



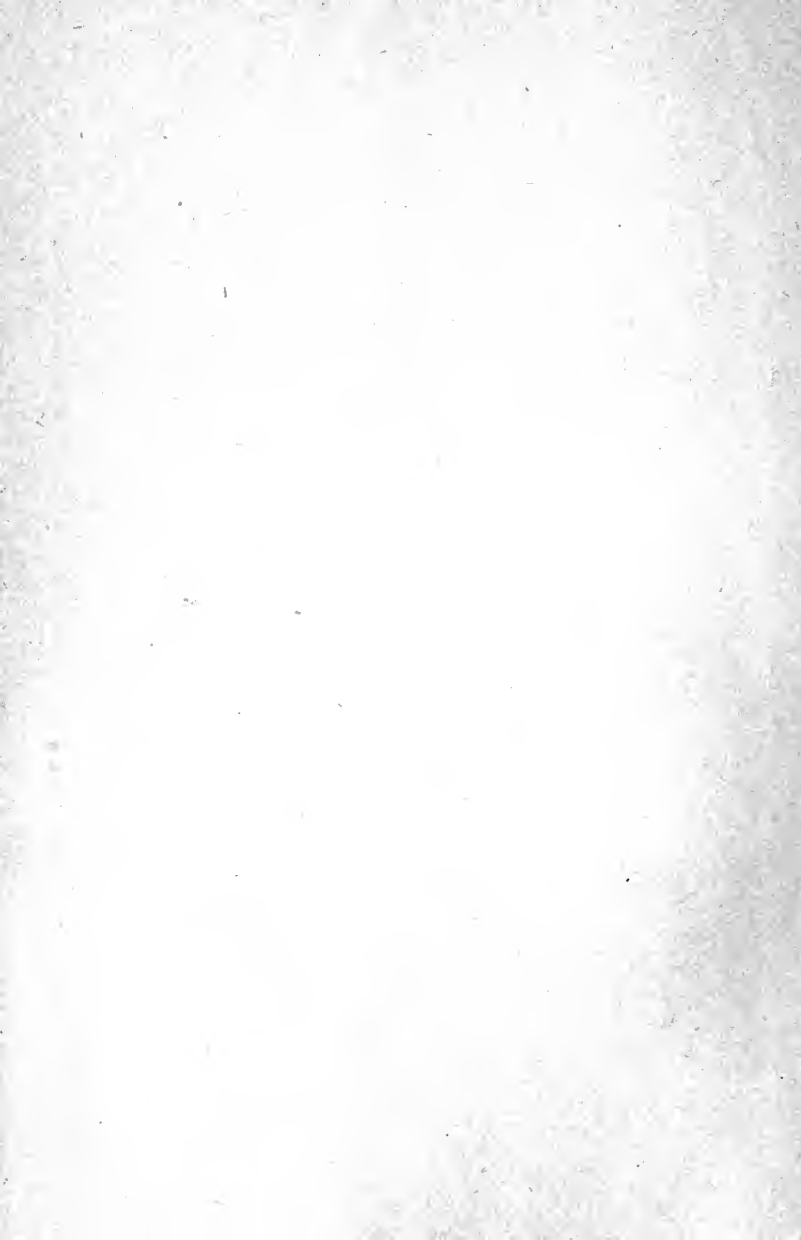
Anna Coche
Sky Pilot of the
San Blas Indians



