat side by side in that small college orchestra playing cello (he was much the better player) or the times we were in chorus together. Those were happy days.

For our church home we chose what was called the Downtown church of Christ, a small congregation of about a hundred members at that time but growing. They needed help and encouragement, and I thought surely I could serve in some way in the Lord's work. These were plain, good people reaching out a hand of welcome to newcomers, as Harding College came into their lives. As years have passed this church has made

an enormous growth numerically, spiritually, and in the love of God, as the knowledge of His work increased.

In early 1936 another change came for Harding College as she passed through a formative stage. President Armstrong had carried the main burden of the institution on his shoulders for three decades; he seemed even older than his years and his face was lined with weariness. He realized he could carry the load no longer. For some time he had been searching in his mind for a man whom he could invite to come and be presented to the board of trustees as a new president for Harding. He found the desired qualities in George S. Benson, of Canton, China, a former student of Harding College. Cablegrams were exchanged for a short period of time and Mr. Benson agreed to come and begin his duties in September, 1936.

In August of that year Mr. Benson with his wife, Sallie Ellis Hockaday Benson, and their two little girls, Ruth and Lois, arrived on the Harding campus. It was a joy to me that I could again be associated with these long-time friends and former teachers. I had, in the past, given some thought to the possibility of doing mission work with them in China. The change-over in the school wasn't an easy one, for everyone had thought only of President Armstrong as heading the institution, but President Benson set to work, moving in his own way, making as few changes as possible in the school policy. This family coming right from the mission field was filled with zeal and a message of the great need of the gospel around the world to put before us. They stirred hearts every time they spoke. Their association enriched my life. That year was filled with profitable changes and many rich experiences under Harding's new leader.

A Decision Made

The school year of 1937-38 brought other people to the campus from varied foreign mission fields, missionaries coming to put their children in Harding and to have a year of recuperation at home, resting from the heavy work in which they had been engaged. Two families were here from Africa, the J. D. Merritts and the W. L. Brown family. I had children from both of these and also from the Benson family in my classes, so naturally I was getting acquainted with what mission work abroad meant. I really enjoyed these children; they were something special to me. That spark that came into me at Cordell was fanned into a flame that year. The question was ever before me. "Could I go to help where the gospel has not gone?" I had Don to think about. Since being at Harding I had learned about several mission fields and of their greatest needs, but Don came first, for he was my own. I tried to turn my mind to continuing in music and preparing to teach public school music, or taking leave and going somewhere to obtain my master's degree. But always the mission fields loomed up before me. I couldn't brush them off. With these three possibilities before me I knew I couldn't do *all*, but must choose one and do it. In January, 1938, I made the decision; it must be the mission work; I would answer the call. A chapel program was given over to stressing mission work with the idea of helping some young people to make their decisions. With the singing of "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow" by that wonderful audience I gave my promise to answer the urgent need for women teachers in Africa. Now I was ready to plan definitely for the beginning of a new work. Don was in college

and was also engaged to one of his classmates. We would talk it over together.

At this time I handed in my resignation to take effect at the end of the term on June 1, and set my classroom in order for the teacher who would follow me. It really touched my heart to realize I was saying good-bye to students and a work that I had so thoroughly enjoyed. Tears welled up in my eyes as I closed the door the last time behind me. Don and I, in our *Mother-and-son* closeness, sat before the fireplace in our own home to make our further decisions. I was settled on my new course to go to Africa and teach in a mission school of native people. Don was then nineteen years old, and I allowed him to make his own decision as to whether he wanted to go with me or remain in Harding. If the latter, I would help him stay in school as long as he wished. Naturally he did not want to leave his fiancee, but he never said one word to hold me back. Our decisions there had great bearing on our future, and both of us had much preparation to make in readiness for our separation, the first in his life except for a few days at a time occasionally. He faced it bravely as we set to the task of making changes, though I'm sure he felt it even more deeply than I realized. We prepared for his taking up dormitory life, and the times of holiday breaks would be spent with my parents. Our plans were complete and now remained only the task of putting them into effect.

CHAPTER VIII

A DECISION AT WORK

Paper work and red tape began, of which there was plenty; vaccinations, photographs, passport, visas, church sponsor, travel fund, sailing arrangements, leasing my house, school arrangements for Don, and there was even red tape to the packing of cases and trunks for going abroad. President and Mrs. Benson, along with other missionaries who had gone through these experiences, gave me valuable assistance and advice.

Everything was completed; church sponsor was my home congregation in Dallas, where my parents worshipped; passport was complete, with the needed visas, in my hands, and sailing date was set for July 20. I was to accompany the W. L. Brown family returning to the field and a newly married couple, Alvin and Georgia Pruett Hobby, Harding graduates, all of us going to the same field of labor. As soon as school closed I was ready to hurry off to Dallas for my final visit with my parents. I spent most of June with them and Don. It had been planned that I should meet my sailing party in New York. They were driving through to New York but I was traveling by train.

The day came for my farewell in Dallas. Leaving my mother and father in their home and struggling to suppress tears, I rushed to an early morning train.

My younger brother and Don raced the car down Main Street, for I was about to miss my train. We rushed through the station with my cases to the waiting train. Don and a girl friend pushed me up the train

step with a hasty good-bye as the train began moving. As my girl friend, waving and shouting good-bye and bon voyage, ran along the platform, my eyes, streaming with tears, were drawn back to the spot where I left Don. There he stood, leaning his black curly head against a pillar pouring his very heart out. This departure was one of the saddest steps of my life. That last sight of Don remained in my mind's eye for years to come. I almost wished I could leap from the train before it got up speed and race back and take him again in my arms. Leaving Father and Mother had been hard, but leaving Don was even more shaking than I had contemplated. I think I surely shed quarts of tears before I reached New York. Don must lean on my father and mother for comfort, advice, and the touch of a mother's hand.

I arrived back in Searcy, said my good-byes, picked up the baggage I had left there, and one night after church service about forty friends put me on board the train for New York. These Christians sang "God Be With You" as my train pulled out of the station. So, now I was on my way to a real mission field, fulfilling a desire that was kindled within my heart over fifteen years before.

My first stop was St. Louis, Missouri, where I had a few hours' lay over, and I did some sight-seeing between trains. Proceeding to Washington, D. C., I spent a night and a day touring parts of the city as I had never been to Washington before. This was informative and interesting as I visited the Archives Building, the Library of Congress, the House of Representatives, the Senate, Washington Monument, Smithsonian Institution, and other places of historic note. I had a lovely room in a hotel near the train station; here a girl friend came, that one

night, and we had a nice visit. I again boarded the train bound for New York. I missed most of the beautiful scenery as I went through the mountains at night. For some reason, by mistake, the trainman put me off at the wrong station, Jersey City, and I was compelled to ask a policeman for help. He directed me to a ferry nearby that was going across the river in a few minutes. I could take it and get on my course again. That took care of my problem.

When I crossed the Hudson River, I took a taxi to the home of Lola Jackson. It was not a long distance and from there I could use the telephone and contact my friends from Searcy, the sailing party. The people of the church had arranged to take us into their homes until our ship was in the docks. We spent the week end with the Manhattan church of Christ, and they treated us royally. We did a great deal of sight-seeing and all the church had dinner in the park together; it was such a grand fellowship. My hostess, Miss Jackson, took me to extraordinarily interesting places, Radio City, Rockefeller Center, an opera in the Radio City Music Hall, and special shopping places. The few days in New York were more than enjoyable.

Bon Voyage

On the morning of July 20, 1938, I met my sailing party, the W. L. Browns and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Hobby, at pier 90 where we were to board the huge city on water, the British liner, *Queen Mary*. Many of the New York friends came to see us off. I had never seen a ship before, and with so many turns and movement of the crowds of people I was almost bewildered. With our last goodbyes we climbed the gangplank and stepped aboard,

and the tugboat was soon slowly and laboriously turning this great ship to face the blue Atlantic. All of us had rolls of ticker tape of all colors which we threw, unrolling it, to friends and relatives on the pier. As the ship moved the fluttering strings of tape stretched from friend to friend, ship to pier, breaking one by one the last tie with those we loved and the U. S. A. I had never experienced this feeling before, and it pierced deeply into my heart. I was leaving everything that was dear to me, going out to take a message to a people in darkness. Only God knows how I felt as our *Queen Mary* chugged out past the Statue of Liberty into the deep blue, open sea. Even fear loomed up inside my whole being as I gazed out over the great waves and rollers and I reflected back on the story of the *Titanic.* The thought made me turn and hurry to my cabin, climb into my upper bunk, and there I breathed a prayer to God as I bathed my face in tears. My heart had become weary as I had now been under strain for many days. I put it all into the hands of God, and braced myself to put away sadness and enjoy these new experiences.

I strolled the open deck in the fresh air with my friends, had good meals, read books, wrote letters, and played games for pastime. By noon that first day we were well out at sea, and the staff began delivering ship mail. My friends and loved ones at home had not forgotten me. I received an armful of *bon voyage* letters, cards, telegrams, money, and beautiful flowers. Especially Dallas and Searcy remembered me almost extravagantly. These kind thoughts cheered and braced me for the duration of the voyage. We were on our way to England which would be a five-day sailing.

The staff planned deck games and an evening concert at which I sang "Land of Sky Blue Waters." Other nice numbers were rendered, vocal and violin, and an orchestra played. That English custom of tea-time, mid-morning and afternoon, never failed, sometimes on deck and other times in the lounge or dining saloon. Needless to say, I soon began looking forward to it. I enjoyed the close association with others that it afforded. Since I would soon be in England, I also spent some time studying the money exchange and practicing it by shopping in the ship's store.

July 25 was an exciting day, and I was up early in the morning to see land appear. This gives one real joy when you've seen nothing but water for days. I hardly took time to eat for fear I'd miss something as we passed such places as the Schelly Islands, Bishop's Rock, Isle of Wight, sailboats by the dozens, the king's yacht, and at last docking at Southampton, England. We were swished off the ship into a taxi and to the railway station for taking a train up to London. To me, even the taxi was a queer-looking car and the most amazing thing was the way the driver could wind his way through all the traffic on the "wrong" side of the street. I learned there that he was right and my thinking was only according to the American pattern. Their traffic is opposite our own. Then the train—how different, but how nice and cozy. Our whole party had two little rooms, called compartments, about the size of an average bathroom, all to ourselves. Good couches, tea table, overhead luggage racks, lavatory, coat and hat racks were there for our comfort. Yes, I liked it and we had tea together.

On arrival in London we again took a taxi having somewhat the appearance of a motor stagecoach with a right-hand steering, and we were whirled along with all ease through heavy traffic as the driver took us to the hotel where we had booking. It was a missionary rest home, almost ancient, with family-style lounge, and a dining room with one long, family-style table. All guests ate together, coming to meals when the gong sounded. The hostess served all plates with the main foods and passed them around. Napkins were in napkin rings, and when the meal was finished each guest cared for his own and put it in a pigeon hole at a prepared place. There were very high but comfortable beds. We were accommodated with community bath, large, high tubs, door knobs very large and keys of brass about six inches long.

Our stay in London was truly a wonderful experience to me. Some of the Christians came to our hotel to visit us. We met with the church on a Wednesday night, and I found these English Christians were hospitable, jolly, and filled with love for the Lord.

Our party divided up for touring the city as several of them had been to London before. I very soon learned how to get around, and I took out alone part of the time as there were some special places I wanted to see. There is so much in London I knew it would be impossible to see it all in four days. All of us did what time would permit. Some of the places I visited were Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral dressed in all its gold and splendor, the British Museum filled with world-famous information, Dickens' Old Curiosity Shop with its aged little stairway, narrow, homemade doors, roughly hewn, obsolete stools,

chairs and other things that Charles Dickens no doubt touched and handled. Buckingham Palace was a place of splendor but old and graced with hand-carved stone, surrounded by a high iron picket fence with grill work, guarded by sentry placed every few yards. This was fascinating, and, as the change of guard comes at regular intervals, Georgia and Alvin Hobby and I made it a point to be there at that time. We were filled with wonder at the array of color, the perfect timing of every move, the bagpipes and the mounted guard.

Georgia and I went to Parliament Bridge over the Thames River and to the House of Parliament. We waved to Big Ben as he pounded out his twelve bells at noontime from the top of near-by Westminster. I had heard of the London Bridge since my childhood, had played the game of "London Bridge Is Falling Down," and now here it stood over the Thames River. The historic London Tower was on one side of me and London Bridge on the other. As time was growing short Alvin, Georgia, and I took a hurried tour through the Tower, seeing the old guillotine used hundreds of years ago for beheading criminals or other offenders, of whom Ann Boleyn, wife of Henry VIII, was one. Inside, it almost appears as a tower of horrors so much bloody history is written of its dungeons, prison walls, executions and Traitors' Gate. It is a tower of towers, having Bell Tower, Bloody Tower, Salt Tower, Broad Arrow Tower, and others. From here I proceeded alone to the famous Tower Bridge which gave me a feeling of looking into a storybook. Boats laden with their cargo were passing underneath going up and down the river. I thought I would walk across to the other side and started out. I

had gone only a short distance when a ship up stream sounded her deep-toned fog horn and I stopped to watch her pass under. Just then a policeman whistled at me. The bridge was about to open up for the passing ship and spill me down into the water or on the ship's deck. The policeman only motioned for me to come to him which I did, and I *DID* watch the ship pass through. All the whistling just meant for me to move. I made my walk and returned, got the next bus back to my hotel, hitting all the late evening traffic. It was suppertime when I arrived back at my room and reported to my friends concerning the marvelous day I had experienced.

The day came all too soon for our departure from London. We said our good-byes to the kind little hostess who had done so much to make our stay pleasant and a taxi returned us to the Railway Station where we boarded the train for return to Southampton. There in the dock was anchored *Balmoral Castle,* which was to take us to Capetown, South Africa. We went on board July 29, found nice, large, airy, convenient cabins and all other usual ship accommodations, lounge, library, good food and plenty of open deck space. I soon settled in my cabin, a lower bunk this time, unpacked the most needed things, and was ready for two weeks or more at sea. It was home for the duration of the remaining voyage. It took me about a day to get (what seamen say) my sea legs again; that is the ability to walk firmly and steadily on the rocking, rolling, pitching ship. And this was really the behavior of the *Balmoral* the day we crossed the Bay of Biscay and other days when sea was rough, although we hit no storms. I had mailed letters home in England, now I began writing in diary form for mailing in Capetown.

The ship's staff began preparing for a tournament of deck games for passengers as our main entertainment. I entered several of them—table tennis, shuffleboard, bucket quoits, and horseshoes. I enjoyed going along with it and did go to some of the finals. Evenings were given over to attending entertainments, orchestra, community sing songs, spelling "B" and other activities.

We made a stop at Madeira Island which was a quaint beautiful little world. I went ashore, viewing the park, fruit and flower markets, linen market and factory, patchwork gardens, brooks, and small lakes with graceful swans swimming about, grassy hillsides with grazing sheep, and quaint little women dressed in their soft quilted boots and long, full, colorful skirts, carrying baskets or pots on their heads. After noon when the motor boat came to pick us up and return us to our ship anchored in the bay, I was ready to go, for my feet were literally sore from walking on cobblestone all day. We could hardly get to our gangplank for the little boats of vendors selling their wares and young boys diving for coins which were being thrown into the water by passengers just to see them dive. I was glad to get to my cabin, kick my shoes off, pile upon my bunk, and open the little treasures I had purchased, beautiful hand-embroidered Madeira linen pieces. I looked at them again and then I fell asleep with fatigue.

There was one note of sadness during the first week out of London. A seaman took ill and died. Early one morning he was wrapped in a blanket, weights attached, and was buried at sea with only a prayer offered by the ship's captain. I could only wonder if he had a family somewhere, and if so, what sad news this would be for them.

In our second week the tournament ended and I had won first prize in one of the games. I was presented with one dollar and I went to the ship's store and bought a souvenir, for that would always be a reminder of how hard I had worked for that dollar and the fun I had in winning something. That night they had a dress parade, and I went into my trunk after an Indian blanket I had, took black crepe paper and made a wig with two long braids, got cocoa from the galley steward to use as make-up, put a child on my back, and got a hatchet from a seaman. I put on an Indian squaw dance and won first prize in my division. Another souvenir had to be coming up. The last function on the *Balmoral*, the captain's dinner, which was a nice affair for the passengers, took place when we were near Capetown.

On August 15 we were told that we would see Capetown lights before daylight the next morning. About 4:00 A.M. I donned my warmest clothes, for this is winter season south of the equator, even put a blanket around me, and went to the open deck. In a short while the faint flickering of lights appeared as silver stars on the distant horizon: Capetown. There, all alone, leaning on the rail, I bowed my head as tears of joy trickled down my cheeks, and a silent prayer of thanks went up to God. He had guided the *Balmoral* through the deep for many days without even one hour of discomfort or fear coming over me. How wonderful to see land again! The waters were rough getting around the Cape, but the pilot who came out to sea to meet us at daylight knew the safe course to take. I knew God was with him too, for our heavenly Father had children on that ship. We slowly ploughed our way through a lane of deep water,

buoys bobbing up and down on either side like street lights to guide us along.

We docked about 6:30 A.M., and there were three Christian friends of the Brown family on the pier waiting for us. We went ashore about 7:00 A.M. and these friends took us to their homes as soon as we had gone through customs' office. Here I was in Africa but still a long way from my destination, Namwianga Mission, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).

PART II
PROFILE OF AFRICA

CHAPTER IX

TO THE VELDT

Debarking from the *Balmoral Castle* in Capetown, South Africa, entailed a lot of red tape—a permit allowing me to go ashore, enumerating and declaring every item and every dollar I had on the ship, a tourist visa allowing me to pass through the Union of South Africa enroute to Northern Rhodesia, presenting my passport and immigration permit to the officials, and getting all my baggage to the proper place in the customs shed for formal examination. Some of these things were done on board as we were approaching Capetown. I took my place in a long queue and slowly descended the gangplank until I set foot on the pier and the solid ground of mother earth was under my feet again. What a good feeling with no swaying, swinging, or rocking of my foothold! I followed the queue to customs office to be cleared. In the shed officers were opening up cases over the whole building, examining contents to see whether or not something might be smuggled into the country unlawfully. Some passengers were in a jolly mood, others angry. When one lost his temper, the officers usually turned that fellow's cases up emptying the contents on the floor for thorough examination. When my turn came, I was simply amused and stood watching. I had nothing to hide. The inspector opened my cases, lifted up a few garments and asked about a small box or two containing some *bon voyage* gifts. When I told him what they were,

he didn't even open them but closed the lids and passed me through the gate to the outside. I was free to go on my way.

The first thing I did was to get to the post office and mail letters back to the U. S. A. and call for my own mail. I had an armful of letters from home and was happy. As soon as I found a settling down place, I read and reread the news for several hours.

Our party divided up and we were taken to the homes of the Christians who met us at the ship. I was invited to go with the Browns to the home of a colored family for whom I soon learned to have a very high regard. They were of the particular race known as Cape Colored, a mixture of white, Asiatic Indian, black African, and possibly oriental. This is the predominate race of the Capetown people. This family was quite light in color, so much so that had I not known beforehand, I would have thought they were my own race. This Christian family received us and treated us royally, taking every precaution to make us comfortable. It was a plain, well-conducted household, clean, with plenty of room and good food. This place was my home for two weeks before leaving Capetown. We were compelled to wait for the arrival of a cargo ship which was bringing a car from the U. S. A. for the Browns. So while waiting, we held services nearly every night at one of the two congregations in the city as well as several cottage meetings. I had plenty of opportunity to acquaint myself with Capetown Christians and to see the city. I was taken to a number of places of historic note—the museum, a trip upon Table Mountain, a day's drive around Cape Point, to the seashore several times, Botanical Gardens, Cape

Parliament, and the Observatory, where I really got a close look at the elements one night.

Alvin and I decided, after advising with others, that we should get a car in Capetown and take it to Rhodesia with us, so he and Georgia and I got one of the Christians to go with us to help us find a car to buy jointly. After several days of visiting the Capetown dealers we settled on a used car and made the purchase. The three of us had to take drivers' tests to get licenses for Africa. Learning to drive on the left side of the street and to use the right-hand steering wheel was very important. We amused our instructor a few times, but we passed our test and were ready to start that two thousand miles to Northern Rhodesia. I had met a woman missionary on the ship who was going to another mission in Northern Rhodesia and she was also having a car shipped across, but she couldn't drive. She planned to hire a driver in Capetown to drive her car up north. I made a deal with her whereby I would drive her up country in exchange for my expenses to Namwianga Mission. This would save money for both of us. Hers was a station wagon, and she could take almost everything of mine, leaving nothing to ship. So now all we were waiting for was that cargo ship to arrive with her car and the Brown's. Alvin would drive our own; hence, the three cars would travel together.

The languages of South Africa and the British are very different from our "flat" American speech, so I had to learn a number of new terms. I bought an Oxford dictionary and began learning their use of many words and a variety of pronunciations. For example, I went into a Woolworth to buy some cotton for making a teacozy, a

cover for the teapot. I asked for a roll of cotton. The girl pointed across the store to another aisle. I worked my way over there but found no cotton. I asked again and a polite little salesgirl pointed to a nearby counter. I walked over to it but no cotton. "Well," I thought, "how will I find my roll of cotton." A girl picked up a spool of thread and said, "Here it is." I smiled and replied, "O, I'm sorry. This isn't what I want." And I proceeded to describe what I was hunting for. She said, "O, you want cotton wool." The thread is a reel of cotton. You don't put baggage in the trunk of the car, you put it in the boot. You don't put gas in the car, you put petrol. We used parafin (kerosene) in our lamps. Napkins are baby diapers and serviettes are those pieces of table linens.

One great thrill I had at Capetown was going to the hillsides out of the city to see the magnificent silver trees really glistening in the sun and the thousands of Madonna lilies nodding in the coastal breeze, growing in their freedom and majesty away from man's tools and cultivated only by the hand of God. I stood spellbound as I looked on and was reminded of the scripture, and song, "Lilies of the Field." Only God can make a lily.

The day came for our leaving Capetown and our new friends. We had enjoyed two weeks of meetings filled with a rich spirituality that was uplifting to all of us. Those social gatherings were hours of happiness, friendship, and hospitality when the tea and dainties loaded the tables. This is a *must* in their social life, not a bad custom either.

Leaving our friends, we started on our way north. The Hobbys departed a few hours ahead as they thought

their driving would probably be slower than with the two new cars. I went to the home where I found my friend Lila and her car ready to travel. We went to the place where my things were stored at the ship docks to load a mattress and springs and a box I had shipped. We got the car packed and made preparation for camping part of the time. In getting out of town I got separated from the Browns, but as there was only one road to the north country, I was sure we'd get together again.

We climbed mountains that first day getting away from the Cape, approaching the plateau which we would follow through the length of the continent. At the end of the day we still had not seen the Browns. We stopped in a small town at dark and couldn't find a room anywhere, so we knocked at the door of a house which stood by a business enclosed by a fence. We asked permission to camp by their house, and they kindly opened the big gate and invited us to drive inside which put us almost at their kitchen door. We opened our food box to have a snack, and these kind people brought us a pot of hot tea. With our appetites appeased we crawled up into the car, stretched ourselves out on my mattress and slept through the night. We started out again at daylight.

Wherever I inquired about the Browns, giving a description of their car, I was told, yes, they had passed through. I expected them to stop somewhere and wait for us, but it didn't happen. We left Capetown on Thursday, and we had planned to be all together and stop on the way for one Sunday worship. Lord's Day came and I had no one with whom to break bread. Lila and I read and prayed that morning before we broke camp, but the day was long and sad for me because

none of my brethren were where I could contact them. At times tears welled up in my eyes. Lila tried to comfort me by saying God understood. I knew that, but I did so want to remember Him and His death by the breaking of bread.

We stopped one night at a small hotel where we had a good rest, food, hot bath and a general *refreshing* as we had come across the desert of South Africa which was very hot, dry and dusty. We had no paved roads anywhere, sometimes almost wornout paths, and not a tourist cabin from Capetown to Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia. Lila and I traveled alone for seven days, camping in people's yards each night (people were exceptionally kind) until we reached Johannesburg where we spent a night with a Methodist couple, American negroes, on a mission. Here we had a good bed, bath, hot food and good chairs in which to rest our tired bodies, and a very hospitable host and hostess.

Our next stop was on the border between the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia where we had to go through customs. While standing in queue at the desk waiting to be served, I glanced at the board just above the desk and there was a letter addressed to me. I almost shouted, "There's a letter for me." A man turned and asked which one, and I answered that I was Myrtle Rowe. He said, "Yes, this car passed through yesterday and left this." I quickly took it and read it, a message from the Browns. It told the story of how they thought for two days I must be ahead, and they drove fast trying to catch me. Of course they were getting farther ahead all the time and finally decided we were behind. They and the Hobbys were traveling to-

gether and, since they didn't know where we were, they would go on to Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia and wait at Forest Vale Mission until we arrived there. I was overjoyed to receive this message, and expected to arrive in Bulawayo that night.

The scenery of the whole trip had been rather dreary looking with only native villages, an occasional irrigated small farm owned by European settlers, or a desert bush, but as we neared the tropics, the countryside was showing some green bush, and animal life was bobbing up—monkeys, baboon, small deer, graceful secretary birds, tall and wise looking, striding along the road. Towns were closer together now.

It was nearly bedtime when we arrived at Forest Vale, but we wouldn't stop when the sun went down as had been our practice, for since we were near Bulawayo we both wanted to push on. Words can't express my joy as I was reunited with friends that night. In fact, they had arrived only a few hours ahead of us, as they had encountered car trouble which delayed them for a twenty-four hour period. But we were together again. Bulawayo was the last city of any size that we would pass through; so we took two days for shopping because we would need a few things for housekeeping on the mission. I bought table, chairs, a wood cookstove, wash tubs, a few cooking pots and a bedstead and had them shipped by train to Kalomo where I would pick them up in about two weeks. With all business matters completed, Lila and I left on Friday morning for Kalomo.

We arrived at the Victorial Falls Hotel, a beautiful place, in the evening and we spent the night there having another good rest. As we drove up in front of the hotel,

we parked by the side of another car exactly like our own, even loaded in a similar manner, and tagged "new from U. S. A." as was ours. As we parked the owner of the other car approached and smiled, saying, "Looks like we are twins." We smiled and I answered, "Yes, your car has caused us a lot of worry. We had a friend trying to catch up with us, and it was your car people told him about, and he got farther and farther from us." We had a little jolly get-acquainted meeting.

As we entered the hotel, all was so different from American hotel customs. Black, barefoot natives, clad in starched white, short trousers, and loose, colorless blouses and white caps, received us, took our baggage, and led us to the desk. We were assigned rooms, and these servants brought us tea and cookies as soon as we were settled. We had an excellent menu from which to choose our dinner. Next morning, quite early, a servant again brought a tray of tea before we were out of bed. This was the "before breakfast" or "early morning tea" which is supposed to start the day right for everyone. We really enjoyed all this attention after the hard week of travel we had experienced. Saturday morning we went into town, Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia, where I did my last business, cleared customs for all in the car and also the goods coming up from Bulawayo, and opened a bank account, since this was the nearest bank to Kalomo.

We pulled out of Livingstone before noon, continuing northward for another eighty miles, ploughing through the deepest red sand roads I had ever seen. Sometimes the car would hardly make it, and there were many miles of it. Monkeys darted across the road or up trees,

carrying their babies on their backs. A small deer, called the duiker, ran so close to the car in his flight to safety that I almost hit him. Often barefoot native men or women were trudging along the road, half clothed, carrying large bundles on their heads and babies on their backs, spears and small axes in hands for use in case of danger. There were mud or grass huts along the way where nude children sat playing in the sand until they heard the car coming. They leaped to their feet, ran to the roadside, waved and shouted, "Chinkwa (bread) ticky (money), madam, sweeti (sweets or candy)." Some ran, trying to keep up with the car, holding out their hands for a gift, as the car struggled along in its sandy ruts. This was the kind of people with whom I would work.

We arrived at Kalomo, a small town of about fifteen white people, and several hundred natives in the nearby compound, the area set aside for native houses. The business section consisted of a small hotel, filling station, post office, one European general store, four Asiatic Indian stores, and a railway station. We didn't stop but only took a look at my new shopping center and passed through for another four miles to Namwianga Mission. My heart was pounding as I drew near. I turned into the yard of the Merritt home at about 3:00 P.M. Saturday, September 10, 1938. After our happy greetings the Merritts had the hot tea and cakes ready for us. After our "coffee break" we retired to the car for unloading so Lila could continue on to her destination about forty miles farther north. The yard was full of natives from the mission compound, men and women who had come to greet the new missionaries, three cars

of us. Each one bowed, clapped his own hands, and gave the greeting word "wa-bu-ka" (good morning) as they gave those broad smiles, baring their beautiful white teeth. The men were all ready to lend a hand for unloading, after which Lila took the wheel in her own hand to drive the other forty miles alone. I had taught her a little driving on our way from Capetown. The rest of us were now with our friends and ready to make a new home.