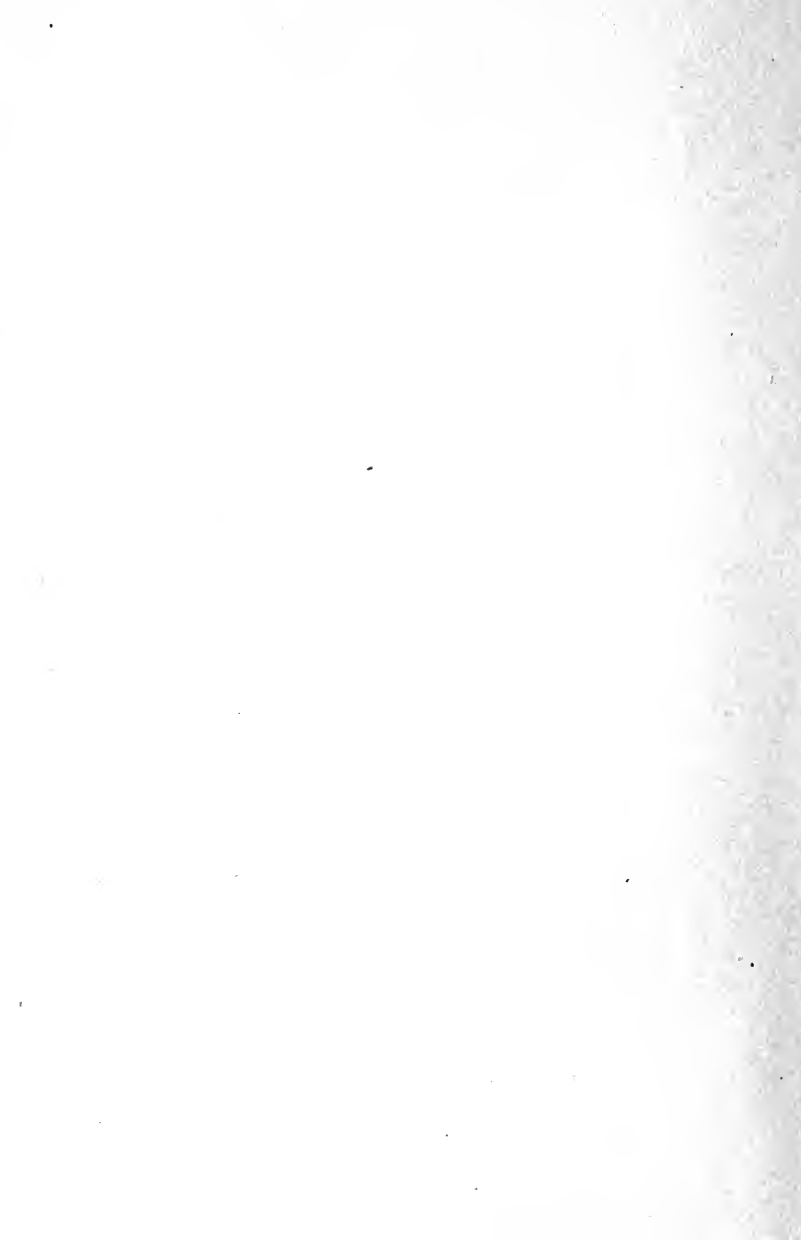
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Anna Coope and her pupil, Lonnie Powers.

ANNA COOPE

SKY PILOT OF THE
SAN BLAS INDIANS

An Autobiography



AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY
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FOREWORD

This is a remarkable book, and for the reason that it is born out of a remarkable, and, indeed, an almost unprecedented experience. The author's life is spent daily and hourly in communion with the Creator and Heavenly Father. God is always near, always revealing His love, and manifesting His protection and deliverance. The book is especially timely in these days when God is held by so many to act only through the established laws that control the physical universe. It is inspiring and uplifting to be in the atmosphere even for a short time of a faith that believes in God every moment, and trusts Him for all things, realizing that He is present in the smallest details of our daily life. The book is published under the strong conviction that it will strengthen the faith of all who read it, and bring the believer into closer touch with the Eternal Father and Omnipotent Saviour.

JUDSON SWIFT.

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ANNA COOPE



ANNA COOPE, SKY PILOT OF THE SAN BLAS INDIANS

CHAPTER I

GIRLHOOD DAYS IN ENGLAND

I HAVE often been asked to write the story of my life, showing how God has led me and provided for every need as I walked by faith in his promises. What God has done for me He can do for others, and if the reading of these chapters will help some one to step out by simple faith on His promises, every one of which is Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, I shall be glad that I have tried to tell the story in my simple way.

In Bolton, Lancashire, England, a large manufacturing town of about two hundred thousand inhabitants, on Tuesday, May 31st, 1864, I first saw the light of day. I was not

very warmly welcomed because I was a girl, poor me! Although I was the express image of my father, he was not particularly fond of me, so I became mother's girl. For some time she cherished a grudge against me because I had blue eyes and flaxen hair like my father, but after a while, mother-like, she became reconciled to my defects and loved me in spite of them.

I was the first-born, which has been a comfort to me, for God has said: "The first-born are mine." The second child came two years later and was a boy. Mother and father were very happy, but the baby did not stay long, only three months, and from that time I was the only child.

When I was vaccinated I became a great deal of trouble, for something was wrong with the vaccine and my arm became so bad that the doctor said it would have to be amputated; but mother said she would not bring up a one-armed child, and he must either kill me or cure me with two arms. To be a girl was bad enough, but to be a one-armed girl was unendurable!

Finally the arm healed, and then there

came a growth in my nose which no one seemed to be able to name. One doctor said it was a polypus, another contradicted this; but whatever it was it gave me pain. My mother went to one doctor after another, some saying that I was too young to be operated on. At last she became desperate and said, "Operate at once, whatever the result, and let us know the worst; she cannot go on suffering in this way." The operation was performed and I lived, but with a pug nose that was to be all my life my thorn in the flesh. I did not mind being a girl, but to be called "Pug-nose" by thoughtless children in school, was hard to bear.

I can see that God allowed this trouble for a purpose. Because of it I kept aloof from other children, and as I was an only child I stayed much in the house and learned all that a girl ought to about housekeeping, was the companion of my mother and grandmother, and began to read at an early age. I was very fond of reading out loud and my parents encouraged it, so I was getting my first lessons in a life of service for others.

I mention my "thorn in the flesh" because

I know that many are unhappy because they are not beautiful in face. But God has said in Isaiah: "How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." So I am glad that I have "beautiful feet," and that God chose me to carry the message of salvation to many of His neglected ones. "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." If I had not had the "thorn" given me, I would have looked like other girls and quite probably would have married, so my whole life would have been different. I believe God allowed that disfigurement to come into my life to keep me for a particular work, therefore that operation was the first lesson in my missionary training.

My parents were hard-working people; neither one had had much schooling. My father went to work when he was seven years old and was apprenticed to learn the mule-spinning trade. My mother also began working at an early age. Both of them were members of large families, and they had to assist in filling the family purse. My father was very fond of reading and was ambitious

to have me learn, so he put me in a girls' private school when I was five years old and I stayed there until I was nine. I was always very fond of telling others what I had learned myself, so I began in those early days to teach my mother when I came from school, and I was sure that she and my grandmother were wonderfully edified! My father encouraged me to read and bought me books as rewards for good reading. He guarded me against what he termed "boshy fairy tales," and later on against novels, examining every book that I brought into the house, even from the Sunday-school library. He threatened what he would do if he ever found me reading love stories.

When I was nine my father took me from the private school, saying that I knew more than he did at my age and that I must now go to work. The law then would not allow a child to work all day long in any factory until it had passed the fourth standard, so I was put in school for half a day and the other half I had to work in a hot cotton factory. Here was another preparatory lesson in the school for missionary training; I was learn-

ing how to live in a tropical climate. I was not allowed to speak to the boys or men who worked for my father or near him. When passing them and wanting to speak, I seemed to feel the keen blue eyes of my father piercing even my back. He punished me once when he thought I had talked with a boy who worked near by, and the only sympathy that I got from mother was, "You must obey your father." I did after that, you may be sure; for years I would not look at or talk to a boy.

Although my father was not a professing Christian, and never took me to the house of God nor read the Bible in his home, and was bitter against me when at the age of seventeen I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, he had had the training of a godly mother who had prayed much for her nine children. She was what they called a Strict Baptist, and my father had been a good Sunday-school boy, so my aunt told me, but like many boys had stopped attending when he thought he was getting to be a man. My mother was partly brought up a Roman Catholic. Her mother was of French descent, but marrying an Episcopalian, their house was divided and only

one of their eight children clung to the Catholic Church, the others going to the Church of England. So my mother never taught me the religion of her childhood, but her oldest sister, the one Catholic in the family, tried her best to make me a convert of Rome, and would have succeeded if my father had not kept such a strict watch over me. He finally forbade her coming to the house. Here again is an evidence of God's overruling hand, for I was very receptive to religious influences and was just at the age to be easily moulded.