The George M. Scott family and the J. D. Merritts had been on the mission over a period of years except for the Merritts' furlough to the U. S. A. the year before, so the arrival of new workers was a great event for them. The welcome mat was out to receive us that Saturday afternoon. They took us all into their homes until we could set up housekeeping. That night all came together for a prayer meeting and welcome speeches, at which time several natives had their turns also if they could speak English. It was a spiritual feast and the Africans were filled with great joy, because more teachers had come to them. They sang their welcome songs in their own tongue and some interpreted for others as they spoke.

We went to bed late, but happiness to overflowing was in our hearts. Another joy of the evening was the handing over of the mailbag which was filled with loads of good news from my loved ones at home. I had not received any word since leaving Capetown. All was well at home, so I felt at ease.

The next day was Sunday and the way the service was conducted was another new experience. Natives took over, leading the songs in their own language but in

familiar tunes. I sat only humming the tune and thinking of the English words. The song books were small, paperbacked, mimeographed copies of words only; no music. Prayer was in the native tongue. The missionary men spoke, but a second speaker, a native, stood by the missionary and interpreted into the native language for those who could not understand English. The Lord's-table service was conducted in the same way.

The building was an old brick structure, about 40 feet by 25 feet, with a grass roof and dirt floor. The seats were made by driving stobs into the ground and nailing boards across the tops, forming benches. I sat on one against the wall so I had a back rest.

Most of the afternoon was spent in collecting needed items to set up housekeeping, then the evening service. We were up late, visiting again as it seemed we could see no end to our joyous visit with these worthy missionary Christians who were so hungry for firsthand news from their homeland and for fellowship with their own.

Myrtle Rowe.
On ship bound for Africa.

CHAPTER X

MAKING A HOUSE A HOME

Africa is filled with wonders created from its greatest asset, trees and mud—necessities of life and things of artistic beauty on every hand. Two small, three-room brick houses were already in the making for the Hobbys and me when we arrived on the mission. Only the foundation for mine was down, but the other was nearly finished. The bricks were made from ant hill mud only a stone's throw from the building spot. They were molded by hand with native labor; the kiln was built and burned producing thousands of bricks which were then hauled to the building place by ox-cart. The mortar was more of the same kind of mud. The inside walls were smooth gray plaster of the same. All window and door frames, joists, rafters and any other woodwork was rough hardwood from the trees cut and sawn at the Livingstone sawmill. The floors were grey concrete and roofing was corrigated iron sheets, and, oh, what a noise during the heavy tropical rains. Only burlap sacking tacked overhead served as a ceiling. Lime whitewash converted the grey plastered walls into a clean fresh white.

The Hobbys and I moved into the unfinished house together. Having a bedroom each and sharing the kitchen was close contact. But it drew our hearts closer together as the months elapsed.

Our few pieces of necessary furniture had not arrived from Bulawayo; so the other mission families shared what they had and provided us with enough to begin

housekeeping until ours arrived. My one box of household effects—a few pots, dishes, cutlery, bedding, and a mirror—held us together. My mattress and springs put on the floor provided me with good rest. My low bed reminded me of that childhood trundle bed.

That first night in the unfinished house was an eerie one, for I had heard too many stories of lions, snakes, and other weird African tales. With no windowpanes or screens, and no door shutters, I could see almost anything looking in on our reserved rights; a lion, baboon, or a hyena might just dare come in. I had heard he would creep upon a sleeper and snip off his nose, and I certainly didn't want to lose that valuable asset to my profile. Noises in the dark can sound very strange, and there were many unfamiliar to my ears. Even the crickets and frogs sounded different from those of America.

But, strange as it may seem, nothing happened and in a few days we were closed in and I became accustomed to the night sounds and was soon a good sleeper. With only a farm lantern and flashlight in each bedroom we never did reading at night, so retiring early and sleeping until sun-up gave us long hours for the needed rest.

About forty African boys, ranging in age from twelve to twenty years, were enrolled as fourth and fifth graders and all of them used books in English. Alvin began teaching at once while Georgia and I went into the furniture business. Alvin worked at it when he was out of school and proved to be quite apt with his hammer and saw. He converted boxes into very convenient pieces of furniture, especially a dresser each for Georgia and me, even to the mounting of the mirrors we had brought from America. When we brought supplies from Kalomo we

always included as many apple boxes or strong crates as the groceryman could give us or the car would hold. By taking them apart and saving all nails it was surprising to see what good tea tables, stools, cupboards, shelves, and even a wardrobe we could turn out. With a box in the house and the forest nearby, my head began to whirl with ideas. Another piece of furniture. They told me I was box conscious, because every time I saw a box I began telling what could be made from it. Putting sticks and boxes together does wonders and it fits the African setting. My toolbox consisted of an ordinary box filled with quite a variety, like the little boy's pocket—nails to be straightened for use again (for a year we had hardly been able to get nails on the market), screws, wire, hand axes, tin snips, screwdriver, pliers, handsaw, and a hammer. I did the measuring many times and allowed students to help me saw sticks for table legs, flower stands, and some pieces for the girls' dormitory. My poor little handsaw went through the mills, but boys were proud of their master pieces. Sandpaper, paint and a brush did wonders to all our creations. We took months to furnish the house, but what fun we had! You've heard that necessity is the mother of invention. We proved it to our own satisfaction.

The arrival of our pieces of furniture from Bulawayo gave us concern about where to get a conveyance for their delivery. None of us had a car that would carry tables, chairs, and cookstoves and there was no such service in Kalomo. Those native students came to our rescue. They could carry the lighter boxes and the chairs. A borrowed two-wheel ox cart and six oxen would do the rest. Six grown boys, trudging along the forest

road with the ox wagon, each carrying his own small home-made, hand-fashioned ax, proved to be slow but sure with our deliveries. One boy led the oxen and one walked along the side shouting and cracking his eight-foot whip to keep the animals moving. The other boys stopped somewhere along the way and cut small poles on which to swing chairs or boxes to carry on their shoulders. By leaving about 1:00 o'clock they would be back home by 6:00 P.M. On their return to my front yard they wanted to be "pictured." They had seen me before with my kodak. Thinking it well worth the film, I "pictured" them. There on the cart was my table, stove and bedstead, a good load. Each boy had his pole with some piece swinging from each end.

With the unloading finished, Georgia, Alvin, and I were busy until bedtime setting up for proper housekeeping, putting the bed together, placing chairs in convenient places, arranging lamps and dishes. There, too, was my little four-cap wood cookstove, just like the one Mother used in the dugout home in South Dakota. Most of the European women over the country (a term used when speaking of white people) used this same kind of stove, so I was in line with everyone else.

I never ceased to be amazed daily at the initiative everyone used in Africa. With no wells or dams on the mission from which to obtain our water supply, the only solution was to carry it from the small river nearly a half mile away. I had carried or hauled water in years past, but this was too much for me now. The purchase of used, five-gallon kerosene cans with wire handles in the sides and student labor took care of the water supply. But, believe me, there was no wasted water. It didn't

take much for a bath *in the washtub.* Since students were working their way through school, it was conceded that this was the solution for all concerned. When the rains came, however, a big (thousand-gallon) covered tank was set up by the house to catch rain water from the roof, so the water problem was easy for the six months' duration of tropical rains.

There was yet another problem: wood to be brought in from the forest. The ox cart and oxen had to be borrowed again, and wood cutters took a half day to haul in a wood supply; then from day to day boys cut our wood with their little hand axes. They didn't like the ax I bought. It was too heavy. It took a lot of wood for the stove, as this was our only method of cooking, ironing with old-fashioned flat irons, and boiling all water for drinking or kitchen use which was a must as a safeguard for health.

Another job had to be done to brighten life up a little. Those dull grey concrete floors called for something. Everyone used a red wax, so that was what we got too—a cheap polish, made by mixing red ocher and kerosene. What a gooey mess! It was real labor going on hands and knees rubbing it well into the concrete, letting it dry, then rubbing again to polish. Student help came to our rescue again, but the language barrier was a hindrance, as we couldn't speak or understand the native tongue. Georgia and I had to go on our knees and show them what to do. I thought I would never get that red wax off my hands and nails.

I began my teaching as soon as housekeeping matters were organized, taking classes of English reading, singing, and drawing. These people were quite apt in music,

even sometimes improvising their own harmony, and doing a surprisingly good job of it. The American Negro folk songs and spirituals were very special with them. Their harsh, loud voices were far from pleasant, but long, constant drill brought a great improvement.

What about girls? There were no girls in school the first year. It was contrary to all custom for girls and boys to be in mixed classes even in the European schools, so we had boys only at the present.

It was disheartening to see how little material the students had to use in school. The mission furnished a minimum of textbooks, slate and pencil, a small tablet of paper, and pencil; they had no library books, notebooks, erasers, crayons and so many other things that we take as a matter of course. They had no money with which to buy. You would be surprised at their sincere appreciation for the packages of used crayolas, short pencils, erasers, colored chalk, magazine pictures, simple used books, and even all my old letter envelopes cut open to make sheets of paper. American friends had supplied me with packages of these odds and ends of scraps to use in school. Paper bags cut open and all wrapping papers were saved for school use. Slates were usually used for arithmetic and writing practice, making a noisy classroom with the *peck, peck* of slate pencils.

The practice of visiting the African homes on the mission was a source of joy, custom observation, and language practice for me. Wives of teachers or workmen were seldom able to speak any English, but we managed to make friends through our laughter and *hand language* and they helped me in learning their tongue. In your mind's eye you may follow me as I go for a visit.

I work my way down a narrow path through tall grass head high, nearly a half mile, and there stands the first little hut. Each woman has a round structure called home. The houses are all alike, built by putting small poles upright side by side in a round trench, like setting fence posts, tying them together with bark string and twigs brought from the forest. The roof is made on the ground by tying poles together in a cone shape; then it is covered with six-foot grass like we wade through nearly everywhere we go. When this is finished, men gather around and have a roof raising. They lift it by main strength and set it on top of the wall. The women do all the plastering, inside and out, of the same kind of mud with which my house was plastered, working only with the palms of their hands to smooth it out. A small hole is left for a window and also a narrow door opening which is covered with a hand-made, grass mat curtain. These hard-working women finish their dirt floors by pounding the surface with sticks until it is hard; then they smear it over with wet mud and rub it vigorously with smooth stones. Then they let it dry, after which they smear it again, this time with fresh cow dung, which is left to harden. It makes a smooth floor, fairly free of dust until it wears off. Good housekeepers do the last process of smearing about once a month. These wives keep their floors swept with a short round whisk broom which they make themselves with grass and bark string.

As I approach the first hut Mrs. Nawa is sitting on a rock, her improvised chair, stirring some kind of food she is cooking on an open fire in the yard, steadying

the hot three-legged iron pot with a stick as she stirs. The mixture proved to be cornmeal mush cooked quite stiff, their only bread. Her baby is tied on her back with a long strip of cloth making a kind of sack cradle for the little fellow as he wabbles and sleeps with each movement of the mother's body as she works. Mrs. Nawa rises to her feet as I approach and bows well forward, clapping her hands politely in a greeting as she shows a broad smile, exposing her beautiful white teeth. She soon brings a small hand-carved stool and invites me to sit. Her nice clean yard provokes my kindly comment on her tidiness. She invites me into her house and how amazingly clean it is! To one side is neatly stacked against the wall the grass mat and three or four blankets which are spread on the floor making the bed at night. Hanging from a pole of the roof is a small brown suitcase, which, I'm sure, contains some extra precious items like beads, head scarfs, socks, and maybe her husband's Sunday shirt and tie. At another special spot she has hung her own best dress, a very bright cotton print made just for her at the Kalomo store by a native man tailor while she waited for it. Two apple crates stacked together serves as her dish cupboard in which are neatly arranged a few small, deep enameled dishes, two enameled cups, teaspoons, a knife and fork, and her large, wooden spoon and long spatula which has been carved by her husband.

A call was made at each home, and they were all about the same. Visiting them weekly was one of my projects, taking colored magazine pictures for them to put on their walls, Sunday school leaflets with Bible pictures, or cards, all having been sent to me by friends in America. On special occasions a gift of some homemade cookies, a

little tea and sugar, or some fresh fruit won their hearts. This helped to prepare the way for further teaching.

Edgar A. Guest said, "It takes a heap o' livin' to make a house a home. It takes some tears, smiles, suffering, and there must be some children too." Yes, and there must be some grandmas. Georgia went to Livingstone to reserve an apartment and wait for her first baby. My own house next door to Georgia was nearly enough completed that I moved into it and set up my own housekeeping. We made plans together for the new arrival, and it was my privilege to go with Georgia to Livingstone, eighty miles away, to the nearest doctor and hospital. Alvin took over my classes in addition to his own, and Georgia and I went to her apartment a month before her set date. What a long wait, for we didn't know a soul in Livingstone although we found enough interest in the strange town to break loneliness when we weren't too homesick for the mission. At the end of three weeks the Merritt family and Alvin came to see us on Sunday. Alvin decided to come and stay with Georgia that last week, and I would return to the mission and take over the school. On our way home that afternoon, with all the mudholes, soft ruts (rains had been heavy) through the forest, we chugged along slowly, constantly fearful of getting stuck somewhere. When we were about halfway home the tired old engine completely stopped, and all the persuasion wouldn't make it go another inch. There we sat in the middle of *nowhere.* Mr. Merritt tried to find the trouble but had no luck. Darkness was setting in on us, and still we sat. People always prepare for any emergency when traveling in Africa, so out came the teapot and jug of water, wet sticks were gathered and,

after a prolonged effort, we got a fire and had hot tea and cookies. Next came the farm lantern and a large mosquito net (and we certainly needed it) which we hung from the limb of a tree. Blankets were spread and there we camped for the night, just praying that rain wouldn't come. We literally did that very thing for spending the night in the open forest wasn't really to be relished at this time of the year. Of course there wasn't much sleep for us; so at daybreak Mr. Merritt set to work on the engine again. The first thing he touched set it buzzing; everyone leaped up to load into our places and we were off for the road again. With a late breakfast at home, we were ready to take up Monday classes all in high spirits.

"Little boy, David," arrived in due time to join the Hobby family. From then on through all my years in Africa I was the grandmother, or *"Auntie Low,"* as some of them called me, as all the mission children joined our ranks. The Hobbys were soon home, and Alvin took up his duties again in preparation for school closing in May.

Students tied their little bundles, rolled their blankets, closed their dwarf-size suitcases and were ready to start on their ten,- twenty,- twenty-five,- some even fifty-mile journey on foot, each going to his own village. Several came by my house and asked, "May we bring our sisters next term?" *A sister* may mean any relative, cousin, sister, niece, or even one of the same tribe. I gladly welcomed the request, as I had been looking forward to having girls as soon as I had learned enough language to talk to them. More buildings would be needed, which must be put into the between-terms program. A dormitory and classroom for girls would be erected. So the making of homes continued.

An African woman's kitchen.

CHAPTER XI

WONDER WORLD—POTPOURRI

With the rainy season gone each year, school closed, and all students having gone home, I looked forward to going to Victoria Falls, near Livingstone, where I could get a rondavel (round cabin) by the banks of the great Zambezi River and take a rest. There I could sit in the door and watch the glimmer of the last golden rays of evening on the flowing waters as the sun sank behind the palm trees on the African horizon. When darkness settled over us and the moon was at its fullest and high in the starry sky, it was awe-inspiring to stroll along the water's edge, cross the little rustic footbridge, and stand at the brink of the towering cliff above the gigantic Eastern Cataract and see the great sheets of water and white foam pouring into the gorge hundreds of feet below. There a great cloud of mist rose into the air like angel hair winding through the treetops. The roar of the plunging mass can be heard in the far distance, twenty miles or more. Gazing into the chasm one feels as if he can almost stretch out his hands and grasp the strips of ribbon of the beautiful lunar rainbow which is so distinct, clear, and near at hand on these bright nights. When I retired for sleep the thunderous roar of the giant waterfall set my mind to wondering if this was like the voice of God when he spoke to Moses in the mountain.

Awaking at sunrise I hastened outside to feast my eyes on the beauties around me. Yes, the mist was still rising and floating away into space in feathery clouds as it had

been doing hundreds, yes, thousands of years. Monkeys darted across the yard, hunting for bits of food or sometimes they dashed up a tree and swung from limb to limb or hid among the long fronds of the sego palms, where they peeped out, watching for a chance to steal something, probably from our very breakfast plates if we dared turn away. While I sat at the table at the tearoom down by the water's edge, there, too, the mischievous little thieves were striding around, and once I saw a wise-looking "mamma" leap upon a table, grasp the sugar bowl in her two slender hands and take off for a hiding place.

On one such vacation, a memorable motor launch trip up the river one day was well worth the money. The boat took several of us just for a sight-seeing cruise up the main channel to an island which is anchored in mid-stream, for the river is about a mile wide in this area. The island is covered with all kinds of beautiful tropical plant life, boulders, and palm trees swaying in the breeze. Monkeys, baboon, hippopotami, crocodiles, squirrels, and birds are its inhabitants. The boatmen took along a basket of sandwiches, cookies, and the teapot. On the island they prepared lunch while we passengers wandered around watching the hippos as they played and wrestled in the stream and sleepy crocodiles sunned themselves on the sandbars. Long-tailed, colorful birds screamed their warnings of "Go-way, go-way" to the animals of the forest to keep in hiding. The ever-present monkeys scampered about but kept their distance. Lunch was finished and we boarded our launch and cruised back down stream to camp. What a wonderful day it had been!

Salty Bribery

The African winter months of June and July were spent in a few rest periods, and in doing needed shopping in Livingstone; then we were off to the villages evangelizing and teaching special classes, or just visiting and encouraging the native Christians. My main project in this work was to gain the confidence and friendship of girls, their parents, and the headmen, eventually getting more girls into the mission school where work with them could extend over a period of months at a time.

The Hobbys and I loaded the car with food, bedding, and mosquito nets and drove about fifty miles out into the reserve and set up camp at an old mission where we had nearby villages around us. Two native teachers' wives walked with me to different places each day, entailing about a five-mile daily jaunt. For making friends with the older people of the villages a little gift always had its effect; a bar of laundry soap or a handful of coarse salt, like our ice cream salt, delighted every recipient, and when the bar of soap was one made by girls on the mission, that was a prize winner. A chief or headman would accept his piece of homemade soap, look wide-eyed at it, turn it, and handle it, asking, "Will it really wash my shirt?" Being assured that it was real soap, he would turn and walk away with a broad smile, probably to go try it out.

Sunday school cards and leaflets with their bright colors always proved to be eye-catchers for women and children especially, and they would sit on the ground and listen to the stories. Then they received the pretty pictures until my supply was exhausted. They learned that Namwianga Mission was the place where girls were taught

more of the stories, sewing, soap-making, and other useful crafts. The parents took to this idea for their daughters. These efforts continued in the surrounding area for several days as I walked the soles off my shoes. Then one day Georgia and I got some native boys to take us in a two-wheeled ox cart so we could make a six-mile trip to a village school and take two-year-old David with us. Some of the children there had never seen a white child, so he was a curiosity to them. They wanted to put their hands on him, feel his clothes and his soft, white hair. David was never afraid of them but was friendly, and they were pleased at this.

Sad as it may seem, some native parents threaten their children when they are naughty by telling them the white man will get them. In one village where this was the practice, little ones clung firmly to the skin aprons of their mothers, crying or trembling with fear. Some older ones took to their heels and hid in the surrounding thick bush.

But in most places, even the uncomely, dirtiest, and busiest folks were kind, friendly, and always ready to stop and greet us and listen to a story. These visits gained their friendship, and girls became eager to know more. Experiences were varied and amazing wherever we went. All villages were composed of two rows of round mud huts with the customary thatch roof.

Most children up to four or five years of age were nude, older lads wore a loin cloth, and girls covered themselves with bark string skirts or wore a very scant covering of cheap cotton print. In some places the younger women wore goat skins tied around the waist and long pieces of cotton print around the shoulders which also

served as cradles for the babies. In other places showing more progress than their neighbors they wore straight print dresses. At one village where we had a young mission student trying to conduct a small school for the children, only one girl wore a dress. The others used the long cloth wrapped around the body for a covering. Nearly all old women were nude from the waist up and wore skin aprons from waist to knees. Old men were no better covered, but most young men wore shirts and short trousers, which gave evidence that they had been out working somewhere for white settlers. Everyone had short cropped, more than kinky, hair; literally beady knots.

Georgia and I visit the villages.

Goats, lank hungry dogs, chickens, and people lived together around each hut. Dirty cereal dishes, were scattered around on most of the yards where the family had eaten their last meal and the dogs were licking up any remaining scraps; no wonder they have so much disease and high mortality rate. Most women were busy pounding grain, usually corn, in a large mortar, hewn out by hand by village men. They used a five-foot pestile. Some shelled peanuts and others were threshing beans by beating them with sticks. This is the daily life in a village, a hard way of survival, but they are usually a happy people, little fretting over poverty or ignorance. They were hospitable and showed a hearty welcome to white visitors.

A teacher's wife on the mission.

After a week or ten days out it was necessary to return to the mission where the building program was in progress and begin preparation for a larger enrollment at the next term opening in August. There was much to be done in the girls' dormitory and classroom. We broke up camp, loaded the car and headed for Namwianga Mission. It was delightful to be home and sleep on my good bed again. How thankful I was for all the blessings which surrounded me.

Village teacher's house.

It was also during this season of the year that camp meetings or lectureships were scheduled at which time village Christians were invited to bring their blankets and camp on the mission for a week and attend classes and lectures taught by the white workers and native teachers. At these times we women conducted classes in Bible, hygiene, some hand sewing, soap-making, and child care. This also helped mothers in deciding to send their daughters to the mission school.

Mooka.

LONGHANDLES

I hope God forgave me for my rudeness that cold July Sunday. Natives have no heat in their houses and their clothing is scanty. Mr. Scott had given some garments to one of the bricklayers, an old man. Among them was a suit of what we sometimes refer to as "longhandles." When I arrived at church and took my regular seat, there sat Daga, the old man, straight in front of me wearing the longhandles. He wore knee-length trousers on top of them, but those long, white legs reached to his ankles, meeting the tops of his heavy canvas shoes. Yes, he was warm and I was glad, but chuckles choked me through all the service. It was truly a funny sight, and I still hope God forgave me for my frame of mind that day. From head to toe, this was his complete attire: a hat, big orange necktie, brightly colored shirt, an overly tight short brown coat with sleeves about three-quarter in length, light brown cotton short trousers, white legs of longhandles, short bright green socks and heavy brown canvas shoes.

MR. PUMPKIN

Here we are with borrowed oxen again. My garden had to be ploughed and this was the only method available. It is what most of the white farmers used, for very few tractors were in the country. The boys got the six animals in their yokes and worked in the new ground for a while, but it was so hard and dry that the oxen got tired, and one decided to lie down and rest. They are very stubborn animals and move pretty well at their own gait. The boys struggled an hour or so trying to get this one on his feet again, but he only slightly flinched under the beating and pulling of his horns, ears, and tail.

But Mr. Pumpkin, that strong-armed plough boy, put him on the move when he stooped down, picked up the tail and bit down on it with his big, sharp teeth. The ox leaped to his feet and set out to run, only being slowed down as the boy with the plow set it deep into the turf.

A Guest in My Private Parlor

What would happen next? Was it a lion? It was something to be sure. Rather early in the morning on going out to my pit latrine (there were no modern conveniences) as I approached the door out leaped a big, greyish animal, and he measured his length as he heeled it out through the grass. My screams perhaps hastened his steps as he did his best. "A lion or a hyena," I thought, but a quick look before he was out of sight revealed to me that it was a mangy little jackal about the size of my terrior dog. I chuckled to myself when I realized how big he looked at first sight. Suddenly I was aware that he was as frightened as I.

Lovely

The use of student labor often brought amusing mistakes. This lad named himself Lovely, and don't ask me why, for I have never figured it out. He was a clever boy and delighted in helping turn boxes into furniture. He made some of those shelves, tables, and cupboards that were so useful in my house. He even made some pieces for his dormitory. Tools delighted him. I can't say what my handsaw was like when he finished. He also liked to cook. I used him in this way for several months. One day I was called away from the house to another piece of work, and I put out some prunes and also some navy beans for him to put on to cook for my

lunch. On my return he had taken me at my word (that language barrier), and there they were boiling away in the same pot, a new recipe. Ever try it? I got them separated in time to save them, although they were not so tasty.

Remnants, Morals, and Moya

That coughing at my back door in the early morning meant something special. My hasty step soon revealed four girls about sixteen years of age who wanted to enroll in school. Their only possessions were some items tied up in a small towel and two cotton blankets each. With the exchange of smiles and greetings we became friends at once. They had been to school on another mission, so they were in the third grade and able to speak a few words of English. In a matter of days they were adjusted and settled in their new dormitory and learning was in full swing in their own classroom separate from boys' school. Georgia and I worked with them and had especially long sewing periods in order to get them a school dress each. I spent many hours at the dormitory with them at night having our worship period, and we just sat around their little fires talking. They were learning English, but I was also getting practice in their language. In a few days two other girls came, and then others, until we had twelve. It was a profitable, happy year for all of us.

These girls remained at Namwianga Mission several years and our school continued in a gradual, happy, healthy growth. We bought material by the bolt for their school dresses, bought two Singer hand sewing machines, made cutting tables, had cooking classes,

hygiene, housekeeping, Bible, singing, and evening vespers, and the academic classes of spelling, reading, arithmetic and writing. Friends in America, on many occasions, cleared out their machine drawers and scrap boxes and sent it all to our class—remnants of materials, lace, braids, edgings, thread, buttons, and even used garments to be made over. Creations from those classes were many—aprons, children's garments, book bags, caps, blouses, small patchwork skirts, little pillow cases, and other useful items. We continued in this routine for several years, and growth was so much that it was necessary to secure a native woman teacher and train her in our own way of conducting this girls' school. She was a little older than most of the girls, had finished the sixth grade, and was a good girl, so she quickly applied herself and took responsibility.

My first sewing class in Africa.
At work in my porch—1939.

Bringing girls to the mission brought new problems that shook me. One night about midnight I was awakened by a great commotion of shouting and a frantic call for me. "Madam! Madam!" The girls' dormitory was a few hundred yards from my house. The first thought entering my mind was fire or a snake. I leaped out of bed, grabbed my robe and houseshoes, got into them and ran as fast as my feet would move. On my arrival they explained that a boy had knocked at their door and when they remained quiet he went to the high window and started climbing into their room. They gave him a push back out and he fell to the ground and ran as they shouted for me. So to make them safer from these night intruders, heavy wire net was put over the windows, and later a high, heavy mesh fence had to be put around the whole compound. It was hard to catch or identify black people in the dark, but sometimes it was done, and it always proved to be some school boy. These incidents happened time and again over the years, boys trying to get into girls' sleeping quarters. Morals are low and every precaution was taken to protect girls, and we never had a tragedy to happen. This was what taught me the reason for the custom of having no mixed classes. There were perhaps bad girls in school, but there were enough dependables to help keep the less desirable in line.

A boy even tried to get into my house one night. It really frightened me. I awoke, crept off my bed, and crouched low, going from window to door as he ambled around the house picking at screens. His identity seemed reasonably sure, but it wasn't clear enough to nail him. I finally shouted at him to leave and he ran. I dashed

out the door and into Georgia's house and gave the report. Alvin and Mr. Merritt went to the boys' dormitories and tried to find a missing boy, but he was faster than they were. All boys were in their blankets and seemingly asleep. But the boy who was suspected and whom the men had queried left school in a few days on his own.

As years passed, and girls were being troubled once or twice ever year, we finally built a house near the girls' dorms and put a long-time Christian teacher and his family there to help. This solved some of my problems. Then in later years it was decided to try putting girls and boys together in classes for their academic work, and the girls' domestic science and other special work would continue as usual. The new efforts improved the quality of the work and increased the enrollment at double rate. Some very fine housekeepers, mothers, and teachers have come out of those years.

It required long hours to serve as teacher, nurse for the ill, work supervisor, and housekeeper for myself. Sometimes, looking after the sick, giving them medicines, or taking them to a doctor became quite a chore. Some of the native ills could baffle all of us. They had one which they named "moya," which they diagnosed and treated in their own way in the villages. When that hit on the mission, it didn't take long to get acquainted with it, for there were several cases from which to get a lesson.

Late bedtime: I had just relaxed and was reading in bed: Rap, rap at the door; who was it? Two girls: "Madam, Jane is very sick."

"But what hurts her?" I called out.

"She crawls like a snake and cries. She has moya" (a spirit). That explained it. This was not new to me anymore. When we arrived at the dormitory, there she was on the bare floor squirming laboriously and sobbing deeply as she groaned and twisted her body. A crowd of about thirty girls had gathered into her room and all were sitting on the floor watching her. Stooping over her, I spoke firmly, "What's the matter, Jane?"

"Moya," she replied as she sobbed. We helped her get on her blankets over in the corner where she had neatly spread them for the night. A few minutes' talking calmly to her quieted her down. All girls except her roommates were sent to their own rooms, and in a few minutes she fell asleep. The candlelight was put out and I returned home. In a short while here they came for me again. Jane was crawling. Mrs. Short, a co-worker living next door, went with me this time to see this case of "moya." On our entering the dormitory there she was writhing, twisting, as if in pain, sobbing even more than the first time. The room was full of girls again, seeming to sympathize by showing their presence, while one vigorously washed lux soap into a small basin of water. My query of why the soap, she replied, "But she wants it to drink. She has moya."