When I left the private school my first Bible was given to me, and I well remember my cousin saying to me that I must put it away and keep it clean, as he did. He was ten years older than I and his Bible was as clean as when he received it. He never read it; oh, no, the Bible was to have and to hold occasionally, and to keep nice. I don't remember reading it in the private school, but in the new Episcopal parochial school to which I went, we often read the Bible; and one of the teachers asked me to come to the Sunday-school and be in her class. My father reluctantly consented, saying that he didn't be-

lieve much in religion; it made folks crazy. I was allowed to go occasionally and was very glad indeed, but not until I was eleven years old did I go regularly. I remember going with a neighbor's child, a girl of my own age, when about seven or eight years old; and there I heard a lady tell of the children in India who had no Sunday-school, who did not know how to sing these beautiful hymns and who knew nothing about Jesus who loved little children. I said, "Why doesn't somebody go and tell them? I would go if I were big, and when I get big I will go!" That settled it! I was marked for a missionary to Indians somewhere from that day; that was my star, my goal, henceforth.

But now a new experience came into my life. One day while playing on the outer circle of an open-air Methodist meeting, I heard a boy of about fourteen say that he knew his sins were forgiven and he was very happy. I had never heard any one talk like that before. My mother's mother had told of Jesus dying on the cross for sinners, but sinners were old folks, not a boy like that or a girl like me! Yes, grandmother did tell me that I "had a

temper," but she never said that I was a sinner. This boy said that he was "a sinner," but that Jesus had forgiven all his sins and that he was happy because he knew it.

Now if I had dared to speak to that boy I would have questioned him pretty closely, but I did not dare, so I had to puzzle over the matter without getting much satisfaction. God had used that boy to fix my attention on spiritual things. I wanted to know how he knew that he was forgiven. I had been going to the Sunday-school and the church and was learning new things both from the Bible and the Catechism, but this was the newest. The Catechism said that I was "a member of Christ, a child of God," but I knew that in my heart I did not feel this to be true, and there came over me a great longing to be saved and to know it.

I tried to get to a cottage prayer-meeting held not far from my home, but it was held at night and I was not allowed to go out after dark, so there was no help in that direction. I made up my mind that I would read my Bible more than ever and pray, and that was really the beginning of my searching to find

out God. How I groped in the dark! I felt better when I prayed much, but I was not satisfied. I asked God to tell me that my sins were forgiven and I would tell it to everybody. I thought I must be confirmed, but my father vetoed that. Then I planned to go to a Methodist Sunday-school, and my mother forbade that; she didn't like "too much religion" any more than my father.

I grew desperate. Here I was seeking to get what I was sure was the best thing in the world, and those who ought to be helping me were keeping me back for fear I'd go crazy. Crazy? I felt as though I really should go crazy if I didn't get religion, and the kind that boy talked about, that made him glad. I knew that I was not glad, and I knew that my parents were not either; so I went on struggling, endeavoring to be a Christian. It was all endeavor; there was no Christian in it.

So I went on struggling. But the Lord has wonderful ways of helping those who are seeking him, and he opened a way for me in the dark. Just at this time my father sub-

scribed for a monthly paper, *The Life and Explorations of David Livingstone*. He read it because he was interested in the exploration scheme, but I read it because David Livingstone preached Jesus to the poor Africans. What did I care where the source of the Nile was? I wanted to find the source of salvation! Livingstone became my hero, and I looked forward eagerly to the coming of those papers. I determined that I would be a missionary after I had found out how I myself could be saved. The source of life eternal was my quest and as a guide-book I read my Bible constantly.

In talking to one of my friends who had been confirmed I asked her if she knew she was a Christian. She said, "I think so." I was dreadfully disappointed, because she did look so sweet in her white dress and confirmation cap that I thought somehow she must have been changed, but when she said, "I think so," I exclaimed, "Oh, dear me, I want to know! That boy said he knew; why don't you?" She said that was not to be known. "The minister didn't teach us that in the con-

firmation class. He said to be good and to try every day to do right, and that Jesus would help us."

I resolved then and there that I would never be confirmed until I had a different feeling than this, until I knew surely that I was saved.

I was about sixteen now, and a new battle was being fought out in my heart. At times I wanted to go to dances; my feet fairly tingled to dance music. I grew desperate and said that I wouldn't try any longer to be a Christian; I would be like my father, who made no profession and who never went to church. I knew professing Christians who danced, but I felt in my own heart that if I ever became a Christian I would not want to dance, and the reason why I wanted to now was because I was a sinner, "a miserable sinner," as the Prayer Book said; we chanted it every Sunday in the Litany, and I knew that it was true of myself. I made up my mind that I'd not struggle much longer. If I didn't come to know soon that I was saved it was no use pretending; I'd give up trying and go to the dance and the theater and have a grand good time! Why not? If it had not

been for fear of my father I would have done these things; and I resolved that when I was of age I would do them, if I was not a Christian before that time. So I went on struggling and trying and finding no real peace.

In the Lenten season of 1882 a minister of the Church of England came to our town to hold what is called a Mission for forty days. He spoke in the Sunday-school, and his words, his manner, his spirit were so different from anything that I had come in contact with before that I made up my mind that he was a Christian, and I wanted to hear him preach. I could get hold of what he said, or something got hold of me, and I trembled. The Sunday night that I heard him first he preached about the second coming of Christ, and it was so vivid that I expected Jesus to come before he got through preaching; and to cap it all he asked this pointed question: "Is every one in this church ready to meet Jesus and go with him if he comes now?" Oh, it was like a thunderbolt in my soul! I trembled, and it seemed to me that I could hear my soul cry out in agony: "No, I am not ready!"

At the close of his sermon the preacher asked all who wanted to talk with him to go into the vestry, and the choir sang, "Yet There Is Room." I sat fixed in my seat. I wanted to go and yet I could not seem to take the first step. Alternate waves of chill and of fever swept over me, and I cried and trembled. One of my friends said, "Annie, what are you crying for? You are a good girl. If I were like you I'd not cry."

"Oh, Emma," I cried, "don't talk like that! I'm not good; I'm a miserable sinner, and I know it!"

She said, "I will go with you into the vestry," but I preferred to go alone; I did not want such a poor helper.

I did manage somehow to get into that vestry and the room was full. I took a seat at the door, and my agony was so great that I sobbed aloud. The preacher's wife came to me and wanted to know why I cried. I said, "I'm not ready if Jesus comes to-night!" She talked to me kindly about being good and believing on Jesus. "Oh," I exclaimed, "I have tried to be good, but trying does not make me a Christian. I want to know that

I am one." The good woman could not enlighten me much, and I said to myself, "I see that it is only God who can help me; I shall have to talk to him." I got up from my knees with the grim determination that I would be a Christian and the "know so" kind; there is no other kind but the "know-so's."

I went home and to my room and shut the door and cried and prayed, and became so exhausted that I fell asleep only to wake up the next morning in agony. But I prayed again and cried, and my grandmother asked me if I were sick. Yes, I was, but a dose of her wormwood did not cure that sickness.

Finally on Wednesday, March 29, 1882, at three o'clock in the afternoon, I was really saved. It was while on my knees praying in the kitchen before a low rocking-chair—down low in every sense of the word—that the light broke on my soul and I felt my burden of sin roll off. I had never read Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," but I had the same experience that Pilgrim had of the burden rolling away. I rose to my feet like one on air, with these words ringing like bells in my soul: "Certainly I will be with thee," and oh, I

was happy! I danced for joy, and in a few minutes was on my way down the street to the home of my Sunday-school teacher to tell her the good news. She said she was glad; that she had prayed for me, because she wanted all her girls to be confirmed! Confirmed? That might be another step, but it was enough for me now that I knew that I was Christ's and he was mine. I replied, "Oh, I don't think my father will let me be confirmed, but I know that I am a Christian now, and I am happy."

I almost walked on air after that testimony; and I was eager to have an opportunity of telling my friend who sat beside me Sunday night. I met her on the street, and grasping her arm cried: "Oh, Emma, I know I am a Christian now!"

"How do you know?" she asked; "I do not, and I have been confirmed and you have not."

True, I had not been confirmed; but I had been so convicted of sin that, like David, my bones waxed old through my groaning. Now God had spoken—"Certainly I will be with thee"—and I knew the voice; it was not that

of a human being; and my whole soul was flooded with light; I had the joy of assurance. Blessed assurance! My mouth was opened that I might tell it out to others. It was no more "hope so," "think so," but "I know"!

My friend said: "Don't go crazy telling that story!"

"Oh, no, I won't be crazy," I replied; "but I'll tell it to everybody!"

That afternoon I told my grandmother, who had been visiting a friend. She said: "Well, I'm very glad to hear it. Now if you are a Christian, when I ask you to leave your books and wash dishes you'll do it without stamping your feet and banging the doors."