"But you don't want to give her that!"

"Yes, she wants it," she continued, and never slackened her soap-washing. She gave Jane a cupful which she swigged down as if she were famished. When she finished we lifted her to her blankets and I sat on the floor by her side rubbing and massaging her back, neck, and muscles to help her relax. She was quivering like a bundle of nerves, but the massaging gradually quieted her and she

fell asleep. Leaving her with her roommates, I returned to my own bed as tired as if I'd been working. Next day she was normal except for looking somewhat washed out.

Another case: The girls called me to Rhoda. It seemed that she had fainted. Here the girls came with song books, saying they must sing to her or she would die. She was unconscious, but their treatment was not permitted. We bathed her and kept her quiet for several hours and she was well of "moya."

Saliya came up with the same ailment in another form: very despondent, sad or "a case of *blues*," as we say. This time the girls said, "We must beat her on the head with a Bible. That will cure her moya."

"No, you won't beat her with a Bible."

"Her mother had moya and died," they said.

"Did they beat her with a Bible?" I asked.

"Yes, they beat her on the head."

"All right," was my reply, "they probably beat her to death. No, you're not going to beat this child." We left her alone a few hours and her *blues* wore off. Other workers in the villages had similar cases or worse. It usually proved to be nerves or an upset over something. Time and quietness was our treatment for moya.

CHAPTER XII

LESSONS ON INGENUITY

"We are rich. Our hearts are happy. We don't need anything." These were the expressions of appreciation coming from the girls as they arrived for school and found new dormitories completed for them. It was so much better than the huts they left in the villages, they were completely delighted with their new home, called the compound. If you should go with me on a tour, this is what you would see.

On a spot about one hundred by three hundred feet stand two small dormitories, a classroom, a small kitchen, bath house, pit latrine and a new five-room dormitory, an addition we were in dire need of. This was the last dormitory completed, and all of us were very proud of it. The kitchen, bath house, and latrine were made of poles and mud according to village pattern. Their cone-shaped roofs were built first on the ground, then hoisted by main strength by the boys and set on top of the walls. The girls did the floors also according to their own customary way, as had been taught them by their mothers and grandmothers. All the dormitories were constructed from bricks which were made on the mission mostly by student labor in their industrial classes or for a small wage. The small dormitories and classroom were the first ones built for girls, but we grew until the walls were bursting out; then came the new five-room building. From the beginning these brick dormitories had good thatch roofs which hold up about ten years. Also concrete floors were put in these structures; walls were

plastered with mud and whitewashed, just like the finishing in my own house. The small dormitories accommodated about ten girls each and the large one would take care of about forty, making space for about sixty students.

What about furnishings? They were not accustomed to having furniture, and neither did we have money to buy it for them, so their usual native ingenuity took care of that problem. Poles swinging from the joists by means of bark string or wire served as hanging places for clothes. Dress hangers were made of clean sticks with bark string tied in the middle, then attached to the big pole hanging from the joists. Box cupboards made by the boys gave storage space for their enamel dishes and cups. The girls had never lived on nice, smooth floors like the concrete, so this, too, was a treat. There were no beds to be sure, but with our purchase of cocoanut mats (a kind of coarse carpeting) on which to put their blankets at night, they considered themselves lucky to have such good pallets. They huddled together for warmth and slept soundly. Making the bed in the morning took little time as they only folded and stacked blankets neatly in the corner and rolled the mats and placed them against the wall to one side of the room. All the small windows were covered with bright print curtains made by the girls in sewing classes.

The ground around the buildings had to be scraped and swept clean in order that snakes not find a hiding place near the dormitories. The girls make their own brooms for this cleaning and sweeping of all the buildings. Each Saturday in early morning, all girls go out a path leading through the six-foot grass on their way to the

forest to gather wood for cooking on the open fire during the following week. Each one gets a large pile of sticks together, strips off some green tree bark for tying her bundle, hoists the heavy load to the top of her head, and the whole procession returns to the compound.

They take their turns cooking. The *number one* food is a very heavy cornmeal mush cooked in a large, three-legged iron pot, like our old-fashioned wash pot; number two is a relish in which to sop little balls of the mush. Relish means greens, beans, meat and gravy, mushrooms, or other vegetables, perhaps from the school garden. The greens: well, that means pumpkin leaves, sweet potato leaves, casava, and in hard times even mulberry leaves. When mealtime is over, each group of girls eating together must wash up their own dishes and put them in in the box cupboards.

Another Saturday job is the laundry work. Each one ties up her own bundle of garments, especially the school dresses, and her own bar of soap for laundry, and the long line files down the path to the small river where scrubbing and beating on rocks makes quite a show. The clothes are ready for some needlework after slapping rocks with them. Before leaving the river they do their bathing and spend a little while fishing with handmade baskets, catching a few minnows which will make their choice relish for supper. Back to the compound: ironing is next in order as soon as clothes are dry. This is done with charcoal irons, box-like irons in which they put deep red coals of fire. They are soon hot, whereupon girls spread blankets on the concrete floors and do their ironing here until bedtime, girls taking their turns with the several irons.

Water Barrel

With new dormitories and increased enrollment each year, six months in a stretch with not a drop of rain, and the creek over a quarter of a mile away, the water problem was acute. During the long, dry season each year (about April to November) even the creek would almost go dry and the water wasn't fit for human consumption. Girls carried their water in big buckets on their heads for all house use and went to the creek for laundry work for several months out of the year. Then, during the six months' rainy season, the tank that stood beside my house caught enough water from my roof to supply all of us if we were saving. When rains ceased, it was necessary to lock the tank to keep water for my own use until rains returned. Action had to be taken to solve this water problem.

By means of student labor a determined effort began for digging a well by hand with picks and shovels. The ground was extremely hard for some feet down so the work went slowly, but steadily. They had no conception of keeping walls straight, so I sat on the ground at the top to guide them. September and October are called the suicide months because of the extremely hot sun just prior to the coming of the rainy season. With a pith helmet on my head and holding an umbrella over me to give all possible protection, there I sat at the top with a long reed in my hand, pointing out where to dig next, a hot, tiresome job which continued for three or four weeks, working each afternoon when the boys were out of school. (Upper grades were in school from 7:00 A.M. until noon and lower grades had classes from 1:00 until 5:00 P.M.) But we were rewarded with a fair water

supply at about fifteen feet. At least we could sink a good sized bucket. Now this had to be walled up before rains set in or the walls would cave in. Boys took wheelbarrows and brought in rocks from a hillside and the rock work began. The long reed still served me as a pointer; the rock work was completed, and we beat the rains. There was enough water, though only a surface pool as it is called, and we had to ration water and wait sometimes for it to run into the well again when it was drawn dry, but it was a great help. When the rains came, it filled to the brim and stayed full through the season. Boys brought poles from the forest and covered it and made an opening for the bucket, then hinged on a lid, so the water was fairly clean and safe.

A Record Concert

My teaching of the music classes was a source of great pleasure to me, but it had to be simple melodies and hymn singing. I got hungry for some better music, but there was only one way to have it and that was by records. The old partnership car from Capetown had seen its best days; accordingly, Alvin Hobby and I agreed to sell it. This money went into the purchase of a bicycle and Victrola each. A catalogue from Bulawayo supplied every need and the choice of records satisfied my hunger. When the order came, I could scarcely wait to hand wind the new machine, get a record going, and turn my ears to *BLUE DANUBE*, selections from *Faust, Carmen, William Tell, The Student Prince, Show Boat,* and others that I hadn't heard since I left America. This was music that I loved. Many were the evenings

spent sitting before the fireplace, aglow with flickering red flames and crackling silvery sparks which escaped up the chimney to the outside world in the brisk, chilly July darkness. A tray of marmite sandwiches and hot tea on one side of me and the portable Victrola on the other (taking close surveillance over keeping it wound) broke the loneliness and gave me many hours of peace and rest after a long, hard day as I revelled in these melodies.

But the bicycle: I had never been on one in my life, so a new learning process was in vogue for me. A bicycle seemed to be a necessity with my work scattered over so much territory. The days weren't long enough to walk it out. Taking the bike in hand, I pushed it to the top of a half mile grade, got a girl to help me get on and give me a start. I was soon rolling at top speed and couldn't move my feet fast enough, so I lost my pedals. Balance was kept by waving my feet in the air like a stunt rider, but I assure you this was an accidental stunt, especially when that bicycle arrived at the bottom of the long grade and it didn't know how to put on the brakes and stop. Somehow it turned into the ploughed ground and threw me, flattened out, into the sandy soil, unhurt except for a few blue spots. Here came the girl who gave me that powerful push. When she was assured there was no injury, we both sat together in laughter as she tried to apologize for laughing at my accident, saying, "Madam, forgive me for laughing, but you looked so funny flying." No more riding that day, but the next morning, with just one effort, that bicycle behaved properly and never threw me again throughout the years.

Peta in the Kitchen

"Fire, Dow, fire! I smell smoke! It's the house!" said Mrs. Merritt to her husband, Dow, as they both bounded out of bed early in the morning. Natives are always curious to see what the European's house looks like inside and to see the wonders of a stove on which to cook all food. Dow had told Peta to come make the fire in the stove that morning. Dow never realized that the boy had never seen anyone make a fire in a stove. Peta examined this wonder and found the largest door, opened it (the oven), and there was plenty of room to make a good fire and put in lots of wood. Dow (in pajamas) stood stock still in the kitchen door, and his wife, wide eyed, stretched to look over his shoulder at Peta's adventure. Dow helped him remove the fire and put it into the firebox while Mrs. Merritt opened up the house and fanned smoke; Peta's first lesson in housekeeping for the white man.

Retrieved from Trash

An item of real value to another boy was his latest craft, a school bag. His initiative and a white woman's extravagance had turned up his prize. He had been to some garbage can and found an old-fashioned corset with all the stays and the long string. "What is this?" he thought. He didn't know what it was but his active brain soon found use for it. He took it home, sewed it up at top and bottom with sinew thread, made handles of bark string, and he could even snap it closed at the top. "Eureka," there he had a book bag. The long string turned out to be a twisted belt for holding up his own trousers. What a find he had made! I had a hard time controlling my "tickle box" that day.

It took two years of consistent study to even begin to surmount the language barrier. Alvin, Georgia, and I made up the class, and we studied each afternoon for some hours, the first year with a native teacher, then had homework at night like students in school anywhere. At the end of this first year I began working on my own and lost no time during the vacation months. Village work and association with the natives forced me to practice. This faithful study paid off through the years in Africa. The next year I studied three days a week with a teacher and worked on my own the remainder of the time. At the end of this formal study the three of us did some translation work and Bible story writing, tracts, and other lessons to be used in our work. Alvin proved to be valuable in helping translate the Bible into that particular tribal language, the first ever to be done. My main project was the preparation of a new hymn book and adding new songs to what we already had. Being able to understand Bible readings, prayers, and songs and to carry on conversation made my association with the native people much more enjoyable than having to go through an interpreter for everything.

A teacher and wife on the mission.

Building dormitories.

Embarrassing Errors

"Press the pig and bury the pants. Was that what she said? Something like that. I guess so, white people do such crazy things," thought Noah that Saturday afternoon. He was helping Georgia (Mrs. Hobby) with her ironing and she gave him Alvin's (Mr. Hobby's) trousers to press for wearing to church next day. Mr. Merritt had also given little David Hobby a baby pig. It had died, so Georgia gave Noah the second job—to take the dead pig out into the tall grass and bury it. Then she went visiting and left him to his tasks. Next morning Georgia hunted everywhere for Alvin's Sunday trousers and they weren't to be found. They were really wondering if the trousers had been stolen. Monday Noah came to work and Georgia asked, "Noah, what did you do with Muluti's (teacher, a term always used by natives) pants when you ironed them?"

"I threw them away in the grass," he replied. "I thought you told me to do that."

"No, that wasn't what I meant to say. Go get them. Let's hope the termites haven't eaten them." He brought the trousers in and there was no damage, but this was one of many mistakes made because of language barrier. She drew a sigh of relief.

Errors can be embarrassing. Was my face red? A boy was helping me in the house each week, especially on wash days, and he knew where I kept most of my clothes. This was before I had trained girls to help me. Two girls came asking me for something and the request was beyond my comprehension in spite of all my efforts. Pointing to item after item got me nowhere, so this boy

had to interpret for me. The girls showed their amusement when Mujuku was called to the scene, but they told him what they wanted. He showed some embarrassment and said, "Come, Madam, I'll show you." I followed him to my wardrobe where he pulled out some of my undies and said, "They want this." With a red face and a laugh, I replied, "Oh, they want clothes." Shyly he answered, "Yes, this kind." Language difficulty, you see.

Helpful Husbands

The most shaking experience thus far was a confinement case that nearly took me off my feet. A teacher's wife on the mission had *"flu,"* and during its peak she gave birth to a baby boy, about an eight-month infant. The husband and a fellow teacher (man) in the night served as midwives. The next morning the husband came to my house and asked me to go see her and the baby. I asked him if they were all right. He seemed to think they were. It was always hard to teach the African people that the hospital was a good place for sick people. They were afraid of doctors. Hospital service was free to natives and there was a hospital for their convenience about forty miles away. Georgia and I went to see her and what we found was pathetic. There both of them lay on some dirty blankets spread on the dirt floor. Neither of them had a stitch of clothing. She was very sick with pleurisy in one side. The baby was alive but cold. Georgia took over the little mite to care for it and wrapped it in a little blanket she had brought. I took over the mother to do something. The husband would not agree for us to take her to the hospital, so I asked him to take her to the girls' dormitory where I could

nurse her. He gave his consent and we put her on a cot; boys carried her to the compound and we put her on a small bed, bathed her, and put a dress on her. Girls were appointed to look after her in my absence.

Here I got more surprises; sick as she was, she simply would not stay in bed. She got up, sat outside in the chilly wind, even washed her body in cold water out by the house in the wind. The baby died that night and the father, with the help of students and teachers, had a prayer service and buried the infant about midnight. It was wrapped in a little blanket and a shoe box served as its casket. I thought the husband would have her to bury too, but they are rugged. My treatments and care, the best I could give to one so hard to keep quiet and in bed, somehow brought her out of it. After about five days her husband took her back to her house, hauling her in a wheelbarrow which was no harder on her than other things she had done. The next day she was doing her own cooking, and in three days she was carrying her own wood and water. This was only one case among many that I saw in Africa over the years I spent in that country. It is easy to see why they have such high mortality rates. But today they are believing in hospitals and doctors. Many will go, now, for medical help as never before. Witch doctors are fading into oblivion.

CHAPTER XIII

HOSTILE WATERS

Cablegrams continued coming: "Urgent. Mother in hospital. Come if possible." "If you see Mother, you must come soon. Weakening daily." The year was 1943, a long, long stretch since 1938 to remain in the tropics without a furlough. But it was these cables that set an emergency for me. Much had transpired during those years: Mother's health had gone down, and doctors had given her only a limited time to live. My Don had married his college sweetheart, Mildred Tyler, and they had a baby daughter. War was covering the earth, becoming more vicious by the day, and I feared for Don's conscription as all these thoughts surged at my heartstrings. Every letter from home told of Mother's grave condition.

The girls' dormitories were full of students and it seemed impossible for the other workers to take over my load, but a plan was worked out and a couple from another mission came to help take the burden. To obtain a sailing with any shipping company seemed futile. The answer from every inquiry was, "No sailing." "We take no passengers." "Only in emergency do we make bookings." Mine was accepted as an emergency after they received copies of my cablegrams. This gave me encouragement at least, but still no promise from any shipping company. Native girls came over to my house voluntarily and prayed with me, and co-workers had special prayers in my behalf. With a final letter from Capetown a cargo shipping company informed me that they would take

me when they had a place, and they advised me to go to Capetown at once and wait for any quick call. It didn't take me long to break up housekeeping, pack some things for storing and put my work in order for turning over to Georgia Hobby and the new workers coming to help her. My cases were all packed and a cablegram home informed the family that I was on my way but as yet knew nothing of what ship, date of sailing, route, or how long I would be at sea. They understood military and shipping secrets because of the war. It would be a dangerous voyage, even possibly brushing with death, but Mother's love, and letters of encouragement had meant too much for me to let her down. Faith in God's guiding hand would lead me to her side. He could care for any ship; He said, "I'll never leave thee nor forsake thee." Then, just before leaving the mission, I received another cable: "Shows some improvement. Still eager for your return."

Nearly three months of negotiation and red tape with shipping companies, and I was ready to go. It was Sunday, 3:15 P.M., October 24, 1943. The train was in the station at Kalomo, Northern Rhodesia; students and co-workers were on the platform with me; the last prayer was said and girls held my hands weeping as if I were being buried, as they slipped their own little notes and pennies into my hands. The last good-bye had been said to those with whom I had been working, both black and white. With my eyes blinded from tears I boarded the slow African train and stood at the window waving until the train was out of sight around the curve. This was my first lap bound for Dallas, Texas, and that Mother of mine. I went to the compartment alone where I read all those little notes of sympathy and love

from my tender-hearted "children" as I, too, poured out my heart.

On arriving at Livingstone, Sinde Mission, friends met me, and we had a few days' visit before my continuing the journey. Then one night they saw me off for Capetown, a four-day train ride. Friends met me at my destination and took me into their homes where I was to await a passage. I'll never cease to be thankful to those good people for so much kindness shown me during five weeks of restless waiting for notice of passage.

After I had reported to the office several times, with telegrams and letters, the agency called me into a conference and offered to send me to Durban, South Africa, where I could catch a cargo boat that was to drop anchor for a short time at that port but would not be coming into the Capetown docks. It was a two-day train ride to Durban and I arrived there December 13 and was taken to a beautiful seaside hotel which overlooked the bay where the ship would drop anchor. All officials were kind as they took me through the red tape to get on board. A small bag was my kit, filled with papers and lifeboat supplies in case they should be needed. All instructions were given to the ten passengers, as we went on board, in preparation for any emergency at sea. Seven of the passengers were American missionaries having to flee some war-torn area, some from the Congo, one from Ethiopia whose mission had been bombed out and whose wife was killed. This little group assembled by the seaside early in the morning on December 18, where a small motor boat received us and took us, shortly after sun-up, out to the *Wascana Park*, anchored in the bay. We climbed the gangplank on a beautiful Saturday morn-

ing, boarded that new Canadian ship which was on her maiden voyage, bound for Vancouver. The ship's cook took the single missionary ladies of the Christian Church and me to our place, a nice, clean, all white, roomy cabin, choice location in midship with electric fans, private bath, clothes closet, and new bedding, all much better than we had expected on a cargo ship.

It was about eleven o'clock before we lifted anchor and put out to sea, leaving the city slowly fading from our view on the blue horizon behind us. When the gong sounded for lunch, everyone was on hand, but by the time the evening meal was served, several were absent (that dreaded seasickness), but not for me. Mealtime always found me at my place. The shipping company didn't make much profit on boarding me. The sea was rather rough, having giant land swells for three days as we sailed around the African coast. We hardly realized the rolling and pitching of the ship until dishes and silver began sliding off the tables. We made grabs, saving a few spills, then table rails were put up after a mass of broken dishes and pancakes stared up at us from the floor (deck). The sea quieted after we rounded Cape Point and headed into the Atlantic. We were too far out to observe any portion of the coast as we passed Capetown.

Christians in that city provided my two missionary cabinmates and me with wafers and wine to have for our services during the voyage. We had our daily worship and broke bread together on Sundays, when we knew Christians were gathered at many places over the world also remembering the Lord's death. We knew hundreds of them were praying for our safety. I had never heard more beautiful prayers than those uttered by the Cape-

town Church when I was departing. Dangers at sea didn't trouble me much. I was at peace in mind and felt that no harm would come to us for God was our pilot. According to regulations, we were given the life jackets and emergency kits to keep near at hand, had regular lifeboat drills, and sailors were at their posts of duty keeping alert and in readiness at all times for any sign of danger.

On our second Sunday at sea, about 2:30 P.M., a ship appeared on the horizon, and all the crew rushed to their gun stations and took signal orders. The two ships were becoming suspicious of each other as signal flags were lowered and raised and lights flashed. All passengers were leaning on the rail, missing nothing. Our sailors could not interpret some of the signal flashes from the distant ship. Soon our Captain turned to speed away from the approaching ship. It was surely an enemy coming on to us. Guns were mounted all over the ship, but the Captain preferred to try outrunning them. But when he turned the other ship also quickly changed course and was almost immediately abreast of us and it, too, picked up speed. It was soon in position and its gunner fired a green flare directly over our bow, landing on the waves splashing our sides. This was a warning shot which meant stop at once or they would take immediate action.

The Captain stopped and our apparent captor headed for us at top speed. Of course we were all wondering if we were in the enemy hands. Our eyes and ears were glued to the gunner as it approached; all was quiet and faces were grim. I slipped away to my cabin and quietly prayed to God to guide all hands in this action. On

returning to the deck to join my companions I saw the boat was near enough that the countenance of the sailors could be read. They, too, were grim and silent. They were dressed in fatigues, so we could judge nothing from uniforms. As they pulled in by our side there in the bottom of their boat lay a kit at their feet which read, "U. S. Navy." Our hearts leaped with joy as we shouted, "Hello, sailors. Hello, America!" Perhaps it helped their feelings, too, but they had to come aboard to see our Captain and examine the ship papers. The rope ladder was lowered and they climbed to our wheelhouse, went through their routine and cleared us to proceed on our voyage. A mistake had been made by our own signalman which had aroused their suspicion and caused all this inconvenience to both parties. They were patrolling the sea on look-out for an enemy ship that was known to be in the area.

On Christmas Day the Captain gave us a nice turkey dinner with all the trimmings, gave out his greetings and treated his ship crew to their "happy water," which caused some inconvenience and hampered some of the services which were due the passengers, but we managed for ourselves. Then on New Year's Day there was a little shortage of some foods and the crew didn't get their demands all satisfied for they drank too much at Christmas. So there was discontent among them.

Early on January 6, 1944, land was sighted and all passengers eagerly leaned on the rail gazing as mountains appeared on the horizon, like hazy clouds, gradually becoming more distinct as we neared the coast. After about five hours we pulled into the bay at San Salvador, Brazil, and dropped anchor. It was restful to sit quietly

once more and gaze over on land, see life on the beach, and city activities of passing trains, street cars, and donkey carts. Fishing boats full of dark-skinned natives with their novelties, little monkeys, and caged birds raced toward the ship, pulled in by our side, and each vendor tried to out shout his competitor as he extolled his wares. This activity continued all day as buying and selling went on over the ship's rail, exchange being made by dropping money into the hands below. Ropes were tied to merchandise to lift it up to the deck; mostly crew members participated in this trade.

This was an opportunity to mail letters, so my most important task of the day was writing letters and sending them to shore by crew members. Letters went home and to Harding College, notifying them of my safety and of my where-abouts. I knew all were anxious about me. It was not possible for me to hear from them, so only time would reveal news concerning Mother. October 25 had been my last message from her, just before I left the mission. Only prayer gave me peace of mind. My letters were gone to the posting box over on shore, but passengers were not allowed to leave ship at this time.

When night came, passengers sat on the open, cool deck watching city lights flicker and the movement of other ships in the bay. It was one such evening in that harbor that a band on board an American ship near us gave a concert on their deck. It was wonderful to hear them and that was my very first acquaintance with *WHITE CHRISTMAS* and I loved it. At this time we were free to have lights and open portholes, the first since leaving Durban, South Africa, because we were required to sail in complete blackout from sundown until sun-up

for sea safety. The Atlantic was infested with enemy submarines.

On Saturday passengers were given shore leave and we three ladies (my two cabinmates and I) took a motor boat and went to the city where we spent the day. The beach marketplace was filled with dark-skinned people, mixed races of Negro, Indian, or Portuguese, selling foods or changing money. Before leaving the ship the Captain warned us to watch our handbags and the money changers, and when we set foot on shore we saw why he gave that advice. They swarmed around us to make exchange of our dollars and the crowd gave good opportunity to purse snatchers. We pushed them aside and took an elevator which carried us up a mountainside to the city street level. It was a revelation to me to gaze up and down the thoroughfares and observe an ancient-looking city in such a modern world as we have. Streets were lined with Spanish architecture and open front shops on the narrow sidewalks. Small, open street cars were numerous with only benches on which to sit or hang on to as the car bounced along narrow, rough streets. Donkeys lazily wabbled from side to side as they were being pushed along by barefoot riders clad in colorful, baggy shirts and trousers, and with big sombreros on their heads. Those patient animals were making deliveries of merchandise such as chairs, stools, small tables, baskets of smaller items, and foods. We strolled and stretched our necks.

Suddenly we were hit with wonderment; there, right before our eyes, was a real American ice cream parlor. We hastened inside and ate until we were quite satisfied. The proprietor spoke limited broken English and the

place was filled with American servicemen. As we wandered through shops, we bought a few little things to take home. The whole day was spent taking in the sights and, in the late afternoon, we returned to the water's edge where the motor boat was waiting to take us back to the ship. We were glad to be on board again as corns, bunions, and calluses were declaring a loud annoyance from that all-day tramping on cobblestone or other rough surface. But we could say we had seen a bit of Brazil. We kicked off our shoes and hit the bunks.

On Sunday, after we had our worship, some of the ship's staff took us out in a lifeboat to a nearby beach for more sight-seeing while they were fishing. We appreciated the thoughtfulness of these gentlemen, and we enjoyed the trip as it gave us a little break from our close quarters on board. It had been one month since we left Durban, and we had no idea how much longer we would be at sea.

Monday morning ships began moving and shifting positions in the bay. Something seemed to be astir. All were cargo ships or oil tankers, and their flags showed what countries they represented: U. S. A., Canada (our own), Sweden, Norway, and other allies. We soon found ourselves moving but yet no information had been given out; military secrets!

By noon all ships were in position, eight of them, pulling out to sea in convoy bound for somewhere north, we knew not where.

At this time the Captain revealed some news to us. The American destroyer which had stopped us out in the Atlantic that Sunday (never to be forgotten) had been

hunting a German blockade runner bound for Argentina, and they found it and sank it about an hour after they left us. A feeling of deepest thanks filled our hearts that we hadn't met that enemy ship.

Shortly after leaving Salvador seven other ships joined our convoy making fifteen. Ours was the only ship carrying passengers, so they put us in the safest position for greatest protection in the convoy. We were too far out from the coast to see land, but it was evident that we were sailing along South America going northward. It seemed that all possible protection was being given—airplanes came out to observe us several times a day; a blimp (balloon ship) hovered over us all day long; five speed escorts kept with us, and two destroyers guarded the sea on our right. Passengers watched and counted every ship, or protector of any sort, I think every hour, to see who might leave us. We watched flag signals for pastime until we learned the meaning of some. The days were long, but how thankful we were for this God-given protection and a chance to count and watch maneuvers. Much of my time was spent in reading books from the ship's small library, knitting, and painting a few pictures of scenes along our way.

The first few days out from San Salvador were very unpleasant. Some of the crew hadn't received all they wanted to drink at Christmas and New Years, or while in Salvador, although some of them were almost too drunk to make it back to the ship, and one man was left behind. The head steward wasn't on duty for two days. These men felt that the Captain should have put more on board while we were in port. We passengers had to look out for our own food with the help of a young second

mate who let us into the galley (kitchen). Also food was running low and there was little variety on board. The Captain, too, had spent much of the ship expense allowance to buy spirits instead of food. When he should have put on new supplies at Salvador, he brought only potatoes and grapefruit on board. The fruit was being locked up to hold it for passengers only, and this angered the crew so they proceeded to break into the pantry and pour creosote over the whole lot. The steward attempted to salvage some of it and serve it, but we couldn't eat it. We watched all that fruit go overboard and float away, being gobbled up by sharks, seagulls, and other sea creatures.

As we drew near the equator the heat was terrific, and it was almost impossible to sleep at night inside the cabin. The men put hammocks out on deck for us where we could get the sea breeze. There we sept for several nights, swinging away as the ship rocked to and fro. Ocean waves rose and fell, splashing against the grey vessel, and soft breezes whispered their lullabies. We had plenty of time to count the stars, study the planets, talk of home and Africa or just lie and think before closing our eyes in sleep. At the break of day after one such night I was awakened by a light scrambling on deck directly under my hammock. Quietly lifting my head and looking beneath, there I saw the chief engineer sprawled out, fully clothed, and still asleep. My heart pounded until I wondered if it might arouse him. I lay there rigid for several minutes before the old man again stirred, slipped to his feet, and sneaked away, thinking he was unobserved. It was learned that the old fellow had been drinking earlier in the night, and he couldn't sleep in his

cabin either, because of heat, so he was hunting a cool place. He had been too drowsy from drinking to know that women were on deck.

It was January 23 when the Captain revealed the near approach to Port of Spain, Trinidad Island. Passengers scampered like children to the ship's rail to watch for the first glimpse of land. We knew it must be true for all around us flocked seagulls, sharks, and other seafaring animals which always keep rather close to land. We didn't wait long. Mountain ranges appeared on the distant horizon and in about five hours we anchored, just as the sun went down, at the water's edge at the foot of a towering green-clad mountain. No shore leave was given but the ship took on fresh water, oil (it was an oil-burning ship), and food supplies, working around the clock from that Saturday evening until Monday morning at daybreak when we again turned out to sea. This time we were nine ships and our escorts.

It was only a short run of two days this time and land appeared again. On inquiry we were told it was Curacao Island to the north of South America where we would drop anchor again to await sailing orders, and get more supplies. We arrived at this little Dutch-owned, coral island in late evening January 26 and pulled inland through a long channel because of danger in the bay. There, hidden away in the middle of a Dutch setting, we dropped anchor at Willemstad. This was known as a little bit of Holland and they had named it well for the whole island was like the pictures of Holland that one always sees—canals and boats, tea-rooms latticed in from hot sun, yellow, pink, blue, and green houses with their clean shining windows just off the sidewalks. The

island is about seven miles wide and thirty miles long, having mostly Negro population. The predominant religions are Catholic and Dutch Reformed. A tour of the island revealed signs of poverty and one mission school, limited agriculture, and grazing.

The little shops where we visited were interesting, and here, as in Brazil, little English was spoken, so when we purchased our novelties the sales people always called an interpreter. It was interesting to me to note that these interpreters were Negroes in almost every case.

Docking in Willemstad gave me another opportunity to mail letters back to Africa, to my beloved family, and to Harding College. Because of censorship, messages must be expressed with caution, being sure not to reveal any ship action. At this time the Captain told us that we were going through the Panama Canal and might stop at Los Angeles at which place we could debark if we so desired (the ship's destination was Vancouver). Now, just how could this message be sent home? My mind was set awhirl. What about George Pepperdine College? That was it, of no military significance. The message went to Mother, Don, and George S. Benson at Harding College. All these knew Mr. Pepperdine, so they would get the message code and spread the news. The message: "I'm quite well. May see George Pepperdine before the last of February." That did it, as I learned when I arrived home. It was announced at Harding College, the Searcy church, and Dallas churches, that I was landing in Los Angeles sometime in February. Still no word from Mother. What would I find?

Early in the morning things were astir on deck. Great cables were lifting two massive anchors, one on each side

of the ship, engines were roaring deep down in the very bottom of the ship and smoke began rolling from the stack. Sailors were shouting, "Aft," "To the bow," "Astern," and the Captain was calling out orders in code. We were moving, turning, and pushing our way down the channel going out to sea again. The pontoon bridge, which had closed us in from the enemy-infested Atlantic, swung around and we slipped through the channel mouth out into the Caribbean. The peaceful, quaint little Dutch town of Willemstad with its spires and gables was left behind; red roofs and chimneys faded away as we moved over the watery horizon westward toward the Panama Canal. We were sailing all alone now except for one speed escort. This meant we were no longer in dangerous waters, which was a relief to our minds. Five days of slow, steady sailing brought us to Panama very late in the evening, and we anchored again as the ship was too late to enter the Canal. No one was allowed to go through at night. Next morning, very early, officials came on board, took over our ship to pilot us through lock after lock while engines running on rails out on either side pulled us by means of huge cables attached to the ship. Sketching with pencils and painting was the order of the day for me, with all the beautiful cliffs, fernery, flowers, tropical bird life, and trees on either side almost in arm's reach in many places. Little green islets reached up out of the water in wider places; then again we slowly glided through narrow cuts in the mountains; a whole day to go fifty miles (the length of the Canal). Late evening as the sun sank into the Pacific we glided through the last lock out into the ocean to proceed on our own. It gave a slight feeling of

weakness to see no escort, no blimp, no plane, nothing to protect us. We had been under their surveillance so long it was a bit disturbing to be alone. Like a child going out without mother his first time turns to wave good-bye to her, so did we wave to our last little speedy escort.

We were soon notified that we definitely would stop at Los Angeles; so now there was really something to look forward to. Watching the mileage chart and atlas, and counting the days, was a pleasure. The route this time was near the coast line and mountain peaks loomed up before us dimly on the horizon most of the time. One night as we sat on deck breathing in the Pacific air, thinking we were out of all danger, war flares were shot into the air from somewhere, lighting up the sky like daytime, and they kept coming nearer our *Wascana Park*. Now what? The Captain himself had received no warnings, so he didn't know its meaning. He summoned all men to their gun stations and warned passengers to get their kits and don life jackets. All orders were followed and we half way wondered if we were coming face to face with Japs in these waters. It became extraordinarily bright around us for several minutes; then came a period of fading away. It appeared again to be the U. S. Navy on a search, and when they came near enough to see that it was a Canadian ship, they turned and left us. We never received any further news about this incident, but it certainly gave us a weak feeling low in our stomachs.

As we slowly chugged along day by day most of the entertainment was furnished by flying fish, porpoises, sea gulls, tuna, and sea turtles three feet across. Reading and knitting occupied much of my time. The Pacific was rough but not stormy. For two days waves were so

huge it seemed that they were trying to swallow us up as they leaped completely over our mast. They knocked several two-hundred-pound barrels of oil around on the deck as if they were mere gallon buckets, and bent the ship rails to which barrels were chained. Everyone, even crew members, stayed inside cabins.

On the morning of February 14, Los Angeles appeared in view. Tears of joy and excitement filled my eyes as we drew nearer in the afternoon. It gave me a feeling that swimming the rest of the way was possible if it became necessary. After sundown we anchored in the bay of San Pedro too late to go ashore that night, so we slept on board again. Rather early the next morning immigration and customs officers came on board and examined all our papers, passports, and baggage and cleared us. It was past noon before red tape was finished. At last a motor boat came to receive us and take us ashore. Waving good-bye to these traveling friends brought a feeling of sadness to our hearts, for all of us had shared something and had something in common which, somehow, had drawn us closer together through these weeks of fear and nervous tension. We seven missionaries disembarked almost four months after my leaving the mission and more than two of this time were spent at sea under constant strain and stress. The *Wascana Park* vanished from sight as it continued on toward Vancouver.

As I set foot on the U. S. soil again, I wanted to drop down and kiss the sand under my feet. We three ladies went to a cafe the first thing to get some good food, as we hadn't had a balanced meal for a very long time, but only a bare existence. Milk, lettuce salad, good meat, green beans, and apple pie had never tasted so extrava-

gantly delicious in all my life before. Next were the telephones. It took only a few minutes to get Mrs. Coons whom I had known quite well at Harding, now teaching at Pepperdine College. At the sound of her voice my hands trembled as I held the receiver and told her who I was. She exclaimed, "Why, Mrs. Rowe, I thought you were in Africa!"

"I was, but I'm here now in San Pedro," was my reply, as I burst into tears of joy. "I want to get out to the college. We've just come off the ship and I'm on my way home." She gave me all the directions and said she would meet me at the streetcar line. We ladies parted at this point with our good-byes. They, too, had located their friends. That *noted streetcar* was soon speeding its way, carrying me to Pepperdine College. As we stopped at our appointed place, I saw Mrs. Coons was there waiting for me. Once more Christian friends took me into their fold. No one need ever remind me of how unkempt I looked, I know without being told. Even if I had ever so good an appearance when I left Capetown, being on board a (not-too-well-kept) war cargo ship for over two months with the very minimum of baggage and conveniences was no asset and did not improve the personal appearance of the ladies.

Mrs. Coons took me for supper and what a good meal it was, and such a joy to sit quietly in Christian fellowship again. The College President and his wife took me for the night and arranged for my booking out of Los Angeles on the first train next day for Dallas. He sent my urgent messages to all my family and to Harding College, notifying them of my arrival, and when my train would reach Dallas, where Mother was still waiting for

me. Letters also were mailed back to Africa where friends were anxiously awaiting news from me. Visiting the school and sitting in chapel next morning was a time of peace for me. That afternoon my host put me aboard a pullman and bid me Godspeed.

As the train went through Tucson, Arizona, there was a short wait, so my sister Eula and brother Orvin met me. We only chatted on the platform while the train was in the station. I couldn't stay to visit them at this time as Mother was first. They told me more about her and of her improvement. The arrival in Dallas was February 18, 1944. Here my dear old father, looking very thin and grey, with others of the family, met me. When asked, "How is Mother?" they assured me that she was much better but thin and weak, just waiting for me. I burst into tears of joy to hear their voices and these words again, and thanked God for keeping her for me until I could hold her hand in mine. When we arrived at the house, I quietly slipped into her bedroom, hurried to her side and dropped on my knees, as she threw her thin arms around me, crying, "Myrtle, Myrtle." Through my tears I assured her that I had come to stay by her as long as she needed me, and I did.

CHAPTER XIV

A PRICELESS PEARL

She was up in her own easy chair several periods through each day, walked over the house, and smiled as she told me all that had happened during my years of absence from her. Yes, Mother was one with great determination and didn't give up easily. At times her face was drawn as she endured her suffering with the patience that few have. The coming of cards and visits of friends meant so much to her. During the first three weeks after my arrival she slowly gained strength. This gave me a chance to do some badly needed shopping, renewing my wardrobe. Being unable to properly care for clothing and general appearance over a long period of time, as had been my lot, can be hard on a woman's morale. I looked nearer a hundred years old than fifty. It was probably embarrassing for my family to claim me as belonging to them. So this replenishing gave me the desired lift.

Don and his family lived in Oklahoma and I had not yet seen them; so on Mother's insistance other members of the family took over, caring for her and relieved me for a visit with them. It was a happy two weeks, much too short. A lively, blue-eyed, blond three-and-a-half-year-old little girl can really pull at the heartstrings of her grandmother. But Mother needed me most, so it was necessary to return to her. Her condition remained about the same, but rest for her was broken at night as she suffered and sat up to obtain relief. This also meant little unbroken rest for me.

In May it was necessary to again leave her in other hands for a few days while I went to Searcy, Arkansas,

on business matters concerning my home. It was near the close of school and students would soon be scattering. Arriving at Harding College in time to see old school friends and especially the faculty with whom I had worked, made this trip an enjoyable occasion. Being with the J. N. Armstrong family, Benson family, and the many church friends gave me renewed spiritual food.

July and August were trying days with extreme heat and Mother was growing weaker. She certainly would not be with us a great deal longer. Nothing short of a miracle would make it otherwise. It was not possible to ever leave her alone, and only for short periods at a time did I leave her with others. Just to take a bus ride to town and window-shop and to bring some little gift to her gave me a break about once a week. She loved, most of all, the small scripture plaques which I bought, and she wanted them on the wall near her bed. These were her favorites:

"The Lord knoweth them that are His."
II Timothy 2:19

Only one life,
'Twill soon be past,
Only what's done
For Christ will last.

"To me to live is Christ."
Philippians 11:21

"Jesus Christ the
Same yesterday,
and today and
Forever."
Hebrews 15:8

In early August it was evident that she was fast slipping away. Don and family came from Tulsa to see her for a few days; Orvin, my brother, and family came from Tucson, Arizona, for several days but, since all had their jobs and we did not know how long life would hold her, they returned to their homes. Loma, my sister, came from Kansas City. On August 26, while she held Mother's hand and I bathed her parched lips, death released her from any further pain. Her spirit soared away to God and, on August 28, 1944, that body of cold clay was laid away in Restland Memorial Park at Dallas, Texas. Cancer, that dreadful enemy, had worked its way and had taken her from us. Many were our tears, but now as she lay in peace I felt like David: "Now he is dead. Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him. But he shall not return to me." Never would I want to call her back, but all of us could go to her. A prayer of thanks went up to God that I had been given the privilege of soothing her fevered brow during those last six months.

Yes, Mother was gone and our family ties were broken for the first time, and now we must make new plans. That mother loyalty had held together this family of nine. Now we must gather around our father. He needed us more than ever before. They had been loyal companions for forty-eight years and he would miss her and be lost without her. Father could not live alone, so our homes were opened for him. He didn't want to leave Dallas at this time; therefore, my two brothers living there opened their homes to him. All business matters were cleared up and each family returned to normal life, but this circle would never be exactly the same without our mother.

PRECIOUS PEARL

(Contributed by a friend)

She was the girl Daddy married,
He would never have picked another;
Many times she had been our sunshine;
She was the pearl we called MOTHER.

She was a lady of virtue,
One whose true beauty is rarely seen.
Without this woman of character
Our home has been minus a queen.

CHAPTER XV

NICHOLAS BIDDLE

Soon after Mother left us a plan began to unfold, though I was not aware of it, for *Nicholas Biddle* to serve as my conveyance from the Sears Roebuck toy department to a school teacher's sphere of activity again. But first there must be some preparation for that return to my long-ago chosen vocation. I had been tired since long before leaving Africa. My face was lined with marks of weariness.

There had been no rest for me since my arrival in the U. S. A., so the next few months, spent with Don and family, were filled with the joy of getting acquainted with my one grandchild. I joined her imaginative world and became one of her playmates. From August until Christmas with them was complete rest and happiness.

But life such as this couldn't go on indefinitely, and there was work waiting for me somewhere without doubt. In January a visit to my Alma Mater (Harding College) pulled at my heartstrings. On returning there it, too, had changed. It wasn't quite the same. On August 16 a great spiritual leader had been taken from them—J. N. Armstrong—who in years past had been such great inspiration to me. It was hard to realize he wasn't there. But to be on the campus, live in the dormitory, associate again with Harding teachers and friends, and tell young people about mission work in Africa was my pleasure and work until April.

War was still in the main headlines of the papers. A telegram came from Don saying his draft had come.

It was a fearful thought, for one war had taken toll of our home; now would this one take my last? The first train out of Searcy took me to Oklahoma to be with him during his last few days at home. Helping Mildred, Don's wife, and her child, Jean, break up housekeeping and move to her mother's, just as I had done over twenty years before, was no easy matter. Within less than a month Don was settled at Tyler, Texas. Mildred left Jean with her mother while she went to Tyler to find work and be with him. I returned to Searcy, taking over the occupancy of my home again. In June Don developed pneumonia and nothing could hold me. It seemed as if the very pattern of years ago was being followed. But it took a turn and he came through, passing the danger point; so I returned to Oklahoma, got Jean, and brought her home with me. My father came to spend the summer; so from then until August was a delightful time having Jean and Father with me.

Another telegram said Don was getting a medical discharge, and they would return to Muskogee, Oklahoma, at once. "Bring Jean there to us." So Father, a self-sustaining man, kept house alone for a few days while I took Jean back to her parents. Soon after my return home President George S. Benson of Harding College approached me about teaching in the training school that winter. This was a happy surprise to me, as idleness had always been one of my *pet peeves*. The year was a happy one; Father was content with me, the school was a great pleasure. Don had entered college in Oklahoma and was pleased with his set-up.

Urgent requests came almost weekly in early spring for my return to the African work. Every letter was

filled with, "When are you returning?" So when school closed in June, 1946, preparations were pushed for an early return to my post in that field. There were the usual steps of obtaining a passport, visas, proper packing, storing, renting out the house again, getting travel fund, finding a church sponsor, and obtaining a sailing. Everything at home and family affairs seemed to be in order for me to leave them again. The war was over; Don was settled in school and Father wanted to return to Dallas.

Booking on a ship was as hard as when I came home, for most of the ships were tied up in transporting troops home after the war. Several attempts were made to obtain booking for me and a young lady who was going with me. We weren't getting anywhere with letters, so we used other tactics. On October 1, we went to New Orleans to park on their doorsteps until they had a vacancy. We were fortunate to obtain an apartment at a very minimum charge for whatever time we needed it. Temporary jobs were not common, but some government offices called for just what we needed. This clerical work lasted six weeks, but still no sailing, for a dock strike was the hold-up by then. With the temporary clerical jobs finished, other work had to be found. Being near the holiday season and my being an experienced saleslady quickly gave me employment in the Christmas rush of the Sears Roebuck toy department. At the end of one week a friend came to me there and asked, "Would you like to go to Africa tomorrow?"

"I surely would," was my quick response. "What time tomorrow?"

"About noon tomorrow. The *Nicholas Biddle* is in docks now and they will take you," he informed me.

That night our apartment was in a whirl with packing and calling my family and friends to break the news. The Downtown Congregation at Searcy was my sponsor; so a quick visit with them by phone was my last contact with Searcy. Having a little extra money had enabled me to make a few special purchases of badly needed items to take back with me—a new bicycle, books, rhythm band instruments, and other teaching materials. I had received gifts of a sewing machine and an easy chair, but it was all on the docks ready to be loaded on time. When I arrived at the wharf, there stood the grey cargo ship, *Nicholas Biddle*, ready to take me to Capetown. On the night of December 1 we turned and headed down the Mississippi River on the way to Namwianga Mission again. The New Orleans church had been especially kind to me during my stay with them, and as I waved to them out on the wharf, my mind could recall nothing more they could have done for me. Emotions overcame me as they faded from my sight and the flickering city lights seemed to say, *"Bon Voyage."*

It was early morning when *Nicholas Biddle* ploughed its way through the last islets, past the last sugar cane brakes, out of the Mississippi mouth into the Gulf of Mexico. We passed Key West, went around the east end of Cuba, then turned, angling across the Atlantic straight for Capetown. The only passengers were four ladies and it was an orderly, well-conducted ship. Very little drinking and no drunkenness came on the scene during the voyage.

The most spectacular thing during the month was Christmas on board ship again. The Captain gave us a special dinner and we ladies made ourselves very much at home, creating decorations from old magazine pictures handed us from the ship's library. We cut, painted and pasted like school children preparing their own tree decorations. A few little gifts of whatever we could find in our luggage were exchanged. Cameras came into action for the main excitement, making it a pleasant day. In the evening we gathered upon the bridge with the ship's staff and passed the time singing hymns and carols, and I believe those men really enjoyed it.

The sea has many interesting things if one just takes time to sit on deck and watch it. Sea life is always bobbing up in the wake, as these man-made devices, namely ships, disturb the waters where the animals sleep, eat, and play together. As if to have a game of hide-and-seek in the masses of marine plant life, dolphins, turtles, flying fish, man-of-war, jellyfish, starfish, sea cat, and many others sport themselves. There is an abundance of this activity all through the tropics, especially along the equator.

Regular boat drill was a part of the routine, at which time passengers put on life jackets and took their stand at the appointed lifeboat. Fog horns sounded every five minutes night or day when traveling through thick fog or heavy rain squalls. Reading, knitting, writing, and deck tennis took much of my time.

On December 31, 1946, came the first glimpse of land since we rounded Florida and Cuba. In the distance, barely visible, appeared the flat top of Table Mountain, 37,000 feet high, overlooking Capetown. As we drew

near, we could see the white cloud, hanging above her, which is traditionally called the tablecloth. When we were about ten miles out, the usual tugboat came out to meet us, bringing customs and immigration officers and a pilot to take our ship into port. These officers began clearning what we had on board, and about 5:00 P.M. *Nicholas Biddle* docked at the pier.

Looking over the rail below me, I saw that frail little woman, Mrs. George M. Scott, who first helped me set up housekeeping at Namwianga Mission. This elderly couple had moved to Capetown for health reasons. A cable to her from New Orleans had given the approximate date of this ship's arrival. There she was, waiting for me. The gangplank was let down and my feet were again on solid ground. It took an hour or more to reach her home by train, but what a happy rest for me and the young lady with me, who had experienced her first sea voyage. Mr. Scott sat in his easy chair waiting for us, and a warm supper was soon on the table.

After a few days in Capetown visiting with friends, we boarded the northbound train for Northern Rhodesia and the work which awaited me. We made an overnight stop in Bulawayo and Salisbury with the missionaries in those cities and then again at Livingstone for a one-day visit and hurried on to Kalomo, arriving at noon, January 17, 1947.

Three of the mission families were at the station to meet us; so, with all hands at the task, it didn't take long to unload our baggage and get out to the mission where long tables were spread with a good dinner under the beautiful shade trees. On every side, wherever eyes could see, there were beautiful flowers of such an array

of color and aroma that one could not help seeing that God was there. Only Africa could furnish a garden so colorful; only Africa could give us all those fruits and vegetables that adorned the tables; only Africa could put so much into one spot as was on the yard that day; loving Christian friends reunited in one heart and aim. Yes, and even the clean, shiny, black-skinned friends came during the afternoon, bringing welcome gifts of their own—eggs, peanuts, fresh mealies (corn), a chicken, tomatoes, or maybe cabbage. It was a delight to see many students who were there when I departed for the U. S. A. three years before. The whole afternoon was spent in visiting. Then in the evening all gathered in the lounge and we had a prayer meeting of thanksgiving, after which we retired about midnight. It had been a wonderful day back in Africa. I was ready to take up my post of teaching again.

Several days were spent getting my house in order again—unpacking and putting things away, cleaning yard and trimming shrubs; then classroom work began. For more than a week people came from the villages to "greet" me, as they express it, and to bring welcome gifts; mothers with babies on their backs, fathers of girls in school, village teachers or just village people who knew me; all came. The building program had continued during my absence, but my work was still spread out so my new bicycle which came on *Nicholas Biddle* with me was uncrated and put to work. The easy chair was rendering an appreciated service too.

By the end of the first month all classes were running smoothly. I had the usual English, reading, singing, grammar, and the special girls' classes in sewing, cooking,

homemaking, and personal hygiene. A native teacher's wife was helping me, especially in dormitory duties. Girls were having academic classes with the boys, for we didn't have teaching staff enough to operate separate schools. The government had agreed that we try this, and it simplified our building program.

Everything had grown while I was away, even the grass and weeds which made good hiding places for snakes. The yard had to be scraped clean, but it takes time to get all this done. One day I darted out the door to hurry off to school, letting the screen slam shut behind me. Suddenly I thought of a book that I wanted. I quickly turned again, opened the door and set one foot inside. Something was squirming under my shoe. Glancing down, I saw a cobra wriggling to free himself. Before he bites, this snake spits his venom, as a warning, at the eyes of his enemy. Holding to the door and lifting my weight off his body, I screamed as he calmly crawled out the door onto the ground. I shook with fear as I reflected, "Did he bite me? Did he spit at me?" I felt no aftereffects. At this moment a boy came running and saw the snake. Not until he was pelted with a stone did he spit, but we were both a good distance away, so his venom didn't hit us. I had never before seen a calm cobra. They are always on the defensive. You wonder, now, how he got into the house. So do I, but I have the thought he climbed a shrub that was against the house, then got on the ledge over the door, slithering just under the iron roofing. When I let the door slam, it jarred him from his narrow ledge to the floor. It didn't take long to get the shrub cut down. This was a narrow escape.

The government inspector, a native educational director, made his visit that term, and it was good news to me when he gave his report. He said they would help us get a home economics building and give a teacher grant for girls' work. I asked, "Do you mean for my native teacher?"

"No," he replied, "I mean for you. I guess you can use a little extra money, can't you?" This was a happy surprise to me. It was only twenty dollars a month for the calendar year but it continued coming through my remaining years on the field. It helped a great deal in the purchase of class materials for the home economics classes. It was never used for any personal effects, but only for buying what was needed for girls' special work.

Spider asked me one day for a paint can. On my inquiry as to why he wanted it, he said he would make a lamp. A few students had small farm lanterns but not he. He took the can; when he had it finished, he brought it to me, asking for oil. He had cleaned it, put a hole in the lid through which he inserted a rag string to serve as a wick. He received the oil, put the lid on tight, and then lighted his lamp to demonstrate for me. Abraham Lincoln had nothing on Spider. This was his means of light for night study. Later, pressure lamps were furnished for a study hall at night, one for girls and one for boys. This was a great boon to them.

At the close of the school year we had open house and invited visitors to see what had been done in handwork and cooking classes. Their display included knitting, crochet, embroidery, hand stitching, machine work, patchwork garments, grass mats, sisal mats, baskets, and other things. Refreshments of tea and cookies were

served by the cooking class. White neighbors and friends, native teachers' wives and African relatives came and expressed appreciation to the girls for their work. Such things as book bags, little bonnets and dresses, aprons, and knitted neck scarfs were sold and the money was put in a fund for purchase of materials. This was a big day for the girls and their eyes brightened with every word of encouragement given them on that occasion.

Another important day gave them encouragement when a civic club of European women invited the girls' chorus to sing for them at a Kalomo meeting. They sang Negro spirituals, *My God and I*, and the African anthem. They did a pleasing program and received many expressions of appreciation from the ladies. It was a joy to me to see how well they were received and to observe the happiness in their eyes. This closed another school year. The girls left in May for their villages where they would help their families harvest corn, beans, peanuts, rice and other small grains.

School girls on the mission.

CHAPTER XVI

FROM SHOE SOLE TO CABOOSE

Transportation methods offer variety of interest, excitement, bumps, and bruises in Africa; shoe leather, ox cart, bicycle, twenty-mile-per-hour passenger train, and the sawmill caboose were my experiences in one season of village work. School closed on the mission; dry season was at hand, heavy tropical rains were gone, and it was time to visit village churches and schools. There was no danger of water-soaked camp or high flood waters during the dry season, so several of us took off for the bush. The Hobby family and I, going by train to a siding, made Sinde Mission our first stop, where others joined us. The men got together and packed suitable camp supplies of foods and bedding, got native help, and mounted their bicycles for the first stretch. They rode when they could and pushed the loaded bikes as they trekked through the forest paths from village to village for several days. During their absence some of us women made a village a day, visiting those in the surrounding area. Georgia and Joyce had little children, so someone remained at home with the babies while others took gifts of salt, soap, simple medicines, or pictures and visited women of the villages. We found many mothers harvesting beans, corn, peanuts, or other foods, but they always took time to find some kind of crude chairs for us. Then they would sit on the ground and chat with us. They brought their children with sore eyes and common colds and asked us for medicine. Some women were busy pounding corn in large mortars, or sifting and cooking stiff cornmeal

mush, their bread, on the little bonfire by the hut. All entertaining was done in the yard in the open air. Huts are used for bedrooms, not living rooms. They live outdoor lives.

We found plentiful occasions for use of our medicines, even illnesses we could not treat. We faced at least two cases of leprosy, one isolated from the village and the other still with her family. In some places there were visible signs of beer making. Their beer drums could be heard as far away as the mission every night, long after we were in bed. Not many in these villages were Christians and few could read; so we left no literature, but invited them to come to the mission to church services.

After about a week of this kind of work, the men returned and we had services on the mission over the weekend. On Sunday afternoon preparations began for a long camping trip the following week. Alvin, Orville, and his wife Augusta, and I were to go on Monday to Livingstone and head from there to other villages. Native students left Sinde with the ox cart loaded with camp supplies, bound for Livingstone, twenty miles away, where they would meet us Monday morning. The sun, peeping through the treetops that morning, found us skurrying around the mission gathering Bibles, film strips for a sunray projector, tracts, special foods, cooking pots, walking shoes, sun helmets, and bicycles. The train would pass through the *whistle-stop siding* about ten o'clock and we were to ride it to Livingstone. We reached the siding, flagged the train, clambered on board with all our odd-looking baggage and sped away at the rate of about twenty miles an hour. When we arrived at the Livingstone station, there was the cart with

our makeshift tent and bedrolls waiting for us. African trainmen are quite accustomed to seeing passengers with food boxes, pots, pans, and bicycles; so they were kind and helpful in lifting our precious possessions from open windows of the coach compartment to the ground.

Augusta and I were soon atop the two-wheeled cart carefully placing our baggage in solid corners and choosing the softest bedrolls on which to sit, for we knew soft cushions were necessary in this mode of travel. The men mounted their bicycles and were off, leading the way to the first village, a distance of about eight miles through forest paths. They would arrive a long while ahead of the cart and get the little schoolhouse darkened and ready to show Bible pictures by means of films to be projected with the sunray projector Alvin had made (thanks to his originality). His illustrated sermons were always a marvel to the village people.

The use of oxen calls for two people, one to lead the team and one to walk beside them and shout as he cracks his long whip over their backs to keep them plodding. It is slow travel but usually a sure arrival, so why worry if it is late. Dodging tree limbs and holding on with a firm grip as the cart jostled along over rocky hilltops and through creek beds wasn't always a lullaby, but just before sundown (too late for our sunray films) we rolled over the last hill overlooking the village of round thatched huts. The people were waiting for us. The men had arrived long before and announced that we were on our way. Here they came, running to meet us, children, big and little, mothers with babies on their backs, and even some of the fathers. As they drew near, I saw some of my own girls whose happy faces took away the tired

wrinkles from my forehead. All of them wanted to shake our hands as they trotted along with the cart, reaching up from every side for our outstretched palms. I clasped every one of the little black, dirty hands as they ran along, shouting, "Madam! Madam! Thank you. You've come to see us."

As it was late, we had to hustle around to pitch camp before dark. The villagers were scurrying to bring wood and water for us. Water had to be carried from a stream more than a mile away. We soon had some food cooked and beds spread. A tarpaulin was put up over the cart in tent fashion to form a bedroom for us women. Gifts of eggs, peanuts, milk, and chickens were brought to us almost by the time we had set up camp.

As soon as our eating was over and camp cleared up, evening service began and most of the villagers turned out. Men sat on the ground around one bonfire and women did the same around another. When the service was finished, a question period began and natives always have plenty of questions of quite a variety from religion to politics, customs, riches, clothes, poverty and the weather. I visited with the women for a while and went to my tent upon the cart, for I was very tired. The following morning Alvin began his illustrated lessons with his sunray projector and continued all day, showing to groups of about fifty at a time, as the little church building would accommodate only about that many. Augusta and I spent most of the day visiting women throughout the village and preparing our meals. Another night service and a long question session brought an end to our work in this village.

Early the next morning we broke camp and started for the next place, about six miles away, the men proceeding on bicycles and we women by cart again. I never dodged as many limbs, thorns, stumps and trees as on this trail. We were so long arriving that the men sent native boys on bikes to see about us, and they gave the bicycles to us to ride, which we appreciated. We were soon in the village while the cart still lumbered through the forest path.

Again, here I had girl students who came to meet me and it was a happy meeting and kind reception. They were eager to show me how clean their houses and yards were swept. They said they were doing what they learned at school. I really believed it, for their homes were the best kept in the village. The usual gifts were brought to us along with two special treats, a long stalk of sugar cane to chew and two oranges from a tree they had grown.

The day program of illustrated lessons and night services were conducted the same as in the previous village. We were with them two nights, then broke up camp and turned toward Livingstone again over that rough, narrow, wooded path we had taken before. But we women tried walking part of the time and we really made it better than by cart all the way. Walking was restful. We arrived in Livingstone in time for supper with Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Reese, who were living in town, got a hot bath and clean clothes, repacked foods and other camp supplies and were off again in about two hours. Where to? To the sawmill train across town.

We exchanged the cart for a caboose. (Good swapping, you say?) Arrangements had been previously made with the brakemen that we were to board their train at

this time and sleep in two cars. We would leave very early the next morning, traveling with them, as they were going a hundred miles or more into the deep forests for a load of logs for the sawmill. We settled down in the caboose and a boxcar with our camp equipment—bicycles, food boxes, cooking pots and dishes, lanterns, bedrolls, Bibles, and pictures. We were off to another school and village nearly a hundred miles away. The rough, caboose floor was not so good for my bed, as the ridges were really high and hard. About 3:30 A.M. the old train gave a jerk and began rolling. By daylight we were well out in the forest reserve, passing small villages occasionally. We ate some cold breakfast from our boxes and washed our faces with a cup of water taken from our canvas water bag. (Can you see us, four missionaries and as many native students with us, all lined up, sitting in the large, open boxcar door swinging our feet as the train was rolling along at a speed of fifteen or twenty miles per hour?) There we were, reading, singing, eating, watching the tall trees go by, laughing and enjoying the whole scene.

Just before noontime we stopped at a rail siding, unloaded all supplies, tied some things on the bicycles, and the native students lifted the rest to their heads or carrying poles. We four missionaries mounted the bicycles and all the company started out, following a small path, single file, through the deep forest bound for the village five miles away. The African boys with us carried most of our supplies. When we had gone about half way, we came to native gardens; so we had to dismount and push our bikes over ploughed ground for some distance. (It isn't necessary to tell you, I'm sure, that this was rough walking and pushing.) After crossing

the last corn ridge the little path looked good and we mounted our bikes again. Next we encountered a wide, dry, sandbar of the river. Again we walked and pushed. As we approached the opposite bank, I looked to one side and there, very near me, were some girls down on their knees digging and raking sand from a hole where they were dipping up water and filling their pottery water jars. And suddenly I saw one of them was my own little girl who had been sick with a spirit at school. She came running to me, took my bicycle, and pushed it the remainder of the way to the river bank. It was here that we faced an almost straight-up clay wall. Everyone struggled to climb, and we passed bundles and bicycles to each other until all were on top. When I stood on my feet again, there lay the village, nestled in a clearing, with the little two-room schoolhouse in its midst, the most distinguished looking building of all.

Students, teacher, and some villagers came to meet us and relieve us of our loads. We were now in a Christian community and quite ready for rest. It was late lunch time and we were hungry. The teacher, a former Namwianga student, directed the boys and girls to gather wood, carry water, and make campfire for us. We were joyfully relieved and they were happy to serve us in whatever way we needed them.

When lunch was over, our program of illustrated sermons, giving out tracts and some small books of the Gospels, and personal visits to the homes began. The little house had to be filled and refilled in order to give the lessons to all the people. The usual night service was held around the campfire until late bedtime. At a late hour the two-room schoolhouse was turned into

bedrooms with beds spread on the dirt floor, and I never slept sounder on any innerspring mattress. Indeed, it had been a long, hard day.

Next morning was the same routine, beginning soon after breakfast and continuing until late afternoon with an occasional break for rest and food. When the program was finished, we hurriedly broke camp and packed up, setting out to make it back to the railway line before dark. Our same sawmill train would come early the next morning, Sunday, and we must be there. Another hard trip through the woods and gardens and we were fully ready to eat what we had brought with us. We spread our beds down on the ground by the tracks and soon fell asleep.

Sunday morning the sun did not catch us in bed. By daybreak we were all busy, some rolling up beds, others cooking bacon and eggs, and others stacking bicycles and bundles by the tracks in preparation for loading. Just as Augusta and I had put the last pot into the box, we heard a rumbling sound, then whistle! Whistle! Here came the train, crossing the river bridge very near. As it came around the curve, I saw all flat cars piled high with huge logs of that valuable African timber: teak, mahogany, ebony and mukwa. But there was no time to gaze. I snatched up the remaining dishes, towels, and teapot and threw them into a box. Judah, our helper, leaped to his feet, grabbed his blankets which he had not yet rolled and picked up that last box. I, just as hastily, grabbed my jacket and the lantern, and took out for the place up the track where we would load. Judah saw I had left my helmet. He picked it up as he ran, reached it out to me and shouted, "Here's your hat,

Madam!" He kept running as he wound his blanket around him and I measured steps as I untied my apron and put on my jacket, trying at the same time to hold on to the lantern and canvas water bag. We made it! Everything was hoisted into the boxcar, all in a pile, but we were in and the train was soon rolling. Now we could separate and pack things properly.

When we arrived in Livingstone we were met by Alva Reese in the car, hurried to his house where we cleaned up a bit and went to worship. It was good to be back to civilization, although it was a wonderful experience we had thoroughly enjoyed.

Sunday afternoon we packed for going home on Monday. Georgia and the children had come into town from Sinde Mission to join us for taking the train home. Monday morning we boarded the passenger train for Kalomo, arrived there about noon; and how good it looked! "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

It took me a week to get myself and my clothes all cleaned up again. In villages there is always so much disease—itch, sore eyes, colds, tropical ulcers, tuberculosis, leprosy, bedbugs, ticks, fleas, lice, and anything you can name. It is a wonder how we escape it all. It truly takes a lot of precaution to keep one's health. I could hardly wait until I could get hot water and get started using it. With all the trips I made through the years, I never brought home anything. This health hazard is the reason for the custom of clapping one's own hands instead of shaking hands in greetings. If you know your people well, you may break over and shake hands, but it isn't necessary, as they don't really expect it. Clapping the hands and a polite bow shows the same respect.

CHAPTER XVII

VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Time waits for no man; and Father Time was bringing great changes to the whole mission. In this kind of work there are some events that stand out in the lives of those nearest at hand. So it was at Namwianga where these changes altered the lives of missionaries and the native people with whom we were working.

Wafted Away

Without doubt, death can bring about changes more suddenly than anything that can come. Mrs. Alice Merritt had been very ill with cancer for many months and the day of her passing seemed to take all the heart out of everyone. In a coma she was brought by train from the small Chama hospital to Kalomo and was laid on a cot, loaded into the back of a pick-up and brought out to the mission. I stood in my door as the car moved slowly past my house. Tears streamed from my eyes as I watched her husband hover over her, holding her hand as life silently slipped away. All the missionaries and many Africans were soon gathered at the Merritt home as we watched her fleeting breath depart. We women closed her eyes, bathed and dressed her cold, thin body, and folded her hands in sleep.

The men gathered and spent the rest of the day and far into the night making a box. Mrs. Reese and I took sheets and formed a soft, white bed inside and covered the outside with black bunting. The next day Alice was laid to rest on the mission, under a big spreading wild fig tree as A. B. Reese spoke words of comfort. With three

small children, Mr. Merritt was left to steer the boat alone with God's help. Everyone was ready and eager to help him. In the course of time, through the help of friends a lovely, elderly lady came to keep house and care for his children.

The next great turn came when the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George M. Scott returned to Africa after her graduation from Abilene Christian College in Texas. In the course of about a year we were all pulling out our best hats and dresses in preparation for the wedding of Helen Pearl Scott and Dow Merritt at the Sinde Mission church building. Yes, Dow had found in Helen Pearl the desired qualities. She was now the mother of his children.

Sparkling Water

If, my reader, you have never had a really outstanding water shortage, then you have missed the great joy of suddenly coming into the rich possession of plenty. The day the deep-well driller struck water on the mission at approximately four hundred feet, and it poured forth at the rate of about three hundred gallons an hour, was a great day. We had never had so much at once except when a tropical cloudburst had come down, and we couldn't harness heavy rains. Well-casing, pipes, and pump soon went in. It was a great celebration when missionaries and natives gathered around with the noise of laughter and exclamations. "Ma! Ma! Manzi! Manzi!" (My, my, water, water) burst forth as the stream of sparkling, clear, pure, water poured from the pump into buckets. Never had we seen a greater blessing flow out to us on the mission.

From this time on for a year or more the girls had it so much easier, going from the dormitories a quarter of a mile to the well and doing their laundry, filling their buckets with the good water, and returning to their houses. What an asset over the green, grimy, muddy, creek water!

But this isn't the end of the water story. God can do such wonders. How was all this paid for? Each missionary somehow received some extra cash gifts from his homeland and they went to pay for the well. Several months had passed before we realized the need for piping water to the different buildings. The digging started by faith and prayer. One day the postman brought me a letter from a good friend. When I opened it, there fell into my hand nearly $400.00 to use in the mission work as I saw best. I took it and ran at *my* high speed to the men in charge and said, "Brother Short, here is money to run the water to the girls' dormitories." So the digging was continued, pipes were laid, and water was run to the girls' yard and mine, where we now had tap water at hand.

A New Challenge

Young and fearless: Well, not so young nor so fearless, but by the will of God "I am what I am." To tackle something new was my way of meeting a challenge. My work had become very heavy and scattered over so much ground that a push bike was too strength-sapping for me. So I decided to try a motor bicycle. I traded my bike in on one, started the motor, mounted it and rode off. Oh, that was so much easier than peddling through the sandy way. It was a pleasure and saved my strength for the next several years.

No More Soft Butter

By now I was an old-timer in Africa, well along in my second term, but had never owned a refrigerator. Most of the workers had one by this time, having obtained them when on their furloughs home. My time had come. An asset for me and my house was that kerosene "frig" purchased in Bulawayo with money which seemed to just fall for that purpose. Over the years, my coolest drinking water had come from the canvas water bag hanging in the breeze somewhere; the coolest milk was barely off the luke warm stage; usually butter was dipped with a spoon, and jelled salads just weren't on any menu. All this, and more too, was what the joy of a refrigerator meant to me.

The Master's Vineyard

Namwianga had grown in status, in knowledge, and in spirit. Over several years furloughs and new people coming and going had brought about the shifting of workers so that each could choose the particular spot he wished to fill in bringing the gospel to the Africans. Some wanted to work in the Bible school, some preferred printing, and others wanted to evangelize. In the shifting from year to year the W. N. Short family and J. C. Shewmaker had settled at Namwianga where the A. B. Reeses, the Alvin Hobby family and I had been in the school work for many years. We had a heavy program of work in all the surrounding area. Teacher training had been added on the mission. Native teachers were going out every year opening schools and starting congregations in the villages. Our building program had made great strides.

School opened on August 1; all dormitories were full, and classrooms were crowded. A new church building, an upper-grades building with three large rooms, and a domestic science building were added. New girls' dorms had to come in the near future. With the help of the other missionary wives we taught the girls' classes in Christian homemaking and needlework through all grades and we taught Bible classes to the African wives. Girls' enrollment was running around seventy-five or more. Every year brought new experiences, although we tried to conform to native customs when they did not conflict with Christianity. It was wise to retain the friendship of native parents wherever possible.

The government was especially interested in educating girls because they were farther behind in the whole governmental program than the boys. For many years there had been only schools for boys. As our work grew, so did the joys, encouragement, sadness, problems, and discouragements, just as in any educational effort the world over. As I relate some experiences of those days as a missionary, mother, and teacher for African girls, my heart thrills, then tears blind my eyes.

EDA

One morning, about a month after the girls returned to school from Christmas holidays in the villages, Eda, one of the advanced girls on whom I had depended a great deal, came to my house and said she had something to tell me. I brought her into the kitchen where I sat down in a chair while she dropped to the floor at my knees and hung her head without speaking. I asked, "What do you want to tell me, Eda?"

She answered, "Madam, I'm a bad girl. I'm very bad."

"What have you done, Eda?" I asked.

"I've done very bad," came from her weak, trembling voice.

"Tell me, Eda, what troubles you." I insisted. "What is your trouble? Have you stolen something from me or told a lie?" This was a common weakness of the Africans.

"No, Madam," she replied through her tears. "I am spoiled. I've been a bad girl."

I understood. They use this expression when a girl is led astray. She was pregnant. Yes, it was a shock to me for she had been a good girl and a promising teacher for the Lord's work. "Where and when did this happen, Eda?" I asked kindly, as I, too, bowed my head.

"While I was in the village in December," she replied.

She told me more about it and then we made preparation for her to return home but not until we had prayed and I had admonished her to change her life and repent. I felt that she was penitent and had confessed her sin. She wasn't a bad girl, but had been led astray by some cunning boy in a time of weakness. She was from a Christian family and had been taught right at home and in school, but my hopes for a teacher in her were suddenly shattered.

MARTHA

She was the pride and joy of every worker, both white and black. Martha came to school when she was a young child in second grade. Not much she could do in working her way, but she could cut grass, plant beans and corn by hand while bigger girls dug the rows. She could

carry small buckets of water on her head from the creek; she could boil the pot of relish (any vegetable or meat) for dinner; she could sweep the yard with her own handmade grass broom; she folded and put away her own blankets every morning; she washed and ironed her own clothes. Martha loved school, was a good student, and was always smiling. Of course, she grew in everything she undertook and certainly made a place in our hearts.

She passed examination after examination as the years went by, went to teacher training and taught on the mission. It seemed that everything she did drew attention from government officials. Then in 1964 she was offered a trip to England for one year of school, all expenses paid. After pondering over it and consulting with the missionaries who had so faithfully stood by her, she accepted the offer. This summer of 1965 brings her back to teach again in the mission school at Namwianga. Hopes are that the government doesn't take her from us to put her in some big school of its own. I fill with joy as I think of my little girl, Martha, now a fine Christian woman and a teacher among her people.

On Delicacies

One day several girls took their own large handmade reed baskets (fish nets) and went to the nearby creek to fish. They waded out into the water in teams of two carrying the clumsy baskets. You never saw girls have more fun anywhere, as they dipped and trapped finger-length fish, minnows, or an occasional frog in their reed nets. They saved everything that got into the trap. When they had accumulated about a quart, they returned to the dormitory, did a final washing of their treasure

catch, dumped them into a pot with hot cooking oil and salt, and stirred them until they were brown and crisp. They brought a small dish of this delicacy to share with me. It was their special treat that day, a fish relish for dinner. They often went out gathering wild fruits and always shared with me, but this was my first try of minnows. Wasn't bad eating.

Another time a great swarm of locusts came across the mission. Girls darted here and there, breaking limbs from bushes. They scurried about beating the air with their leafy weapons, knocking locusts with broken wings and legs to the ground by the hundreds. Little girls ran along behind with baskets, dishes, or even their dresstails gathered up, as they excitedly shoveled in the downed locusts. That day their relish consisted of the fat winged insets scrambled in hot cooking oil, another real delicacy. They didn't offer me any, perhaps because I had already expressed my distaste for attempting those thorny-looking locust legs.

During a school vacation time I had a class of women busily engaged in a sewing class while their children sat playing in the sand, in the yard near the classroom door.

One of the fathers had been out hunting, had found a wild bee tree, and had robbed it. He brought a small, enameled basin of honey and set it on the ground in the midst of the circle of children. I heard their shouts of glee and also some remarks mothers were passing to each other. I asked why the excitement, and they informed me that Sixpense had brought the children some honey. I wanted to see their bright faces, so I stepped out the door and peeped over the little black kinky heads. All the little sandy hands were diving into the dish of golden

treat and their lolly-popping, sweet fingers dripped with honey and pieces of comb filled with fat white grubs, all complete good, rich chomping. I returned to my business of sewing, quite satisfied to leave it with them.

The Africans are meat eaters and are easily pleased with their food, simple as it is, if they can only have meat. They long for the fleshpots. As I stirred around, shifting boxes and arranging the sewing room, a big rat darted across the floor. I began the chase as I shouted, "A rat! A rat!" Pear, who was working in the yard, came running with a stick and soon downed the intruder, after which I said, "Take it and throw it away, Pear."

"Madam, may I have it?" he shyly asked.

"Why, Pear, why do you want it?" came my surprised query.

He hesitated to tell me, but the embarrassed boy answered, "I want to eat it. His meat is nice. He is very big and fat. We Africans eat rats." He took the animal, but I do not know whether or not he still eats rats. In later years he became one of our teachers.

The visit of a friend or relative from a village and especially some mother, was a very special occasion at the dormitories. You may be sure, too, that mothers got anxious about their little girls away from home in school in the hands of strangers. So mothers often walked fifteen, twenty, or more miles to see how their little girls fared. One day a mother came from a faraway village to visit her eight-year-old daughter. She was carrying a two-year-old child on her back and a bundle of blankets on her head. High on top of all this was that special food treat for her little girl. Rhoda ran to meet her

mother, and when she approached the tired mother this happy little girl dropped to her knees and reached out for that tired, rough palm. Mother took the little girl's hand between her own, kissed it several times, then turned up the little palm and tenderly spit in the child's hand, a sign of a mother's deep love. Up jumped Roda and relieved the mother of some of her burden, then led the way to the dormitory. On their arrival the mother sat down on the ground by the door and leaned against the brick wall to rest. All the girls in the compound came, two or three at a time, knelt on the ground in front of the mother; some clapped their own hands in greeting, while others reached out to shake her hand.

But that food to eat that she brought, what was it? Roda soon found out. Here were several long strips of dried pumpkin, some hard twisted pieces of salty, dried beef or venison, called biltong, some peanuts tied up in a small rag, a cup of sugar in another cloth bag, and two foot-long stalks of sugar cane. Yes, this mother certainly knew how to get into Roda's heart. Every girl suddenly became this little girl's best friend. They all hoped some more mothers would be that thoughtful and come for a visit.

A Little Mite

Most people are always as interested in babies and customs as I was. This story was a revelation to me. Answering the door one afternoon, I found standing before me one of our former school boys, Window, with an unusually grave look on his face. He related this sad story. His wife had died on Wednesday (this was Friday), leaving a tiny baby boy, born on Tuesday before the mother's death, and he wanted help. When I asked where

the baby was he said he had brought it to me, and he led me around by the side of the house. There sat Window's father and mother on the ground, waiting for me to appear. Between them on the ground sat a basket. "Where is the baby, Window?" I again asked.

"In there, Madam," he answered, pointing to the basket. I lifted the piece of wool blanket on top, and there in a nest of soft white cotton lay his little son asleep. He then handed me a letter which I quickly read. It was from an European woman, Mrs. Campbell, living about twenty-five miles away. Her message explained that Window lived about fifty miles from the mission, and he had come as far as her house carrying the infant wrapped in a few dirty rags, and it was thoroughly chilled. She had given it water and glucose, wrapped it in the cotton and blanket, and put a vinegar bottle of warm water in the basket; then Window had proceeded to Namwianga.

When I had time to collect my thoughts, I mounted my bicycle and told him to follow me. We went straight to Georgia Hobby for I knew she had baby clothes and more experience with infants than I had. I explained the case to her and we got busy. Soon the little mite was clothed, oiled, and powdered, and Georgia had worked out a formula for him. He took the bottle although he was a very weak three-pound baby. With this much done, another decision must be made; who would care for him? We told Window about the orphanage at our Sinde Mission station near Livingstone, and he agreed to take it there. But it was too weak for the trip just yet, so I agreed to care for it a few days, then he would take it on the train.

Now Window had other words. I asked him if he could stay on the mission until the baby was strong enough for him to take the child to the orphanage. He answered, "Yes, but first, I must return to the village, as the chief told me to do, so he can dismiss the people. They are still crying at my wife's grave and will cry until I return and the chief dismisses them."

"But can you stay even one or two days to see if your child will live?" I anxiously asked. He agreed and stayed two days, during which time his little son seemed to be gaining. I kept him in my house and by my side at night, being sure it was warm and received regular feeding. At last he said he must return to his chief and report.

Each time he and his parents came to see the child I could see they were quite satisfied to see it so comfortable and well cared for. But he insisted that the people in the village would remain at that grave, even to sleeping there, until his return. I'm sure they were having death dances with drums and beer as this goes with their burial ceremonies. Before leaving, the young father came to see his son and requested that in case it should die, please let the students bury it on the mission.

He turned away and days went by without his return. I kept vigil over the infant, but finally again made its soft, warm bed in a basket and trusted it to the care of a student as I put them aboard the train bound for Livingstone and the orphanage. Its life ebbed away a few days later. I never heard of Window again to even tell him.

On Giving

"I thank God she pulled them out the window." This crumpled piece of paper contained a message.

It was a cool, brisk winter morning with clear sky and the air almost frosty. A barefoot, poorly clad, unshaven African man from a village fifty miles away stood near my back door waiting for me to appear. According to custom they never knock at a door, but come near and wait until a member of the household comes and acknowledges them with a greeting. He eagerly stretched out both hands to put that soiled, crumpled paper in my grasp. I unfolded and read the Citonga (native language) message from Alifa, one of my own girls, now a Christian mother of five little children. She had left her lively brood at the house while she went some distance away to work in her garden. A child had played with fire and set the dry grass roof ablaze. My eyes were blinded as I read her message.

"Dear Madam, I thank God today for giving me a chance to tell you that our house and all our possessions burned, but I thank God that all our children were saved. Mother saw it in time and ran from her house, and I thank God, she pulled them out the window. My Bible also burned. Can you send me one? Also maybe you can help us. We didn't save even one blanket. But please send me a Bible. Your daughter, Alifa."

The news was quickly spread to all the school and church, and what heart would not be touched to see the gifts they brought to my porch? I knew how little students had, but whatever they possessed they shared. There on my floor lay some of their best treasures of

value to young hearts. Such as they had, they gave. There lay the collection ready to be loaded into a mission car and carried over the long, rough trail to Alifa and King, those Christian parents. Here was a pair of socks, there a cup, head scarfs, spoons all sizes, enamel cereal dishes, pocket mirrors, a belt, blankets, school readers, pillowcases they had made in class, under-garments, little patchwork dresses, shirts, bags and aprons made in domestic science, and several pieces of spools of thread. One little girl even brought her only needle with a long thread in it. On top of all was a New Testament, a Bible, and some Sunday School stories and pictures. A liberal money contribution was taken, and all was sent that same day to this Christian family.

Sometimes we became discouraged when we felt that we were failures in putting over lessons on giving, but such a response as this helped our own outlook on their giving.

"Why is that burlap bag lying up there by the pulpit?" I kept wondering, as I sat on the narrow, rough, pole bench in the little village church, listening to the native preacher as he conducted the Sunday morning service. I was soon to know its meaning. The collection basket was passed; a few of those big half-dollar size pennies clanged in the basket, two or three tickies (5-cent pieces, smaller than a dime) bounced against two eggs; three ears of nice white mealies (corn) were sticking out above the basket's top edge, another egg was carefully laid in by the corn. With the basket full, it was carried to the front and the garden produce was deposited in the burlap sack and the eggs were carefully laid in an enamel basin. A woman with a sleeping baby on her back stepped to

the front and placed a small, yellow pumpkin on the dirt floor by the sack. Another brought a small dish of peanuts and emptied them into the sack. Now what can the church do with these simple gifts? When there is enough to sell they take it to a small, community, Asiatic Indian store and sell it, or they may carry it all the way to the mission and exchange it for little paper-back hymn books, wine, or testaments. This kind of giving is quite common.

CHAPTER XVIII

TAKE A BREAK

Hurrying, scurrying, washing, starching, ironing, pressing, airing glad rags that have been packed in mothballs. Why all the excitement? Oh, the governor was coming to our town, and the District Officer had invited the Namwianga Chorus to his home to sing on the luncheon program. This was a real honor to these students. I had chosen twenty of the best voices from our boys and girls and had given them extra hard training in preparation for this grand occasion. They had washed and starched and labored over those green cotton dresses and barretts. The girls all dressed alike; the boys wore khaki short trousers and long, short-sleeved, collarless overblouses—not a spot or wrinkle, but only the neat, simple school uniforms. They shined like new money.

We loaded into cars and drove off for the affair. The host received us and escorted us to our places in the shade of a big, beautiful tree very near the long open-air porch where the governor and other guests were to be seated during the program. Every boy and girl kept on his very best behavior.

They rendered the program in a truly acceptable manner which would have made any school swell with pride. It was very well done. We sang *Swing Low, Steal Away, My God and I,* and *God Save the Queen,* all in English, then the *African Anthem* in their own language. Many kind things were said to them afterward, and the governor paid them his own special tribute. They returned to the mission, but I remained for the luncheon.

On a typical balmy African April day, school dismissed. Trucks, pick-ups, and cars were all put in top running order for transportation to the occasion of all times, the visit of the British Royal Family at Livingstone. Trunk lids popped open in every missionary home and out came last year's hats, suits, gloves, high heels, and our prettiest hankies peeping from handbag corners. We were off early and arrived on time at the Boat Club, the place designated for the Royalty to enter Northern Rhodesia.

The long, white, royal train brought them from Capetown to the opposite bank of the historic Zambezi River. There a beautifully decorated launch received them with the usual pomp and dignity. Out in mid-stream the native Paramount Chief waited in his colorful launch and fell in line behind the royal party, followed by two barges and two black-and-white skiffs. All the river procession moved with dignity as oars and shiny black bodies, bare from waist up, swayed in perfect rhythm to the beat of drums on the river bank. The tall red fezzes and knee-length red cloth wrapped around the waists of the oarsmen made as spectacular a picture as the royal launches. The high, rolling, misty cloud rising from Victoria Falls, with the vivid rainbow directly behind the procession, was as a great painting before our eyes. Throngs of the Rhodesian population, black and white, lined the river bank as far as one could see.

Almost within an arm's length of us the carpets were rolled out from the waiting limousines to the water's edge to receive the guests from the launch. Wires and ropes with their colorful decorations and flags swayed in the April breeze. Press agents, a broadcasting car,

movie cameras and kodaks were clicking on every side. I even had mine ready. The procession was now very near. King George stood straight and handsome in his admiral uniform of blue and gold as the launch ploughed through the last few yards of the Zambezi waves. As they docked the smiling Queen Mother stood and moved slowly toward the carpet. She was beautiful in her soft, white, flowing, chiffon dress with ostrich trim, a large hat of the same, and long, white gloves. Princess Elizabeth (as she was then) wore a simple, dainty, soft pink dress and Margaret a blue. They were a charming and gracious family, accommodating cameras when possible.

The African Royalty stepped proudly from their craft. The Paramount Chief (king) of Northern Rhodesia was dressed in his black, long-tailed, high-collared, gold-trimmed uniform. The Queen wore her long, red velvet gown, common canvas shoes, a small, white felt hat under which she wore a colorful, hand-knitted cap. With heads held high, they stepped along the carpet in single file and awkwardly climbed into the limousine.

Police cars and motorcycles escorted all the grand party to the city to the grandstand where the British Royalty sat *on high* while all native chiefs sat in chairs arranged on the ground directly in front and facing the grandstand. King George made his address, presented several medals, and gave honorable mention to native chiefs. Then the response, given in perfect English, came from the Paramount Chief.

With the ceremony over, the party was taken to the best hotel where they were entertained at a garden party given by the most elite of the city of Livingstone. The lesser elite (our party) made our way from the crowds,

went to the city park where we lost no time in getting away with a basket of food. After a few minutes' rest, we were on our way to Namwianga. We arrived home about 10:00 P.M., all tired out, but it had been a grand break for us, a day filled with new experiences.

CHAPTER XIX

EUREKA

Children, children, children everywhere—Shewmakers, Hobbys, Shorts, Merritts, neighbors east, north, west, on farms, in Kalomo, and in nearby towns up and down the railway line. What an opportunity! "They have no school. Are we letting our own drift, through neglect, as we turn all efforts to the African school?" This question was pondered and tossed about many times. More farms were opening and more families coming each year. Even small children of the area were being sent hundreds of miles away to boarding school. Mothers on the mission were attempting to handle their own children's education by using the set correspondence courses sent out from Southern Rhodesia. This was far from ideal, but they had no other choice.

"Why not have a school on the mission for European children and open it to neighbors also?" All workers met to discuss and lay plans, set aside one building for the purpose, and add some temporary structures and equipment. All of us teachers would share the load by each taking some assigned classes. As the community was scattered over a large area, most children were too far away to come daily; so the problem of boarding girls and boys arose. Two families, the J. C. Shewmakers and W. N. Shorts, offered their homes to boarding students.

All plans were worked out and, in January, 1950, this work began with the first six grades. Now we had two Christian schools on the mission about a mile apart.

Alvin Hobby was serving as principal of the African school and J. C. Shewmaker for the European school, which we named Eureka. Some of my work at the native school was taken by African teachers which left more time for me to take some European classes. I retained the domestic science and homemaking courses and only supervised other phases of the African work which had been mine. Vespers and singing groups came at night, so I continued those.

Enrollment day came. What a responsibility! Here came more than a dozen children to board, to add to our eleven mission girls and boys. Mrs. Shewmaker took the little girls and Mrs. Short took the boys, ranging in age from six years to twelve or thirteen. Both families closed in porches and pulled in cots, tables, chairs, and clothes chests to accommodate their new families. They shared everything they had. All this was far from easy, but here was another chance to contact more people with Bible truths, the gospel.

Growth over the next few years was unbelievable, and children were coming from two hundred miles away. Some of these had been unable to get into the large city boarding schools. Government inspectors were writing favorable reports, and we ended up getting help from them for building dormitory rooms, bathrooms, and classrooms. Increased water supply was provided, so building projects were constantly in progress. Over a period of about five years the enrollment grew to more than fifty. Georgia also took some little boys to board.

My years of participation in this work gave me great joy; each year some accepted their Lord in obedience to the gospel and, through these boys and girls, profitable

contacts were made with European parents over Northern Rhodesia. (Oh, what a life-saver was that motor bicycle for my transportation between the two schools!)

A great joy came over the mission with the arrival of a couple from Livingstone who had become Christians and wanted to give some years to mission work. They were deeply consecrated to the truth they had learned. They gave up their jobs and came on faith. She was my faithful standby in the African girls' work as I helped in Eureka. She was fully qualified to assist in needlework, inspection of house cleaning at dormitories, vespers, and Sunday Bible classes. He, too, was a hard worker and Bible teacher. Meet Mr. and Mrs. Jack Chrissop.

We needed our batteries charged. With the heavy program on the mission it was hard for workers to find a time for vacations, but this is very necessary for everyone on a mission. There must be a change put into one's schedule sometime. An European work had been established in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia; so the church there set up a lectureship, inviting people from several distant points in Africa. We really felt the need of some rest, fresh spiritual uplift, and Bible study. Consequently we just closed up *shop* when school was finished that May, and all the workers went to the lectureship.

We had several days of spiritual feast and happy associations with European Christians from Salisbury, Bulawayo, Livingstone, and other areas. It was a great refreshing time to sit in an audience of our own race and drink in the messages given in our own language and sing the great old hymns with people of like feelings. It was a stimulating fellowship. Such meetings were planned for at future times to help us keep our batteries charged.

News from home wasn't always cheerful. My father's health and that of my sister, Loma, was failing. Each letter brought anxiety to my heart. It seemed not practical to leave the work at this stage, with the shortage of workers on the field, but still the thought turned over and over in my mind. Except for two or three days at a time occasionally, I had not taken any leave since my return to the field from the U. S. A. in 1947, and my load of work was heavy. The final decision was for me to go to Johannesburg for the month of July, which would get me out of the tropics for a time. Staying in the tropical regions over a long period is very sapping to one's strength, and, although I had never been ill, I needed the change.

So I went to Jo'burg to the home of one of our missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Joe McKissick, who took me into their family and entertained me royally, showing me every possible kindness. It was a great inspiration to to me to meet with the church in that city where he was serving as minister. The high mountain air was invigorating. When I awoke in early morning after my first night's sleep on her good bed, I looked out the window and was shocked and overjoyed to see the ground covered with a light snow. I hurried out to walk in that layer of feathery flakes. I had never seen snow in Africa before. I went home refreshed and ready to begin school in August with new energy. Letters from home somehow didn't seem so depressing.

During the next term of school, hoping to obtain a booking for some time during the following January, I continued my contacts with shipping companies. By November everything seemed favorable. The daughter of

our own friends and missionary in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, was ready to enter college in the U. S. A.; so we applied for sailing together. Verna and I planned carefully all our dates and the meeting place for the voyage, and looked forward to it with much joy.

November came, and Eureka was ready for their Christmas program and tree. The little auditorium was packed with parents, just leaving room enough for the children to enter and perform. We presented a Mother Goose operetta in the preparation of which the children had taken great interest. They all looked cheery and realistic in their costumes, and they sang like experienced stars. Then their treat and little gifts from the tree topped off their program. The oldest student, David Hobby, served as Father Christmas (Santa), all dressed up in his red suit, stuffed with pillow to make it fit. Fun! Yes, we had fun.

But this wasn't the end or even the best. They had a surprise for me. Another program that same week was a party for me, at which time they read their creative writings, sang especially for me, and brought out a beautiful blue cake, decorated with a white ship and a *Bon Voyage* message. Of course I knew the other teachers, Georgia and Joyce especially, had maneuvered this, and it was cleverly done.

Well, suddenly, and even unexpectedly, here came my sailing date, set for the last of November, just before school was to dismiss for holidays. I had to rush my last-minute packing and turn over my final classes to the other teachers. As I stood at the open window while the train rounded the curve leaving Kalomo, I could still see the co-workers and children waving. In my passing through

Livingstone, Bulawayo and Johannesburg, Christian friends met the train for a chat with me. Verna, from Salisbury, was waiting for me at the home of old Namwianga missionaries, the George M. Scotts.

November 26, at 11:00 A.M., was the time set to be on board. We were up early, and rain was pouring with such force that it looked as if we needed a boat to get to the docks about fifteen miles away. By wading two blocks, carrying our cases and umbrellas and waiting ten minutes or so in the downpour, we got a bus and thought our troubles were over. We arrived at the docks and behold, no ship! What was wrong? The ship was out about seventy-five miles surging against a storm and was making no headway, "Why had you not phoned?" You say. We did, but we were told to come on. After a two-hour wait, we were given instructions to come again next day. So we dragged through the rain to the bus line and returned to the home of our friends. Brother and Sister Scott were more than surprised to see us step upon their porch. "Have they missed the boat?" was their thought.

The next afternoon rains had ceased, the storm subsided. We took the bus again, found the ship in dock and the gangplank down ready for us to go aboard. Our cabin was clean, white, spacious, with no better bunks anywhere. Settling down in comfort for the voyage was easy for these two tired ladies. As it was a cargo boat, there were only nine passengers, but they were very congenial, nice people.

The waters were still somewhat rough as we left the Cape, but it was soon over. Three days' sailing brought us to Walvas Bay, West Africa, where the ship docked a week for loading fishmeal fertilizer to take to Texas.

With such a long stay there, all hopes of arriving home in time for Christmas were shattered. To pass away those days we went ashore daily for sight-seeing, such as it was, in this German province. We spoke no German, so just looking was the extent of our shore leaves. It is desolate-looking country, covered with sand dunes which you see here today and yonder tomorrow as the winds shift them about. The small fishing town is no more prosperous looking than the countryside. So our stay at Walvas Bay was a rather dull, dusty, fishy time.

Once out at sea the routine of good meals, counting calories, reading, writing, sleeping, lifeboat drills, and just watching the sea and boat activities was restful and pleasant. There was nothing more spectacular than the big Christmas dinner given by the Captain. Passengers did most of their own entertaining. I sent a radiogram at Christmas to Don and family. Then one came from them telling me that they were meeting me in New Orleans.

Very late Sunday evening of the first week in January, 1952, we dropped anchor at a small boat dock five miles down the Mississippi River from New Orleans since the ship could not dock until next morning. We went ashore where friends met Verna, and she was soon gone from me. Don wasn't there, but I sat down to wait. He didn't come, and still didn't come, so I phoned the church building about time for dismissal of service and talked to their minister. Yes, Don and family were there. On their inquiry about my ship's arrival, they had been told it would be in next day. When I explained where I was, they and their friends soon came to me. What a happy meeting! These friends had put me on the *Nicholas*

Biddle about five years prior to this time. We spent the night in New Orleans, then set out for Muskogee, Oklahoma, Don's home.

After a good visit with them I went to Dallas to see my father and the rest of my family there, then to Searcy, Arkansas, Harding College, and churches in many places. It was a wonderful year to be with my family again and meet with the churches who had so faithfully stood by me and my work in Africa. Much time was spent with classes of women and church leaders who asked for my reports on the progress made in the African mission field. The main aim was to present ways in which women, especially, could be of service in the Lord's work through their small contributions which they could send to Africa to help teach those girls and women. The ladies of almost any congregation throw away enough food and clothing to supply the needs of all the girls in school at Namwianga. It was a busy furlough time.

A happy Christmas was spent with Don and family and my father; this completed the year of 1952. I made my way back to New Orleans to get the ship which would carry me again to Africa and the work on my heart. It was just another voyage on a cargo ship, with no special outstanding events worth recording.

Arriving at the mission on February 15th, I found both schools in full swing and everyone hard at work. It took a little time to get settled into my house again, bring things out of storage rooms, and set up housekeeping once more. A new missionary family had arrived recently and was working in Eureka, so most of my time was devoted to the African school.

Soon after my arrival at the mission from America this time I was again faced with the problem of transportation since I had sold my motor bicycle when I went home the year before. It seemed impossible to face riding bikes another term, so I went to Livingstone to hunt for a car. My bank account was the main drawback, but some way would surely be provided.

Yes, I found it. An elderly couple had bought this little Vauxall (English version of the Chevrolet) and had run it about five hundred miles. The husband passed away, and the little old lady couldn't drive. Here was a good buy it seemed to me, but I asked two of the men on the mission to see it and pass on it for me. They considered it an excellent opportunity for me, so I closed the deal and drove the little economical car home. It was just what I needed and it gave me much joy since it equipped me better than I had ever been for carrying my part of the load of work all that term. It made me less dependent on the family cars of the mission. I transported sick girls to the doctor, now located in Kalomo, and helped in many other ways that I had never before been able to do. It gave me a greater feeling of usefulness and security.

Routinism

A typical Sunday on the mission was a busy time for everyone. Each family had a post to fill in carrying on the services over the surrounding area. There were chores that had to be done—dish out food to all student groups, prepare for classes in all buildings, ring bells at set periods, and see that students did their chores and responded to bells. Family meals, getting children ready for Bible classes, and rounding up house chores kept the

mothers rushing through the morning hours. Every adult missionary taught a Bible class somewhere—on the mission, in Kalomo, or elsewhere.

With all services finished, everyone returned home, fed their families and put the children to bed for a siesta. Adults may, or may not, take time for a short rest. Most of the afternoon was given over to study and letter writing. That's when we sat at our typewriters running off those long, detailed, general letters for American friends, letters to our close ties, articles to send to some paper, and translation work. Busy? Yes, we were busy.

Late evening was feeding time again; then chosen leaders took their posts at the different places for meeting. Native leaders usually took their own services and the missionaries took this time to have their own worship and Bible study together. The European neighbors were invited to attend. We had these meetings in the homes; usually the J. C. Shewmaker lounge was used because it was the largest room on the mission and most convenient for all concerned, especially for Eureka children. After the service we enjoyed a period of fellowship and refreshments. As I reflect on those pleasant evenings my heart longs for it again.

It was our aim to seek a way to interest the Europeans of the area, so inviting them into our homes was a pleasure. Having their children in Eureka helped bring contacts.

Often Saturday afternoon was given as a time for having neighbors come for tea, tennis games and croquet. There were community gatherings around Christmas time in Kalomo when we enjoyed being sociable with our neigh-

bors. At one time we had a revival in town in a large shed. Crowds were large and association was pleasant. The Dutch Reform and Anglican are the leading religions of the country, and few of those that are confirmed ever change. Our best opportunities seemed to be through Eureka. Most parents were quite agreeable for their children to study Bible, and several boys and girls were baptized on the mission. God's word will not return unto him void.

The African people were not satisfied with their gods and the superstitions which filled their lives. They were easier to reach with the gospel than the European population. At the close of almost any service, without the usual exhortation, girls and boys step out and go stand at the front of the audience. When asked their purpose in coming, some say they have sinned, others want baptism. Most of the congregation will go in a long line, following a path down the long hill, pushing through the tall grass, to the small hole of water at the creek three-fourths of a mile from the church building. Africans called it the Jordan River. In the long dry season I've seen the water so low that we walked a mile or more to find water deep enough for baptizing converts. I've seen them sit flat on the bottom, then be laid back until they were buried. At times I've wondered if we would be forced to drive several miles to a larger stream for these services, but the Lord never left us.

CHAPTER XX

EXCERPTS AND EPISTLES

Yes, I felt quite at home in Africa again as I walked into each class and met new and amusing experiences daily. Girls and boys were having all academic classes together. The special courses for girls, domestic science classes in sewing, use of the machine, knitting and other handicrafts, homemaking, cooking and hygiene still received most of my attention. In addition to this work I had classes in arithmetic, English, and composition. My experiences were sometimes quite amusing. (I share some of them here.)

The rainy season was near the end of March, at which time flying ants, as we call them, come out of the ground from little holes, take to the air for a short flight, lose their wings, and then face their death. Chickens dart everywhere after them until their craws are full almost to the point of bursting. Natives hastily grab cups or dishes, break off weeds or leafy switches, and run to the holes from which they see the creatures escaping. They thrash them down, rake them up, and put them into their containers. The captives are soon dumped into a pot of hot cooking oil and fried to a golden brown, like shrimp. Delicacy! This war on the little pests was what I stopped to watch on my way to school one morning.

In English and composition classes a teacher in an African school can have some of the most unusual and amazing experiences when grading papers. A teacher needs to be alone with her thoughts at this time so she can laugh if she chooses. Here are excerpts from those upper classes:

AARON writes: "When I stop to learn I shall go home to plough and to teach my little brother and tell the name of Jesus and his father called God. I shall try to prich the gosple of God and His Son. Maybe when Jesus comes he will find me obey him, and we do all things which he said before. I shall try to tell them how to keep the village to be clean. And I shall try if God will help me in my life, I shall be as a pricher in the country. Maybe that will help me in the name of our Father God and his son who died because of our sinner. They killed him he was on dieth for three days but he arise, we must obey him."

Aaron perhaps did better than I could have done in his language. He did become one of our village teachers and did some "priching."

Now this one from ROBERT:

"If I go home I will do many things. I want to teach the people how to write, also the words of God. I want my friends to know everything which is in the earth. I want to make doors to sell so that I will find much money, this is wat I can do." (Mr. Reese was teaching shop work to boys' classes.)

I had them write letters to my girl friend back home. Now read this from SAWMILL:

"Dear sir: I thank God that he has give me this change to write this epistle. For me my life is going well here at Namwianga college. But only we have beans every day. Madam is

teach us good English. But I need a shirt. Will you plise send me one soon. We Africans are much poorness.

Thank you sir.
Your son
Mister Sawmill"

In spite of the daily bean ration, he seemed to thrive, for he was over six feet tall, a brawny fellow, weighing about two hundred pounds. He too did much village church work and some teaching.

This one comes from a girl who seems to handle her money carefully. Malita's composition:

"I want to write about a store when in the store I saw some dresses and some coats too. In that store I went in he was every good Indian man because when you tell him to cheep he will do it. Because that may be he will have much money in his store so that many people will like to buy in his store because he always cheep to them. Then he will have much money so that he can buy some other things so that he will sell them. too. The other stores will say why don't you come to his store to buy. They will say because you don't cheep to us. In that store I have bought many things. I have bought a dresse for 8s6d (about $1.50) and a dress for 9s6d. Some under skot (skirt) for 3s6d (about 60 cents) and some for 4s6d. He is a very good seller."

Students always carry a dictionary right with their school texts, and they use them. They delight in hunt-

ing new words and finding occasion to use them. They get them out of context, wrong shade of meanings, wrong definition, or wrong spelling, and even coin words from some sources. Here is one who studied his dictionary long and loud, I'm sure, but he wasn't in my class. You will readily see how perplexed he was over his misfortune.

This letter to JONAH's European boss:

> "Dear sir: On opening this epistle you will behold the work of a dejobbed person, bewildered and a much childrenized gentleman who was violently dejobbed by your good self. Sir, consider this catastrophe as falling on your own head and remind yourself on walking home at the moon's end to five savage wives and sixteen voracious children with your pockets filled with nonexistent pounds, shillings, and pence. Pity my horrible state. As the reason given by your good self for my dejobment was laziness. No, sir, it were never possible that myself who pitched sixteen mortals into their vale of tears can have a lazy atom in his mortal frame and a sudden departure of leven pounds has left me on verge of despire. I hope this vission of horror will enrich your dreams this night and the good angel will pulverize your heart so that you will awaken and rejobulate your servant. So mote it be. Amen.
>
> Your humilified servant
> JONAH"

Now, aren't you sorry for this fellow? The news never got around as to whether or not he got his job back.

Students must also learn to express themselves orally, so they practice getting on their feet to speak. They must do this in preparation for carrying on church work in the villages. Class debates were common, and they chose their own questions or subjects for discussion. Here are some of them:

1. It is more better to wear short hair than long hair.
2. It is more better to marry uneducated wife because she listen to her husband and he will not need beat her many times.
3. If wives let their babies cry the husband must beat her.
4. It is not good to marry two wives. Many wives makes much troubles.

Sometimes a class has a question and answer period. Here are some of their questions:

1. Why do European women sometimes call their babies monkeys? (Georgia was wooling her baby around one day, playing with him and she called him a little monkey, and this boy heard her. He said Mr. Hobby should beat her. They call this cursing.)
2. Why do not European women carry things on their heads? (Africans carry everything on their heads.)
3. Why do white men wear pajamas? (African people sleep in the nude.)
4. Why don't European women carry their babies on their backs?

Oh, we learn a lot about ourselves if we just listen to them discuss the curious customs of the white man. Their childish minds are always at work.

Mission work entails much more than pulpit preaching. We found no better way than the *Christian Bible School* plan. Of course that called for building programs, boarding problems (there are plenty of them) and the academic teaching. But when students come year after year, teachers and students draw very close together, and every contact can and should lead someone to the light. This was a great experience in my life. I could never have gone into their villages and gotten close to them using this method only in my teaching. Their coming to me, living daily near me, and their calling me *Mother* brought closeness in heart. The African must know you a long time, gaining confidence in you as a teacher, before he will confide in you enough to tell some of the African customs. This is a subject that must be met in Bible teaching, but it must be done sympathetically and kindly in order to break down undesirable customs while holding to those that don't interfere with Christian life.

Creatures of Custom

Women carry their babies on the back in a goatskin or some other skin of similar size, or a long piece of material tied around her body.

A son-in-law must kneel, and clap his own hands when a father-in-law or mother-in-law approaches.

Women make a red paint of red ochre (a pulverized red stone) and butter with which they paint themselves even to rubbing it into the hair.

Girls gash the skin of the face, arms, and even the body, then rub black soot into the wounds, making very intricate designs by scarring the flesh.

When little girls of some tribes have their permanent teeth, the father takes some kind of crude iron tool and knocks out the four upper front teeth as a tribal marking. I think this has now been outlawed, but I've seen many of these toothless girls. The men of some tribes literally file these front incisors to sharp points like canine teeth. They say it is done that they might be more able to eat meat. I can agree that they need some kind of aid, for they certainly have some hard, tough meat.

Women plant, cultivate, reap, thrash, grind, and cook the food. The men plough, build, and hunt.

Men and older boys sit together in one group to eat, and women sit with the younger children in their own circle. Each group eats with the fingers from a common dish.

The men make family blankets by sewing skins together until they reach the required size.

Men carve the wives' kitchen tools, such as large spoons, spatulas, and large mortars in which to pound the grain into flour.

The women make clay water jars and very large jardinieres in which to store dry beans, peanuts, dried pumpkin, or dried greens. This keeps food safe from rats.

Women carry the water and bring the wood from the forest for family use.

Little boys of the village herd the calves and goats, and older boys or men take the big cattle.

Women shingle the hair very short, the same as men, then wear scarfs.

Two men, especially relatives, who have been separated a long time, on meeting will shake right hands then left hands and finish the greeting by kissing each other's palm.

Men build grain storage huts high upon stilts to get the grain out of reach of cattle or even wild animals.

Girls must not be fed eggs since it will make them barren.

A man pays money, cattle, goats and even chickens to the relatives of his bride-to-be. The girl's grandmother can require the boy to build her a new hut.

The marriage of a couple is not complete until the bride cooks the ceremonial meal and gives him to eat. This may come after they've been living together several days.

A man can have as many wives as he can raise a dowry for, but a woman can have only one husband.

When a boy wants a certain girl he sends a friend to ask her parents. He can also send the girl a bar of soap. If she doesn't want him, she rejects the soap.

A groom's gifts to his bride-to-be consist of spoons, cooking pot, dish pan, small cereal dishes (used as we use plates), blanket, a knife, and her wedding clothes.

If there is a divorce or a girl runs away from her husband, the parents must refund the dowry money. If they don't want to do this, as they usually don't, they will make the girl return to her husband.

When a couple has been married a few years and there are no children, the husband is pressured by the old village men to get another wife. I've seen good Christian boys lost, all because the old men will not leave them alone until they break down.

A girl must never appear happy on her wedding day, but most even cry if she can. This shows she loves her parents and doesn't want to leave them.

A bride leaves all her old clothes to the younger sisters, and the groom must replenish her wardrobe.

When a person is dying, the village women will gather around and chant, "He is dying." He is buried immediately, and his spear, ax, blanket, lantern, dishes, and even some food all go into the grave with him. The more important the person is, the more there is to bury with him.

A chief or headman may be buried right at the door of his hut; then all the family will abandon the hovel. He might be buried on some high hill overlooking the village. Villagers will go there and sacrifice food, dance, and pray for rain.

Women wear loads of beads and brass on their arms and ankles, in the nose and ears, and around the waist and neck.

When a teacher enters a classroom, all students stand and remain so until the teacher greets them and tells them to sit.

When selling an ox the buyer judges how good the animal is from the length of his horns—the longer the horns, the finer the ox. This is because the long horns can carry the yoke more satisfactorily in work.

When women are walking along the road and see a chief approaching, they drop to their knees and remain there until they greet him, their customary hand clapping with a low bow as he passes by.

When boys start to school at a mission, they choose English names for themselves, words which they like the sound of, whether or not they know their meaning. Or friends may name him because of some characteristic.

EXAMPLES: Sawmill, Motorcar, Sack, Jam, Pencil, Pumpkin, Rice, Ticky (money), Towell, and even Jackass.

Africans never knock at the door when they come to call on anyone for any purpose, even to visit. They usually come to the back yard and wait until they have attracted attention. If the host doesn't discover they are there, they will begin making noises, probably coughing or clearing the throat.

In receiving a gift from anyone a child is taught to hold out both hands to receive it, never one hand only. I've seen mothers smack a *one hand* extended.

When a man and wife travel together by foot, he leads the way ahead, carrying his hand-ax and spear. She follows, carrying rolled blankets, pots, pans, dishes, and items of food piled high upon her head, the baby tied on her back, and perhaps leading a second child. Once in a great while the man will be seen carrying the second child tied on his back. But it is said that the husband is her protector so he must be free to fight in case of danger.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DEAL IS CLOSED

They are just normal girls and boys, in school together, in the congregation together, and they are all keen observers. Custom does not permit them to play together, mix and mingle on school grounds, or study together, but, never forget it, those black eyes are casting slyly around. During all the year boys are interested in which girl is most clever, who is the best worker, who has the best physique, or who is neatest in dress. News gets around as to who keeps the best dormitory room, or who cooks the best food, and who makes the best garden. A note or two may be slipped through some secret channel or a post office may be established out by the road under a rock somewhere. Sometimes, postal service is secured among little folk who can keep secrets. But parents must not hear of these clever tricks of letter writing on the mission, or they'll be afraid to trust their girls with the white missionaries. For this reason Madam didn't want to catch these tricks either, but sometimes she did.

No dating, or walking together at any time, no parties, and no movies—he watches the conduct of girls from a distance and by the time school is near the close several boys may have their minds made up. Someone is sure to begin in the native accepted way of getting his wife. The courtship is short and to the point.

Young Teacher Petrose came to me, as the girls' mother, and bluntly said, "I want to marry that girl, Sofia. May I write her a letter?" With my permission, he brought it to me the next day and insisted that I

read it before giving it to her. He said I must read it according to their custom, because I was her mother on the mission. I took it, and he went away. It was in an unsealed envelope, and this was the message he had written:

> Dear Miss Sofia, I love you very much. I want to marry you. I want you for my wife. Will you be my wife? Answer my letter soon and give to Madam.
>
> Your boy,
> Petrose.

Sofia often helped me with my work, so I called her to the house and gave her the letter without attracting the attention of other girls and also gave her permission to answer it. She took it, but didn't answer it soon as he requested. He came daily for a week to get his letter. Still it didn't come, so he took another step. He bought a big bar of laundry soap and brought for me to give to her. The custom was if she accepted the soap, that meant she was agreeing to the proposal. If she rejected his gift, then she was refusing him. Well, she kept the soap. Now he had something to work on. After a few days she brought me a very small piece of paper with this message to him:

> Dear Teacher, I am very thankful for this opportunity to write this letter. I don't know if my father will agree. My mother may refuse.
>
> Thank you.
> Yours truly,
> Sofia.

She knew very well he would agree and so did he, but custom is important. In the next few days her father come to the mission, and I told him that Petrose wanted his daughter. I asked him if he wanted her to marry yet. I thought she was rather young. He answered, "Yes, Madam, she is ready to be married. Just do what you wish. She is your child." Both these young people had come from Christian families and had been in the Namwianga Mission school for several years. But they couldn't give up all customs, even though they wanted what they termed a Christian wedding.

Petrose proceeded with his deal. Next he got a teacher friend, Solomon, to go with him to Sofia's village, fifteen or twenty miles away, to ask for her. When they drew near the village Petrose hid in the bushes and Solomon proceeded until he was within the village limits; there he sat down to wait for someone to come and invite him to the hut. He was escorted to the proper house, and Sofia's father gave him a small stool on which to sit. They talked of the weather, gardens, cattle, the health of all the family, and on and on until they ran out of a subject; then Solomon broke the news. "Petrose wants to marry Sofia." The father knew all the time what Solomon wanted.

"Well," said the father, "You'll have to wait until I go to a far away village to see my sister and ask her. There are many relatives that I must ask. You can come again sometime."

Solomon returned to Petrose out in the bushes and reported the news, and they returned to the mission. They all knew the deal would go through, but it was only a matter of time.

A week went by before Solomon returned to the village alone to see what news he could learn. Yes, the aunt had agreed, also the grandmother, and they were now ready to come together on the amount of dowry. Petrose made the next trip alone, and they closed the deal. It ran about as follows: Petrose would make these payments: $25.00 and an ox to the father and a goat to the grandmother. This he would purchase somewhere for about $2.00. A chicken each would go to several other relatives. He had some time to raise all this before the wedding. His father kindly agreed to help him out.

He returned to the mission and told all the story to me. From this time on gifts were brought almost weekly for me to pass on to her. Permission was also given occasionally for him to come stand in the shade of a tree in my yard and talk to her for a little while.

The gifts brought to me consisted of a blanket, two tablespoons, a boy's pocket knife (to be used as a paring knife), two small enamel cereal dishes, a dish pan, two teacups, and a small cooking pot. Then the wedding clothes had to come, so he brought bright print cottons for two or three dresses, white material for a slip and undies, white anklets, and tennis shoes. She made all her clothes, even to the underwear, in sewing class. As these things came to her she put them in a box and kept them at my house, for she did not want the other girls to see them. I never learned why.

The wedding day came and she was one of the saddest little girls you ever saw. She was to come to my house just after noon to dress for the wedding which was set for 2:30 o'clock. I waited and looked, but she didn't come. One o'clock passed, one-thirty came; I couldn't

wait any longer. I rushed to the dormitory to see what detained her. There she lay on the bed, face down, covered up head and ears in her blanket, crying. I asked, "Are you sick, Sofia?"

"No, Madam," came her weak voice.

"Well, then, come quickly and get dressed. It is almost time for your wedding." She slowly dragged herself from the bed, rolled the blanket around her, and another girl led her over to my house. The two of us got her dressed, but she couldn't do one turn for herself, not even to the putting on of her shoes. We had her ready by 2:15, and all girls were ready to go with her. She chose one to walk by her side going to the church building. Others walked behind.

We arrived at the appointed place and found all other students patiently waiting. Mr. Hobby and Petrose sat side by side on the front seat. Sofia took her place on another front bench with her girl friend. Mr. Hobby took his place at the improvised pulpit which was highly decorated with yellow rag weeds, Chinaberry leaves, and a bright, large-figured tablecloth. Teachers and their chosen helpers had put in the day on this elaborate decoration for the grand occasion.

At Mr. Hobby's request the couple stood, and he told them to join hands. They came close enough together that by reaching out they could lock little fingers. When Mr. Hobby asked her if she took Petrose as her husband, I thought she would never answer. He asked a second time, and she gave a low grunt for her "yes." When it was over, the student body grouped themselves and began a slow march and a chant as they urged the couple

on ahead of them. They went to the home of one of the teachers where everyone was fed on bread, meat stew, and plenty of tea. This reception interspersed with singing, talking, and laughing continued all afternoon. The couple did not participate, but they only sat quietly side by side on chairs in the shade of the house. Occasionally students came bringing food to them and would chat a few minutes. The day was ended about 10:00 P.M. and students went to the dormitories.

One teacher moved out of his house and turned it over to the couple for the duration of a few days. School was then closed. Petrose took his wife to his own village. This has been a happy marriage, and they now have a nice family. She keeps her children clean, and he is "proud" of her as his housekeeper.

Over the years several of our Namwianga girls found their husbands at school, and their courtship and marriage was conducted much in this same manner with few variations. On some occasions the missionaries gave the reception in their own yards. For the last one before my leaving the field I took my little car and went twenty-five miles out into the bush to bring the girl's parents and grandmother. I must say, "God bless that little old lady." It was a great day for her. She had all she could eat and plenty of tea. I never saw a happier person.

During a summer vacation one of my girls was married in the village with a Namwianga teacher officiating. He tried to have everything just right, even the music. He got a hand-winding victrola to use in the wedding march and used the record "Carry Your Cross With A Smile." I guess this couple has been faithful to that sentiment at

least, for they have a nice family and are Christian examples and teachers.

All this story gives the native version of a Christian wedding. We know from first hand experience that they have made great strides in putting away some customs to become Christians. It has not been easy for this young generation as you will see from this next true story.

MOBWE

The sun was sinking low in the west as Joyce and Augusta, two missionary wives, nervously pushed their way along the narrow, grassy, bushy path on their way to a village two miles from the mission. The occasion? To see Mobwe. This little girl was a bright, promising pupil, attending school at Sinde Mission, walking this same sandy path daily in her gay light-hearted way as she hummed her simple native tunes. This little Christian girl was brighter than most of them her age and was especially clever in her Bible classes. Mobwe's parents were not Christians, but her mother had come to Joyce's home that day and had invited these two ladies to the village that night for the wedding of little twelve-year-old Mobwe; hence this trip.

As the sun dropped from sight behind the trees on the red horizon, Joyce and Augusta entered the village. The native mother received them, brought chairs for them, and they sat with a group of several village women. There was Mobwe, still wearing her school dress, darting here and there with other children as they shrieked in laughter when they succeeded in capturing the fireflies. Some of the women seemed to be stirring around ner-

vously. Joyce asked the mother, "Does Mobwe know she is to be married tonight?"

"Oh, no," came the quick answer. These heathen parents had made the whole deal with a man who worked in town and made what they considered a good salary, maybe twelve or fifteen dollars a month. He could pay a big dowry to the father and buy plenty of clothes and blankets for Mobwe. The first installment was four dollars and the balance of thirty dollars would be paid when he received the girl. Though Mobwe was not supposed to know, somehow news leaked out that some man had been chosen for her. Young as she was, she probably thought this was something yet in the far future, but, lo, it wasn't. The tragedy was this very night. The man who sought her hand had worked and saved up the price, and now he was hiding in the bush nearby demanding his prize (even though, according to tribal custom, he was not allowed to have marriage relationship until she reached the age of puberty). The day set for the marriage was completely unknown to Mobwe.

Joyce and Augusta had thought perhaps their presence might help to give the girl courage to refuse this man, for they were sure he was not a Christian and not the kind of husband that Mobwe deserved. She was devoted and faithful. They saw in her great possibilities for a future Christian home.

The hour was near at hand. The native women were showing restlessness in their stirring about. Mobwe was still chasing fireflies but stopped long enough to come greet her teachers.

"When will Mobwe know?" asked Joyce.

"Oh, she won't know until someone seizes her and anoints her," answered the grandmother. This duty had already been assigned to one of the relatives of the village. The marriage ceremonies are left to the women. The relatives who had been assigned the job of contacting the groom came and sat down quietly with the other women. They were all speaking in subdued tones. Suspecting that something was in the air, Joyce asked, "Has the man arrived?" "Yes," answered one of the women. "He is waiting out there," and she pointed toward the dark bushes.

The woman who was to do the anointing quietly arose and ambled off to her hut. She soon emerged with a bottle of cheap toilet water hidden in her clothing and called, "Mobwe, Mobwe, Koza kuno (come here)." The obedient child came running, little knowing what sorrow awaited her. When she came near, she was grabbed and held by main strength. Not until this moment had she suspected anything. She began struggling to free herself, and other women leaped to the assistance of the anointer. Mobwe's opposition increased, and she seemed to have strength from above as she squirmed from the grip of those wicked hands. She darted here and there, but others caught her; she was carried bodily into her mother's hut as she fought and scratched at them.

According to custom she was expected to show displeasure with limited resistance, but not to this extent. They knew now that she meant to refuse the man. She was shouting at them, "I can't marry this man. He drinks and smokes. He is not a Christian. He will force me to make beer. I cannot do this. I want a Christian husband."

If Mobwe should submit to the anointing and eat the cornmeal they had sprinkled on the dirt floor of the hut, this would be submission to accepting him as her husband. But she declined with all her strength.

The women kept yelling, "Mobwe, I'll beat you! Be still, while I anoint you!" Finally the mother called for a stick to be brought with which to beat Mobwe. That mother beat the girl unmercifully, but still she refused as they continued with the battle. With all this abuse she never let out one scream, for to do so would be submission. She suffered and choked back tears with all her strength.

Next the mother shouted, "I'll use a shambuck on you!" And she called for one to be brought to her. This very hard, stiff, hippo leather whip was given to her and she slashed Mobwe a few cuts, but still she stubbornly failed to submit. She was sweating and panting, and her clothes were torn to strings. The women, seeing they had lost the game, sat down on the ground. They had wrestled with her well over an hour and a half. A cup of water was brought to Mobwe, and she drank it down eagerly. Some of the women left the hut and held a conference.

The physical torture had failed—now mental torture began. The women returned to the hut where the girl sat silently as the mother began to speak again in sharp tones. "Mobwe, do you not realize that it is my duty to see that you submit to your father's wishes in this matter? If you refuse, I shall be beaten to death by your father and you will be left to rear this baby (pointing to her youngest on her back)." The girl still gave no gesture of submission. The mother spoke again. "If you refuse

this husband, we shall not find another for you (a tragedy in the life of an African girl), and you cannot remain in the village. You will have to roam the forest without food and clothes. When have you become head over this house that you can say what you will do? Will you marry this man?" Mobwe sat speechless and stubborn as tears rolled gently down her cheeks and fell upon her bruised, naked body, bared to the waist in the brutal scuffle.

The woman who had been out contacting the husband-to-be, who was still hidden in the bushes near by, came into the hut with some money. She threw a shilling (20 cents) on the dirt floor before Mobwe. "You see, here is part of the money!" she growled. The girl sat mute. A floren (about 40 cents) was then thrown; still no response. Everyone sat silently awaiting the answer while Joyce and Augusta were praying for God to give the child strength. Their hearts were heavy and tears blinded their eyes. More coins were brought and thrown before the girl. Yet she would not give in. The women left the hut, apparently to contact the groom again, for more coins were brought and piled in a heap on the floor, but Mobwe still declined.

With this the mother again started with the mental torture. "If you refuse this man and you ever find another one, we shall not act as midwives for you in childbirth. (It was village custom for women to help each other in confinement cases as in those years few went to the hospital.) You will have to remain in the forest, have your child alone, and starve to death. We are all finished with you." All the other women gave their loud assent to the mother's words.

This mental torture went on for an hour or more, then the devil made his final thrust. It was the last straw. They threatened to bewitch her. The flesh is weak; she yielded, for from the cradle up the African is heavily steeped in this kind of superstition.

Though these two good women did not detect the gesture of assent, the anointer began to pour the oil into her hand and rub it on the bride. It took no genius to see the child had weakened under the strain. She was rubbed with the oil from head to waist; then they lifted her frazzled skirts and proceeded to cover the entire body.

Meanwhile the contact woman notified the groom that the girl had submitted. He was escorted to the hut in the center of the village where he brought blankets for her and for himself and spread them on grass mats laid out on the dirt floor. He also brought several garments of new clothing for the bride. He sent a large, bright-colored square scarf for her to use as a sort of veil to cover herself during the bridal procession to the hut.

When the girl was prepared, she was led to the hovel. Some of the women led the way and others followed the bride, all in line. One woman took Mobwe into the house where the husband sat on his own blankets. The sad little girl was fully wrapped head and ears down to the feet in her blankets. The woman retired from the hut. The husband arose, pulled the remainder of the dowry from his pocket and held it out the door. The go-between came, knelt on the ground and accepted the money which she turned over to the mother who, in turn, distributed some coins to those who had helped in this

heathen wedding. She then delivered the balance to the girl's father.

It was a moonlight night and the bridal hut was lighted with a candle. It was not a closed-in, plastered house, but only a wall of upright poles, so any activity of the occupants inside was left open to the public. As you know, there must be no familiar relations because of her age, so the people stood guard and watched through the night (we suppose).

At 11:00 P.M. Joyce and Augusta left the scene, winding their way back to the mission, so bewildered they were speechless, yes, broken-hearted from what they had experienced that night. What was to become of little Mobwe?

The next morning the man took his prize on the back of his bicycle, or possibly let her walk behind him, carrying her possessions on her head; he took her to Livingstone to live. But that husband had failed to reveal that he had two other wives, and now Mobwe was the third. When the parents learned this, they refused to call it a consummated marriage, and they called the child home about two weeks after the wedding.

She started back to school, but Mobwe was different. She seemed unable to recuperate spiritually from the wound which was inflicted on her young life. She stayed in school for a while, but she was never the same sweet Christian girl. As she grew older, she went into sin and finally became the third wife of another heathen. It seemed that the first terrible wound never healed. Although this wicked custom is breaking down, there are still many Mobwes in Africa if we can only reach them. That is why Namwianga Mission exists today.

A wedding party on the mission.

CHAPTER XXII

STORY HOUR

Every missionary has at one time or another had amazing experiences. You may know that those going to a place like Africa, so big, so different from our own well-developed country, so old, and still in its primitive stage, will have plenty of the unusual stories. All my co-workers had faced hair-raising adventures and observations; some comical or sad, and some almost unbelievable things had happened during their years on the field. From these with whom I worked, I heard many stories of their own experiences which somewhat served as a shock absorber for me when I met similar trials. I relate some stories here, but these are not isolated cases. Many others of their kind were always cropping out somewhere, often catching us off guard.

One of our surprises was the time we had guests from Livingstone and all the missionary families joined in an evening cook-out over on the hill near by where we enjoyed picnicing on the huge rocks (as big as our houses). Natives pass judgment on anything, only in the light of their own lives, knowledge, and way of thinking. Their imagination is easily aroused.

Our "Mizimo" (Me-ze'-mo)

To many Africans Jesus Christ is just another deity to be added to their list of tribal spirits. They may be ready to admit that through Christ comes the soul's salvation, yet they are reluctant to discard all their heathen gods and superstition. They believe strongly that

matters of every-day life, such as rain, childbirth, and hunting success are being supervised by their ancient spirit, *Mizimo*. Because he has been associated with the children of Africa, he lives in every family, and he knows them better than the God the white man has brought. The missionary has been saddened more than once when, to his consternation, he witnessed baptized natives praying for rain at the grave of some witch. But the greatest surprise came when we learned that they thought we did the same.

A young Christian boy came to one of the missionaries and asked, "Why do the missionaries go to the big rocks to pray at night?"

"What do you mean? I haven't heard of any white people doing this. What white people do it?" was the missionary's reply.

"I mean you missionaries," answered the boy.

"We missionaries?" came the excited answer. "We'd never think of doing such a thing!"

"But you do it," the boy insisted rather sorrowfully.

The missionary then had a long, serious explanation to make concerning our happy cook-out evening over on the rocks. We had been in plain sight of the dormitories, and now we knew the students had watched us with all their native curiosity. They could not understand why we would go there to do that back-breaking job of cooking when we had all conveniences—stove, chairs, tables, dishes, and plenty of food—in good houses. "No excuse for going off over there to cook and eat. It's just an alibi to cover up devil worship. It's their *Mizimo*," was their native thinking.

Witchcraft

This gruesome witchcraft case was tried in court. It was an allegation of disinterring and eating human flesh. Three African women were sentenced to one year's imprisonment each for witchcraft. One of them admitted she ate human flesh. "Many other witches do the same," she said. A fifteen-year-old girl told the court her story. The women had taken her with them to dig up a corpse.

"Then they struck the head and feet and the corpse sprang up," she began. "Then they cut the throat and cut off pieces of flesh and tried to make me eat it," was her story. She told this to the chief who found bits of flesh and some large snail shells containing poison in the women's huts.

Obliging Host

"Why were my charms overlooked," thought one of the elder wives of Chief Namwala. "That younger wife, Nolia, has bewitched our guest. She is no good." This kind of reasoning came from the elder wife when, according to a practice among some minor chiefs, her husband had permitted the guest chief to cohabit with one of his wives, the younger being chosen by the visiting chief. The older wife was jealous of Nolia and accused her of the art of bewitching. On repaying this visit Namwala naturally expected his friend, Chief Senkobo, to reciprocate this courtesy.

A Snake?

There were excited voices outside Margaret Reese's door one night. When she stepped out, there stood nervous Kabalata with his little brother. "Madam,"

he said, "my brother has been bitten by a snake." Margaret, knowing that some snake bites meant quick death, hurried with a razor blade to cut open the pricked spot and hastily rubbed permanganate of potash into the wound on his hand. She sat down by the boy to watch for any reaction. After some while he seemed to be responding satisfactorily to her treatment, so she told Kabalata to take Kapusa to the dormitory and put him in his blankets again.

Next morning Margaret felt quite elated over her success in the snake-bite treatment. Kabalata came to the house again and said, "Madam, I guess it wasn't a snake that bit Kapusa last night. This morning we found a tin can with a sharp point, very near where he was lying. I think he threw his hand on the tin and felt something cold and thought only of a snake." Her feathers of self-satisfaction fell.

Speed of Jehu

Practically the whole village was gathered, sitting on the ground listening to the missionary preach. Suddenly they looked a few yards away to see what seemed to be a wild man entering the village, running like Jehu. He came nearer by the minute, swinging his hand axe and shouting at the top of his voice. It looked as if he might tackle the whole gathering, and they began moving from his path, but he turned aside. The missionary asked what the meaning of his action was. He was told that this man had come from some distance away to mourn the death of a child relative who died in this village two weeks previously. After the man turned aside he came back and sat down quietly with the people, and the preaching service continued.

SIANJINA

This African headman was unusually prosperous for an African. They have a proverb which says "where lice stay, there riches will stay." His name carries with it the meaning of "lice." He had probably inherited the name because of the prominent presence of this insect. As a youth he had gone to Johannesburg, South Africa, and worked in the gold and diamond mines. On returning to his village he became a cattle trader and soon had over a thousand head of cattle and thousands of dollars. He had a family, sent his children to school, and one son came to the mission to study Bible. That boy became a gospel preacher. Sianjina became a Christian, but we wouldn't consider him faithful, because he continued to drink and always feared witchcraft. Although he was considered a rich man, he dressed as other old men, in dirty rags and an old overcoat probably bought second-hand from some source. He slept on a skin spread on the dirt floor of his little, round mud hut and covered with old, dirty blankets, even though he had a cot with a thin mattress in his room. He ate with his fingers like the rest of the people.

This old man had smallpox and came near death's door. He sent for Mr. Merritt and said he wanted a *box* made. "For your money?" asked Mr. Merritt.

"No," answered Sianjina, "one to bury me in. I'm an important man and should not be merely rolled in blankets. I want to be buried like the white man." Their usual custom requires only wrapping the dead in blankets and placing the corpse in a sitting position in the grave.

Well, the old man didn't die, but in two or three weeks he came to the mission and asked Mr. Merritt if the box had come.

"Yes," was the answer, "do you want to take it?"

"Oh, no, no!" said Sianjina, "I don't want to see it. You keep it for me." Mr. Merritt accommodated him and stored it away on the mission.

Later Sianjina had pneumonia at his son's village and wanted to return to his own home. They put him on a home-made farm sledge, inspanned several oxen, laid the sick man on his blankets, and put him on the sledge. They started out on the slow journey, over the dusty trail leading to his own village several miles away. The old father died on the way. Messengers rushed to tell Mr. Merritt. They loaded the "box" on the pick-up, and Mr. Merritt took it to Sianjina's village eight miles out into the bush. On their arrival they found the hut full of wailing women. At the edge of the village the chief heir was measuring with long reeds for the size of the grave. A native jug, filled with water, was emptied on the spot signifying to the departed spirit that all wishes would be carried out. Mr. Merritt and other men placed the corpse in the "box," and many of the old headman's possessions which were to be buried with him, were piled by the door. The natives had already dressed him for burial before Mr. Merritt arrived: a new, bright shirt, a full-gathered, short, print skirt, big belt with elaborate bell ornaments, long green golf socks, new shoes, and a red cloth around his head and face. After he was put into the coffin two new blankets were put around him. Mr. Merritt spoke a few words to the assembly, had prayer, and left the village.

Days later the Merritt and Short families went out to the village. There they found people from over the whole area and others still coming. Some were dressed in plumes and paint, carrying shields, flags, spears, and drums. At least fifty women, many of them carrying babies on their backs, danced on the grave and wailed. Most of them held spears, clubs, or even a small stool, in their hands. Occasionally a woman would lift her spear high and dash off around the village as she screamed or let out a shrill whistle to chase away the evil spirits. The grave had been so trodden down that the surface could scarcely be distinguished from all the surrounding area and paths of the village.

An eyewitness gave them a description of the grave and burial as it was done according to Sianjina's request. A large hole was dug down several feet deep, then a cave extended from this in one side. The coffin was placed in the cave, setting it upon the old man's cot which had been put in first. Two large white enamel buckets which were supposed to contain his money went in next. Several bolts of cotton print cloth, for his new clothes in the next world, were placed under his bed. A gun was put near his head, and a dozen or fifteen lovely, new blankets were packed around and under the coffin. The door of the cave was sealed with rocks and poles, then plastered over with mud, after which the main hole was filled.

A big feast which continued for several days came after the burial. Five large head of cattle were butchered for the guests the first day and six the following day. The final report was that forty head were killed for all the

mourners that came. The one who gave this report to Mr. Merritt said the blood had not been sacrificed on the grave as is the usual practice of the heathen.

In a few months another feast and wailing session was carried out, and then came the final disposal of the remainder of his property. Let's see how that went. Don't forget that he was a rich man. Gifts were passed out to the mourners and others who performed special duties at the funeral, the grave digger, the ones who dressed him, etc. During these months his hidden treasures and all his cattle had been collected. Before his death Sianjina had a local court clerk write out a will for him designating where most of his property should go. To his four sons—Kettle, Maggie, Bicycle and Kantamba—he left $20.00 and twenty head of cattle each. To his sister's son and daughter, who were his main heirs according to native custom, he left $12.00 each and the remainder of his cattle (several hundred head). Another nephew who accompanied him on his trips in his latter days, got his savings account which was in the Livingstone Bank, $2,400. Now, you ask, "What about his wife? What did she get?"

"Oh, nothing," came the reply. "Not even a blanket. It's not the custom of the black folk to leave the wife anything," said our informer.

Before leaving Sianjina you must hear more about his family. That son, Bicycle: I don't know the secret of his name, but with Africans there is significance in a name. Knowing, as I do, something of their ways, I would guess he was perhaps the first in his area to have a bicycle. He was given the name and will always be *Bicycle*, the son of Sianjina. This boy came to the

mission to school, studied Bible, and carried it to his people. He still makes his crops, and between seasons he ties his blankets and Bible on the back of his bicycle and goes over all his area preaching. He is a happy, friendly, smiling young man wherever he goes.

Bicycle has a sister who lives with him and his family. He came to the mission often and always brought greetings to me from that sister, and he never failed to insist that I visit them in their village. The time came that I made my plans to go. At the close of the school term I chose two of my girl students to go with me to visit villages. We got together a few camp supplies, and one of the men on the mission took us by car out to the native reservation fifty miles away. We unloaded at an old mission point, then unoccupied, and the car returned to Namwianga. We gathered up our supplies and set out to spend the week walking to each little school and hamlet, making our rounds to most of the villages of the area, spending about a day and a night at each place. The week was well filled with this visitation program. Maybe you would call it a tour of a peace corps. At the first village we entered, some girls welcomed us, and we sat down to rest. One hostess soon brought a half-gallon tin bucket containing a sweet drink which they make. The two hostesses took a big swallow first from the bucket then passed it to the girls accompanying me, and they each took a sup from the container and passed to the next. I knew my time was coming, so I thought in a hurry. When it was passed to me, I lifted it near my mouth but just didn't have the courage to taste, but only

went through the motion. What was the idea? Our hostesses were showing us a real welcome, and they drank first to prove that it was no witchcraft poison.

As our visitation continued each village showered us with gifts of peanuts, milk, a chicken or two, little pumpkins and eggs. These supplied us with most of our food. The last village was that of Bicycle and his family. When I approached the small hut of Malita, the sister, she was sitting in the shade of the grass roof, a happy, smiling little woman, with a drawn twisted crippled form that had never walked a step in her thirty-odd years. She changed position only by scooting around as she sat flat on the ground. I'm sure she was wearing her best dress, a highly colored print trimmed with rows of large rick-rac braid. She told me that Bicycle bought her pretty dress for her. You could see she idolized that brother. Her black laughing eyes sparkled when she talked of him. More than anything in the world, she wanted to see and ride a train. Bicycle told her it was a big house on wheels, and people went in at a door, sat by big windows in big fine chairs. I doubt if she had ever been even twenty-five miles from her village. Hers was a small world, but she sought pity from no one. She was happy sitting in the shade wearing her pretty dress with all her strings and bands of colorful bead work. She was intelligent, but illiterate. In later years she committed suicide.

When I was ready to take my leave, she dragged herself inside her hut, got three small white eggs, carefully put them in a little dish, dragged herself out again, and laid them in my hands; this was her "mpacella" (gift) which she had saved for the white madam, Bicycle's

teacher, who was coming to see her. I turned to my path leading to the old mission again where the car would soon be waiting for us; we would be home before night. From my week's walking I had been almost too fatigued to take another step, but when I left Malita, daughter of Sianjina, I lifted my feet higher and livelier. Her smile and courage had given me a feeling of more gratitude than I ever had before. God had been so kind and wonderful in giving me an average, normal, strong body with which to serve Him.

Speaking of Names

A book could be written on the significance of names as in that of Sianjina (lice) and Bicycle. This special one may be of interest at this point. No matter how much we study the native language we will never learn all their secrets and we will always make mistakes. One missionary was talking to a group of boys. There was one present who wore the name "Nasiku," meaning *black* or *dark*. He had always been a little blacker than others. But the missionary got his words confused and he called the boy "Sikoswe" which means *rat*. The boys all laughed at the mistake, but the lad's new name stuck with him and he is still known as "Sikoswe," (rat).

After observing new missionaries for a while students, especially, will get together and give them suitable native names, some complimentary and others not. They may be too polite to tell the missionaries their new native names, but I found out what mine was as my language teacher didn't mind telling me. They were always very pleased when missionaries learned their language and would talk to them in their own tongue. When I did

that they chose a nice name for me, "Ka-chin-je le (the clever one). They gave Mr. Merritt his name years ago, "Man-gla-zi" (the one who wears glasses). Mr. Hobby was "Siatantola" (the cold or quiet one). Mrs. Hobby was "Siaseka" (the smiling one).

The Rabbit's Foot

Did you ever hear of removing warts by rubbing them with a dish-rag, then hiding the rag? Or did you ever know of anyone carrying a rabbit's foot for good luck? I remember opening an umbrella over my head in the house once when I was a little girl, and my little old grandmother snatched it and closed it quickly and admonished me earnestly never to do that again. It was bad luck. We laugh at these now, but it only shows that we don't have to go back too many generations to learn of charms or omens among our own people.

Most Africans cling tenaciously to superstitions that dominate their lives. Examples for your consideration:

A young man who worked on the mission went to his village and found that his wife had given birth to a child without any help. Midwifery is their custom although it is breaking down as they are beginning to accept hospital services. Because she was alone, Soap's baby died. Consequently, the wife had to sit outside her hut until the days of purification were fulfilled. It was during the rainy season, so the husband had to borrow a tarpaulin from the mission with which to cover her; this served as a kind of tent.

They believed that if she should go inside and touch anything pertaining to her husband or their little three-year-old girl it would mean certain death to them. The

day the moon changed two women came, brought some herbs from the forest, and made medicine with which to bathe her. The blankets and her clothing were put through a fumigation ceremony. These women collected a fee for their services; then the young mother was able to go about her normal family duties.

A portion of the windpipe of a lion is put into a horn with medicines from the forest. This is carried when one travels through lion country in the belief that should a lion approach, the horn with its concoction will roar like the beast, and the approaching lion will turn away, thinking it's only one of his own kind and not an enemy. Hunters also carry lion claws tied up with herbs as a lucky charm.

It is bad luck for a hunter to sharpen his knife the night before he plans to go hunting, since the animals where he plans on going will dream that the hunter is coming, and they will all run away.

For a man who is not a father to see a woman the day her child is born, is a serious thing. If he does see her, his own child, yet unborn, will die. To be sure this doesn't happen, often a row of spears is stuck up in the ground about fifteen feet from and around the hut. This is a warning to stay away as a child is being born.

The practices of native doctors usually consist of a conglomeration of tomfoolery. One doctor treats only one kind of illness. Ordinary animal horns are used as suction cups on the temples as treatment for headache. Some doctors will gash the flesh of the temple to allow blood to escape. They say the headache is caused from

too much blood in the body. Some will gash the area around the lungs as treatment for pneumonia or any other respiratory pain.

What would you guess a *finger* doctor does? The father of one of our former teachers was a *finger doctor*. This was the procedure in one of his cases. Jeremiah was really quite ill and the people thought he was going to die, so they sent for the *finger doctor*. The patient told of all his various complaints and gave the doctor his three pennies, the charge agreed on.

The doctor rose to his feet, pointed his index finger to the ground in front of him and began walking, apparently following where his magic finger pointed. It led him over ant heaps, into the creek and around trees or huts. He pushed his way across a cornfield to an old abandoned hut surrounded by dry, half-fallen cornstalks, and there his finger pointed to the rotten grass roof. There was the cure for the boy. He pulled out some of that old grass, returned to his patient, made tea with his handful of dirty rubbish, and gave it to Jeremiah to drink.

"The boy will live," said the doctor, and he did. What better proof of magic power and success for the *finger doctor* did the people want?

Green Fangs

The husband went away from home to be gone for the day and left his wife to care for their herds around near the gardens where her companions were harvesting corn and beans. At midday women and children were lolling around in the sunshine, watching and whistling at birds to chase them from the grain fields. The shepherdess came running across a corn patch gasping and waving to

her friends to get their attention. "Please take care of my children and my baby. I'm dying," she called out.

"What happened?" asked one woman as they ran to her and crowded around.

"Mamba," she gasped as she pointed to her leg where the poisonous snake had inserted his fangs. She gasped again and was gone. The mamba is the swiftest and most deadly of all snakes. A victim will live only a few minutes after the mamba strikes. This gives little chance to get aid or to obtain a snake serum which will save life. There are few deaths, however, because everyone is constantly on the alert for this killer. People look at the ground or feel their way carefully when out walking anywhere.

Bicycle's sister, Malita.

CHAPTER XXIII

LABOR AND COMPENSATIONS

Three years since my return from the States plus long teaching hours, and working in both white and native schools in a tropical climate, was bound to sap my strength. I mothered nearly a hundred African girls, supervised their food rations and work hours, saw to the care of the ill, taught some of the home-craft classes and religious training, and took care of my own foods, sewing, and housekeeping. Although my health was especially good, sometimes I could scarcely get rested. I was compelled to get away at the year's end of school.

It seemed best for me to go to the coast and get out of the tropics for a month, so I chose to go to Durban, South Africa, a beautiful east coast city. Happy memories come to me when I reflect on those days spent with the John Maples family from Dallas, Texas. My gracious hostess saw to it that I had the best their home afforded. Their mission there was establishing the church among the Europeans. It was a joy to me to be with those people and listen to services being conducted in my own language, and to be a part of their cottage meetings and Bible study.

The scenery, too, was magnificent, with fields of tall, waving sugar cane which covered the hills of all the countryside. By walking only three blocks from my host's home I could gaze out on the great expanse of the blue ocean and watch the breakers roll in with a thunderous splash against boulders. My interest ran high when fishing boats came to view, tossing over waves and through

whitecaps. Those afternoons spent driving out to the more distant sandy beach bring pleasant memories of digging in the white sand with bare feet, wading in the salty shallows, or gathering treasures of the sea which were tossed out of the briny deep just for us. Shells and coral swirls filled our pockets. Nothing is more invigorating than inhaling the sea breeze as the salty mist falls on your face.

A trip to the whaling wharf brought amazement to us onlookers, and the olfactory nerves were especially stimulated then. Several whalers had just pulled in, towing their tons of flesh to shallow water. Other giant whales were already loaded on flat railroad cars to be taken around the mountain to the factory where they would be converted into usable products for the world.

At the end of a month's rest I reluctantly bade farewell to a host of new friends and my kind hostess with her fine family as I boarded the South African train and departed for Northern Rhodesia and the work I loved. I had recovered from that always-tired feeling and felt the renewed strength, high spirit, and buoyancy of my earlier self.

Althought discouragements came sometimes, the many joys in this work recompense one for every tear shed. On my arrival I received a warm welcome from my coworkers and native friends alike. School opened in August, and my heart filled with joy when I looked out my door and saw the first glimpse of several girls making their way along the path, through the tall grass leading to my house. The veldt grass was so tall I could see only the suitcases and blankets, which they carried on their heads, bobbing up and down as they wound along

the path, but I knew who it was. Some of the girls had been with us several years, but they brought new ones each term.

The mission had become the home of over two hundred girls and boys. They were carrying Bibles and its great message to their people every holiday when they returned to the villages. Boys were conducting services, preaching, and helping build their simple native-type churches and school buildings at their homes. Girls helped in these tasks by cutting and combing thatching grass and carrying water for the bricks or mud plaster. They made the mud floors and hand-plastered the walls of these structures. Many girls also influenced the parents of their friends to send their daughters to Namwianga. Fathers and mothers were glad for their young people to become Christians even though they themselves might not be. The youth never refrained from expressing their faith and appreciation for having heard of God and his love toward the souls of men. These were the young people now returning to school.

Simango Writes

"It is great advantage to be a Christian. You can save many people in the whole world by preaching the gospel to them and to tell them that happened long ago since they were born. They don't know about that therefore if you are a Christian you will help God's work.

"It is better to be a Christian than to be ignorant as we know that the fame of Jesus has gone everywhere in the world and in the same way, in the Bible we are told that there will be

no time of speaking or to grant pardon of Jesus. When son of man comes there will be gnashing of teeth of ignorant. If we be a Christian, we continue in his gospel, we will enter into the kingdom of heaven and sing beautiful songs of our saviour who died for our sins before we knew him and his faithfulness kindly to everybody, unjust and the just. It is better to follow him in future."

Simango was a student about eighteen years old in the fifth grade, a Christian, and could conduct any part of a church service; he preached in the villages and later became one of our teachers.

Many friends in the U. S. A. sent packages of materials, remnants, and gleanings from their machine drawers that could be used in the girls' sewing classes. A young Christian wrote this letter of appreciation after we had received several packages in one mailbag:

"Dear Friends:

"I am very glad to have this time of writing this letter to you. Thank you very much for all the things you have sent to us. And we are very pleased to see that you are very kind to us. When we opened the packages we were very happy when we saw the things that were inside. They were very pretty and pleased us very much indeed. And we sewed many dresses, towels, belts, caps, bags, pillow cases, and children's clothes.

"Now, we are selling all these things which we made and when we get money enough we will buy a machine.

"Madam teaches us many good things here at Namwianga. I am learning here with my younger sister, we are in standard five (grade 5). I am fifteen years old and she is thirteen. We are both Christians and learn Bible every day.

I am your Christian friend,
Balita Jobe"

I have given you these writings just as they wrote. Both students were with us several years.

MUNGAMBATA

"I'm going to tell God on you," said Mungambata as he turned to leave Mr. A. B. Reese to whom the old man had been pouring out his heart in desperation as he made an earnest request for a school.

This headman had heard the missionary preach and he was eager for all his people to hear the good news, and to become Christians. This would end all his troubles he told them. "Do you not drink, and dance, fight and kill, and steal each other's wives?" he told them. "The Christian way is the good way." He was baptized that very night and went to his home rejoicing over the great message he had heard. He repeated it over and over to his people, all he could remember. He was so earnest and enthusiastic about it that they caught his spirit and at the end of two weeks he brought twenty people to the mission to be baptized. At various intervals he brought others until every man, woman, and child old enough to be obedient to the gospel, all of his village, were baptized. He didn't send them, he brought them.

It was on one of these trips that Mungambata came to Mr. Reese with his entreaty for a teacher to be sent to

his people. "My people long for the gospel like a baby longs for its mother's milk," he said. At another time he fell to his knees, his face upturned to Mr. Reese and his arms extended upward, palms together as in prayer. With trembling voice and tearful eyes he implored again. "Give us a teacher that we may have a school in our village. My people are hungry for learning."

Mr. Reese was touched but felt so helpless and sad for this was in the early days when money was hard to get and few workers were on the field. His eyes, too, were blurred as he said, "There simply is no teacher to send now. We just can't give you a school."

Mungambata arose to his feet with downcast heart, tears in his eyes, and with disappointment written on his face, as he turned to leave. After taking a few steps to depart he turned facing Mr. Reese and reproached him, saying, "If you don't send me a teacher, I'll tell God on you." That was too much for Mr. Reese; he sent the teacher. Mungambata put away his extra wife but continued to support her and her children. He maintained the cause in his village and remained faithful until death called him home.

Mooka

His toes were all gone; some of his fingers were mere stubs, with white spots. Yes, he had leprosy. Mr. George M. Scott found this old man in the village, taught him the gospel and baptized him. Mooka was also referred to Mr. J. D. Merritt, a navy nurse during World War I, for treatment. His horrible disease was treated, arrested, and finally cured. The native people had observed something that, heretofore, was an unheard of thing.

Persecution ran high among the African Christians, with the severest being aimed at Mooka. The Bible teaching coming from missionaries was causing some of the people to give up some of the common age-old superstitions and evil practices.

"What kind of a man is this Mooka? No more white spots. Leprosy healed," they reasoned among themselves.

This Christian man had to find another place for his family. A converted headman invited Mooka to come live in his village. But what happened? These people soon became jealous of him for they saw he was prospering more than they themselves. They became jealous of him when his herds increased more than any others of the village. They said he had too many cattle and this was bringing ill luck to them. He must pray with them to the departed spirits. This and other demands came from the people, but he refused, so they drove him from their village.

He moved out into the veldt alone, built himself a bigger and better house, and made better crops on the new ground. The villagers came near him and planted gardens; then if his herds got into their fields as a result of their crowding him, they made him pay damages. From here he moved farther away and built a smaller house for he said the people were jealous of his big house.

They said, "This man is selfish. He will not make beer with us."

"Now what can I do?" asked Mooka of one friend, a fellow leprosy patient.

This friend, a village headman, said, "Come live in my village."

All was agreed and Mooka moved again. With a thankful heart he built his hut, and the family all settled again. "Now, this is rest," he said. Then came an unusually dry year, crops were failing, herds were starving, and water was low. People everywhere were sacrificing and praying for rain. The headman came and said, "Make beer and pray with us to the departed spirits that rain will come."

"But I pray only to God," replied Mooka.

"You must follow our ancient custom and help bring rain. We are dying of starvation," argued the headman.

"But, I cannot. I believe in only one God and Jesus," answered Mooka.

"Do you want to kill all the people?" asked the headman.

"I only want to please God," was Mooka's earnest reply.

"Then get out of my village," demanded the headman. So again he moved outside the village and built his family huts. It seemed that he had been scorned enough to break him, but this still was not the end. Because of a government ruling against Africans moving out alone, the magistrate came along and found him there, so he stepped into the scene. Being a new man in office, he knew nothing of Mooka's problems and the persecutions he had suffered.

"Whose huts are those out there?" he demanded. "Does he not know this is illegal to live outside the village?"

"He is a man the people don't agree with," he was told. The magistrate set fire to his huts and they were soon converted to a heap of ashes.

"Yes, yes," muttered poor Mooka, "no more than I expected." So he was forced to move again. He got permission to build his own village and take his family and relatives many miles from other people. He had a large family of kin who went with him, and they began all over again. Many of the Christians find it very hard to break away from old customs and superstitions, but Mooka's faith grew stronger. He sought out every opportunity to tell his people of his faith in the *one God.* He left his tormentors, moved out into the bush, built a whole village of his own, cleared the lands, cultivated new fields, they herded their cattle, cleaned out some springs of good water, and built bigger and better houses. He was appointed headman over the village, and again God prospered Mooka. During these years of persecution he went from village to village preaching of his *one God,* and he sent several of his children to the mission school. One son and a son-in-law became proclaimers of the gospel.

My last village trip shortly before leaving Africa led me to Mooka's new location. I took my camp supplies and teaching materials and drove out to Kabanga Mission in the reserve, fifty miles across the wooded veldt from Kalomo. From there Mr. Merritt took me in his jeep out through the thick bush, across ditches, over boulders, up steep grades, and around trees and ant heaps—a typical jeep road. It was about a twenty-mile drive, but it took us two or three hours to reach the village. Here came several of the women and children most of whom I

knew quite well since they had attended school. They were shouting, laughing and chattering as they came bounding through the tall grass to meet us. They had heard the jeep struggling through the last creek bed and they knew it was Muluti (teacher), Merritt. As they approached us they waved their hands and shouted, "Madam! Madam! Muluti! mwabuka" (good morning). Mr. Merritt was about exhausted from the hard drive following the winding wooded foot paths.

My supplies were unloaded. After Mr. Merritt and I had agreed on the day for his return, and the place of meeting (about two miles back, for this last two-mile stretch was just too much for even a jeep), he returned to the mission.

So there I was, far out from "nowhere" in Mooka's village. But they were my friends, and they would give me the best of whatever they had. I walked through the village greeting the people. As I approached Mooka's big house, there in the yard sat the thin little old man on his homemade chair wearing an old floppy hat on his black shiny, bald pate, with a well-worn, faded army coat covering his thin body. He hovered over a little fire which was near his bare feet. His kind eyes sparkled and his smile bared his few teeth as he greeted me. He was unable to walk around without grim pain for he was suffering from a terrible tropical ulcer on one shin. (This was not a return of leprosy, but a common thing seen in the tropics.) He was happy and talkative, asking for the news of all those he knew at Kalomo. As two of the women, with babies on their backs, escorted me around, I was pleased to see their *big* houses—several three,-four- or five-room structures of sun dried bricks, long

meandering porches, good windows and doors, and well-done thatch roofs.

It was harvest time, so most of the people were in the fields gathering corn, beans, and pumpkins, and digging peanuts. But all would come home in the evening. Mooka's daughter, Alifa, and others brought me gifts of nuts, wild fruits, eggs, and a cup of tea. The choice chair was set out for me. They put my supplies in the small unfurnished guest room in Mooka's house. I saw they were saving the best for me, but I was afraid to sleep there because of insects, especially ticks which cause tick fever. What could I do? Never would I want to offend a single one of these kind friends. Alifa was my former student, so I knew she would understand. I said, "Alifa, I want to set up my camp before nightfall."

"Oh, you'll sleep in our guest room. We keep it for strangers who come," she quickly replied.

"That is so thoughtful and kind of you," I answered. "Do you suppose there might be ticks in the floor or wall that would come out and bite me?"

"I don't know, Madam. Maybe," she said.

At this point I reminded her, "Alifa, you know my body is very weak, and if a tick bites me it may give me a fever and I would be very sick." She agreed that she knew this could happen. I told her I was not afraid to sleep outside just at the edge of her yard, if we could just tie up a little standing circular wall of long grass. She went to her father and told him what I had said. He replied, "We don't want to throw her away in the forest." I assured him that he wasn't doing that, but that my body was very weak in fighting insects.

Several boys and girls set to sweeping a spot on one corner of the yard where I would camp, while others brought wood and water for preparing my evening meal. Alifa's husband and brother came in from the field at evening time and ate their food; then what a jolly crowd cooperated in getting small poles and long grass to build that little grass house for me. They laid a grass floor on which to spread my blankets; all sang, laughed, chattered, and had it finished about 9:00 P.M. When it was completed, everyone sat down on the ground around my little camp, and we had Bible reading and prayer, led by one of Mooka's sons. We retired for the night and two young girls were assigned by Mooka to sleep in a small cubicle of my grass house to protect me.

I spent the remainder of the week teaching two Bible classes daily, one in the morning and one at night. They were especially for the women and children but, no one was barred from listening. Mooka and other men of his family sat near my class at night and asked if they might listen to us. I had flannelboard pictures which they enjoyed.

Time came for me to pack for going home. I handed out my left-over foods to the women and children. Alifa's husband and brother brought four oxen and inspanned them to the two-wheel ox cart, loaded on my camp equipment, and I was ready to leave my friends. They had been more than hospitable; they had shown that they loved me. As I was ready to climb upon the cart Mrs. Mooka pushed a little girl out toward me. The child stretched out her little grimy hands to give me something. I received a rolled-up rag in which were tied pieces of money. My eyes blurred as I untied and counted it.

There was their love gift of about $1.50, mostly pennies. I thanked them for this collection coming from this fine Christian group and I mounted the cart with Alifa and her sister-in-law. Their husbands took over the lead of the oxen and we went on our way through the forest to the place where I was to meet Mr. Merritt. We jolted along while we all chattered, laughed, and sang our throats out as if entertaining the birds and animals hiding along the way.

I found the jeep waiting, so my supplies were soon transferred from the cart to the car, and we turned to drive back to Kabanga Mission. As we went out of sight through the trees, I gazed back at my friends still waving their hands as they shouted, "Thank you, Madam, for coming to see us and thank you for the Bible lessons."

I spent a night at Kabanga with the Merritts and returned to Namwianga next day. This trip had been a great experience for me. Every day and every dollar I spent in Africa during those years of labor were well spent. I believe the church is in Africa to stay for I'm sure there are enough Christians like Mooka to keep Christ in their country. I thank God for the small part I had in taking the story of Jesus to them. I thank God for Christian homes that were established by our own boys and girls. I can feel that each home is better than the homes of two generations back. Yes, there will always be discouragements and some will fall away, but this is true also in our own prosperous, educated society. Those years were not periods of sacrifice, but of joy and fulness of life.

CHAPTER XXIV

AS I MEDITATE

All the families had to have their time for break between school terms; therefore it was my good fortune to keep children for them on many occasions and let parents leave for a complete rest. It was on such occasions that I kept their children and became very attached to all of them as they joined our forces through the years of family growth. The separation from my own close ties led me to that close grandmother feeling for all the babies as they came. Their growth, baby talk, games, then school, was like magnetism pulling at me.

When I was awakened early in the morning by a bumping sound outside around my water tank, a silent smile crept across my face as I slipped from my bed and peeped out the window. There, creeping around the tank, was a little boy in pursuit of the baby frogs as they hopped and splashed in water and leaped for a hiding place in the flower beds near the wall. I was intrigued by his determination not to let one escape. Finally, with all his pockets bulging with wriggling toads, he made his half-mile walk back home in time for his breakfast.

Sometimes little feet pushed a kiddie-car along a sandy path on the yard and came to a stand-still by a flower bed; there a chubby little hand reached out and tenderly pulled a flower to his nose for a smell, or plucked one off to carry to his mother or me.

Not to be forgotten is the time a little girl wanted to go home with me one evening and spend the night. "Yes," she told her mother, "I'll stay, I won't cry."

I took her, and her plans were elaborate about all the things we would do and where we would sleep. We went to bed and she snuggled up to me as she talked, "I wonder," she said, "if mother is asleep." She drew a little closer and her voice began to quiver. "I think mother needs me. I better go home," she whispered, as tears burst forth. "I want to see my daddy." So I lit my kerosene lantern, dressed, and lifted her from the bed. She dried her eyes as we walked that one-fourth mile, carrying our farm lantern to light up our pathway. When we arrived, she said, "Mother, I want to sleep with you and Daddy."

The day of the Eureka picnic was a great day. I took all the class over on the hill about a mile away, across the river (creek) to roast marshmallows, cook mealies (roasting ears), and weiners. We hardly had our fire going when we saw a cloud coming up. We rushed our fire somewhat but not enough. The cloud came over us, bringing a cloudburst. Tropical rains can come amazingly fast. I knew we must get back across that creek before the high water came rolling in. We hurried along the path as fast as we could, but when we reached the creek the water was already so deep and swift I feared for the children to wade it alone. The older ones held hands and dashed across. Two adult African boys carried the younger ones over. We dragged through the tall water-laden grass in the continuing downpour for another quarter of a mile to my house. I then called Eureka (I had a phone by this time—another of our mission assets) and notified J. C. Shewmaker that we were home and safe, but wet, and requested he bring the pick-up and get the children.

Sports day is always a big event with any school, but this one for Eureka was very special. We were invited to have it several miles away at the Boma (a name given to the government center of our area). We made big preparations for the event, even to rhythm band practice. On this special occasion they sang and played *God Save The Queen*, the same tune of our song, *My Country 'Tis Of Thee*. That was a great day in their lives.

The times we met at the beautiful water hole near the Eureka schoolhouse to baptize some of these young lives into the body of Christ is the climax of these memories of my associations with Eureka. This school for the Europeans with more than fifty students and Namwianga with nearly three hundred African students were located about a mile apart, and both offered great challenges for us.

The dry season of six months was about half gone: cold June and July were past, and mid-August was time to open a new term. Both schools were opening with some new improvements ready for use. What a joy to look at the growth that had come to the work since 1938. Buildings, equipment and number of students, teachers and European workers had increased several hundred per cent. We now had about three thousand students in the area having daily Bible lessons.

During this holiday season water was piped to my house (yard) and I bought a used bathtub, set it in a corner of my porch, which I had closed in, and now I had my first bathroom in Africa. I still heated water on the wood stove and carried it to the tub, then caught the water in a bucket outside from the drain and carried it away, but I got real tub baths. A new home economics

building with two big rooms, a wood cookstove, a pantry, some good cupboards, and more Singer, hand-operated sewing machines, another new dormitory, several single beds and mattresses—all this improvement in the school in the last few months made hearts glad and work efforts more effective. I was also able to use advanced girls in some of the teaching. Martha, whom you will remember I mentioned previously, was one of these. The growth over the past years seemed almost unbelievable. Mrs. Rena Crissop, an European Christian from Livingstone, was also giving full time to girls' classes, and she was valuable help. The work was a great consolation.

Mixed Emotions

The coming of the postman each day brought letters that sometimes caused a sense of mixed emotions within my heart. My father was growing quite frail and one of my sisters who had undergone surgery for malignancy was failing. As long as all went well at home I was content, but when illness struck emotions were hard to curb.

Letters became more disturbing; I was needed at home. We decided that older African girls could help take classes and other responsible places; and a teacher's wife could be appointed to help in the capacity of dorm mother. In October of 1956 I obtained booking on a ship from Capetown for about January 1, 1957. I could continue my work for that semester which would close about mid-December. I lost no time in my further preparations of sewing and packing. I vacated my house, giving it over to a Bulawayo couple who wanted to come and help on the mission for a year.

When school dismissed for the holidays my eyes were blurred as I watched that long line of girls go from sight through the tall grass, their suitcases and blankets on their heads bobbing up and down, just as I had watched their coming to school along this same path many months previously. They knew I would not be there when they returned in January, so our parting had been a sad occasion for all of us.

The workers saw me off on the train for Capetown where I would board another Lykes cargo ship bound for home. This time I traveled with the George Hook family from Nhowe Mission. There was nothing especially spectacular about the voyage, but all was pleasant with good weather, beautiful sea, first class food, and a clean ship. I enjoyed the five Hook children. We were four weeks at sea and landed in Galveston, Texas, on February 3.

Our ship, *Harry Culbreath*, slowly pulled into the wharf. To my complete surprise, I gazed earnestly at a face barely recognizable. I caught my breath, looked again. I grasped Mrs. Hook's arm and stammered, "Margaret, I believe . . . there . . . yes, there's Don! It's Don! It is, and Mildred! There they are!" I turned in circles as I laughed and cried for joy.

In about an hour I stepped ashore and we were happily united. We soon had my light luggage loaded into their car and shipping arrangements completed for the heavy pieces. We lost no time in getting out of the city and on our way to Dallas, Texas. That night we had a good visit with my two brothers living there, left the following morning for our next stop at Plano, Texas, to see my sister. She was ill but still on her feet, cheerful and

active for one in her state of health. After lunch we left Plano bound for Muskogee, Oklahoma, Don's home, where my dear old father was waiting for me. We arrived just before dark and I slipped in on him, took him in my arms and this was a happy evening with my family all reunited. My granddaughter was now a young lady in high school.

Home Again

Could it possibly be true? Here I was in my own home in Searcy again. A short five months ago I was leading a normal busy life at Namwianga Mission in the middle of Africa.

After a three weeks' visit with Don and his family and my father I returned to Searcy, visited Harding and my many friends, took possession of my home, and set to the task of cleaning, repairing, and refurnishing it. In August Father came to live with me. A teaching position seemed to open especially for me. God can work wonders. Here I was back in my sixth-grade room of the Harding Elementary School, the same place I left when I went to Africa in 1938. School opened in September and I was adjusting to American ways again.

Christmas holidays came and I had not yet seen my brother Orvin, and sister Eula, in Tucson, Arizona, so I took my father and went by train to Dallas where he stayed while I paid a visit to Orvin and Eula. Our Christmas together was truly a happy holiday. On my return to Dallas I stopped over in Abilene, Texas, where Loma now lived and had a short visit with her. She was under constant care of the doctor and I knew her life was fast ebbing away with the return of cancer.

Then God took her in January, 1960, but Father was too frail to go to Abilene for her funeral. Friends came to my aid, took care of him, and I went to see my baby sister laid to rest.

In February, 1962, Father had a heart attack one night and I rushed him to the hospital. He was in the hospital a month with Searcy friends staying by my side, giving aid in nursing when I went back to school. His improvement seemed to justify my bringing him home from the hospital at the end of a month. He was confined to his bed and one night before bedtime the pain he was having seemed to indicate another heart attack. It was a cold, wet, icy night. Being unable to get the doctor on the phone, I stepped outside to go after him. I slipped on the ice and fell, injuring my ankle, a sprain I supposed. I hobbled to his door and back to my own house to my bed. The doctor came, pronounced Father all right, but he said he feared I had a break, but would x-ray next morning.

The x-rays showed a broken ankle; so friends took over at home and I was confined to the hospital that week. When I returned home wearing a knee-length cast and using crutches, brother came from Dallas and put Dad in a bedroom on the train, took him to Dallas, where an ambulance met him. When Dad left me that night, he was never able to return, but he was well cared for and was content at the small hospital nursing home. He continued to improve, got on his feet, could stir about the house, and always enjoyed all our visits.

I returned to my teaching the next week, ambulating on the cast and crutches for eight weeks, only laying them aside in time to close school in my normal way.

I missed having Dad with me and I was lonely, but those young people arriving at Harding College, from Namwianga that year, took away many lonely hours. It was like having my own come visit me. As I gained strength that summer, I visited Dad, then Orvin and Eula in Tucson and Don's family in Muskogee. Each time I visited Dad I saw that he was more frail. Then, on May 18, 1961, one year after Loma's passing, Father slipped away quietly and peacefully to be with the Lord. Just two weeks before school closed I went to Dallas to see him laid to rest by my mother's side, the one with whom he so wanted to be. From this time on my invalid brother Orvin received my attentions during holidays.

I was strong and active again and those sixth graders kept me alive as we worked and played together. I appreciated these children each year with their buoyancy and cheer which they brought into school each morning. The times they burst in at the door bringing me a choice flower, apple, cupcake, or a song of *Happy Birthday* and a brightly colored package, the times they struggled to pull a big Christmas tree into the room and set it up, then decorated and planned for that party—oh, a teacher's life never has a dull moment.

Other pleasant memories come as I reflect on the connections I had with college students. During these years since my return from Africa the missionary children were growing up and coming over to enter Harding College. These were the children I had known all their lives and, as they came, I felt that I needed to take the mother's place. The *African Club* activities helped to keep us together and draw others into our interests. My home was open at all times to them.

With these children's coming home there were also parents who found need for furloughs. Some were arriving in time for the wedding of some girl or boy of their number.

In December, 1962, J. C. Shewmaker and his wife, Joyce, were to arrive in Searcy with their youngest, Sherman, to put him in Harding. I had great anticipations and looked forward eagerly to their arrival. I began planning early and was making some special preparation for a lovely Christmas for them. Everything was going well and house decorations were about finished; the table was piled high with gifts for them and then *it* happened. On December 3, I took a hard tumble on my own stairway and hit the bottom, landing with another broken ankle. I was hospitalized, put in a cast, and was given one week of rest. I returned home with a knee-length cast and crutches again, went to school the last two days before the holiday dismissal, and with all my good help the class had their Christmas party. With this finished I was ready to rest and recuperate, but not for long. The next day, December 15, I was quite ill. Examination showed I had pneumonia. So there I stayed in the hospital until after New Year's Day. The Shewmakers had their holidays and family reunions in my home without me, but they shared their Christmas dinner with me by bringing a beautiful tray of food to the hospital.

I could never have known what a host of friends I had except through the adversities I had met in less than three years. On January 6, 1963, I left the hospital, and on February 6th I returned to school using crutches, but I soon laid them aside. I finished school normally, then spent the summer exercising my ankles, visiting Orvin, Eula, and Don's family. I came home feeling

entirely renewed and didn't even realize that I had ever had two broken ankles.

I was filled with renewed energy and was ready for another year in school with this fine, lively class of sixth graders. The year went quite smoothly. But at the end of school in May, 1964, I felt so tired again that I was prompted to ask for semi-retirement, teaching only half a day. It was kindly granted and so I made plans to slow down my pace, but I still wanted to be useful in life.

My first step at this time was to visit Eula and Orvin in Tucson. I had never flown before, but I took a jet in Little Rock, and flew to Tucson, arriving in time for supper. Orvin and his wife met me and I found him cheerful as usual, but it took great effort for him to ambulate on his crutches. We enjoyed being together the first week; then one night he was having trouble feeding himself at the supper table. Next morning he was no better, so he went to the hospital. While waiting for a doctor to take over, he had a severe stroke. He was soon in his room in the hands of the doctor. As the days passed we saw improvement each time we visited him and I planned to return home about the first of July. My last visit was cheerful; he talked freely, ate well, and he even gave us instructions as to the best route to get to the airport. I was home for supper. It had been a wonderful trip except, of course, for Orvin's illness.

One week after I arrived home a telegram came, saying Orvin had passed suddenly with another stroke. God had been good to give us that last wonderful visit in June before he was stricken. He had been a wonderful brother with courage and bravery that would put most of us to shame.

CHAPTER XXV

FRIENDS

Friends can do such wonderful things. Shortly after Orvin's death one of those devoted mission children took me on vacation with them up into the Rocky Mountains near Denver. It was a delightful camping trip for the duration of nearly two weeks. We went all around Pike's Peak. I climbed mountains, gathered wood, stone, and plant specimens. They could not have chosen a better time to do this kindness for me. I repeat over and over: God has given me such wonderful friends. What could I have done without them?

The closing of this term brought me to the end of a teaching career of over forty years. It has been a profession filled with joy and sometimes disappointments, but great rewards come when a teacher sees those who have been her pupils come into success and bear fruit for God.

Then along came friends again when school was out and offered another camping trip for me; yes, to New York, taking an interesting route through several states where I had never been, along the coast of Lake Erie, Niagara Falls, then to Ithaca. There I took a plane and flew to *Kennedy Airport* where Don and Mildred met me and we spent nearly a month just having a general good time. I came home by jet and settled in to making preparations for the arrival of Eula from Tucson. We had a wonderful visit together for several weeks. With summer gone, I now find myself making plenty of plans

to fill the winter months. I find there is no time for a retired woman to become bored or take to the rocking chair to pass time away.

Of my friends who have made life so full and worth while for me I have this word:

A FRIEND

Of one who's truly a friend,
His love can ne'er be bought;
When I'm discouraged and distraught,
He his sympathy will kindly lend;
New incentive he'll give to me, his friend,
To ride above and set at naught,
Each cloud of fear or doubtful thought.
The heartfelt words and smiles they give,
Put into my heart the will to live,
Grateful am I to each and all;
Friends have kept me from many a fall;
Of God, I implore that I may serve
And be a friend who'll never swerve.

Hundreds of people have helped me through these long years so now it is my deep desire to reciprocate by doing for others as God has done for me.

OF LIFE

Seventy years of living
They say's a fair beginning;
Now I hope from here on out,
I'll grasp what life's about,
And be ready more to share,
Helping others to forbear,
As the way they tread along;
To tell each one he's not alone,
For God sees us his very own,
And has promised us a home,
If we faithfully plod along,
And keep our lives all free from wrong.

EPILOGUE

To conclude this writing, may I say this to my readers: These pieces of information on Africa have been collected over a period of twenty years ranging from 1938 to 1958 during my years spent in that mission field. During these two decades Africa was undergoing a transition that was confusing to the natives. These last ten years since I left the field have brought greater changes, with many of the countries gaining independence from Colonial European rule. Northern Rhodesia is one of these, and the African people now have a large part of the government in their control. With all the changes came the new name ZAMBIA instead of Northern Rhodesia. There is integration of the blacks and whites in many walks of life.

Most of these changes are found in or around the cities and along the railroads or main highways of the continent. If a traveler leaves the European developed parts of the country and goes out into the native reserves and remote areas and stays long enough, he will find cases of African primitive life as I have described it. The people are truly growing as their leaders now begin to carry responsibility and take over what the white man has brought to Africa—education, teachers, hospitals, doctors and nurses, factories, and development of the natural resources, especially copper, uranium, gold, diamonds, forests and great water power.

Missionaries are due much credit for their labor among all the tribes, giving them schools, hospitals and the Bible. Christianity will build up any nation where the Bible goes.