You see grandmother had not much confidence in my "Christian endeavor" life and wanted to see the real thing. But her remarks did not cool me off; I was a Christian and I knew it.

When my father came home—ah, here was the test of my courage! But I had something to tell and I went at it straight as a die. He growled, than said in an indirect way, not speaking to any one in particular: "H'm, it's a whim she has; it will soon pass off." Well,

thirty-four years have gone by and the "whim" is still on. He did not understand, neither did mother, who simply said: "I hope so," when I told her.

But none of these things moved me. I was living in a new world; I was born again. I was "a new creature in Christ Jesus," a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. I never again repeated that part of the Litany which says that we are "miserable sinners," for I did not feel that I was. I knew that I was a forgiven sinner, and it made me very happy. My girl friends called me "saint" and "too religious," because I refused to go with them on their Sunday afternoon strolls but would go with my Sunday-school teacher to visit the sick. I gave as my reason that I wanted to be a missionary, so I must begin to take my training.

A candidates' class for confirmation had been formed during Lent, and I had twice asked my father to let me join it, only to be refused. But about two weeks before its close I asked once more, to receive the answer: "Well, your grandmother says that you are

better. If you keep on like that you may do as you please." So I joyfully made preparation to be confirmed on May 18th, just thirteen days before my eighteenth birthday.

CHAPTER II

NEW LIFE IN A NEW LAND

TWO years after my conversion we left England for the United States, landing in New York, then going on to Providence, Rhode Island. My rector had given me a letter to present to any Episcopal clergyman where I might settle.

We lived only two months in Providence; then father and I got work in the Turkey Red Dye Works at Bellefont, near Auburn, Rhode Island. In this establishment I learned to weave damask tablecloths; and at every opportunity I bore testimony to Jesus who had saved me and day by day kept me. We lived in old Elmville until the Roger Williams Park Association took the land, the Wextend Park grounds, etc., when we purchased a lot and built a cottage in Edgewood and made that our permanent home.

I found that there were two churches in

Auburn, which was very thinly populated at that time—one Baptist and the other Adventist of the American Pre-millennial Association. A young woman who worked near me in the factory offered to take me to Sunday-school, which she said she attended when she had something new to wear. So I went to the Baptist church in the morning and the Sunday-school in the afternoon, but was so disappointed that I cried when I went home. I told my mother that the preacher was uninteresting and nothing that he said touched the heart. I had expected something different from the church to which my grandmother belonged, but this church was probably an exception. The Sunday-school was no better; the girls seemed giddy, and the teacher was not able to hold their attention. There was more display of jewelry than I had seen among the wealthiest ladies of the church at home in England, and I was actually homesick for my old church.

This went on for several Sundays when a neighbor, talking with my mother at the well, invited mother to go with her to her church the following Sunday evening. She thanked

the one who invited her, but said that she did not care to go to church; that her daughter might, however. I had heard this other one called "the little church," and I looked forward with hope that it might be simple and quiet and meet my need. It did. As I entered the door I felt at home. The bell-ringer was also deacon, janitor, Sunday-school superintendent and Bible class teacher. He shook my hand so that I remembered it; there was no doubt of my welcome. The one-room building was so simple in its arrangement and color-tone that I was rested at once. When the other members of the congregation came in, my escort and I were introduced and made to feel welcome. I felt that I had found my church home, and it proved to be that for thirteen years.

The preacher, the Rev. F. O. Cunningham, who is still alive and preaching in the New England States, was a fine singer and the whole assembly sang heartily. The hymns were new to me, so I listened. I remember one in particular: "I've reached the land of corn and wine." Ah, yes, that was just what I had reached, and I was going to stay if



The first school was a native house with palm-leaf roof and bambo walls.



"I feel very big towering over some of the women, who stand under my arm."

they would let me, but I wondered how I was to join such a church, which in England would be called a Dissenting church.

The singing and the prayer uplifted me; but the sermon was wonderful. It was on the second coming of Christ, which was presented in such a way that I sat spellbound. I had never heard a sermon like that in all my twenty years. The preacher who spoke the night that I was converted had talked of the Lord's coming in judgment, and I was terrified because I was not ready to meet Him. But this was a different phase of His coming. I did not lose a word, and I turned to the references in my Bible so that I could read them again. Tears rolled down my face. I was fed; I was happy; my hungry heart was satisfied.

When the service was over the preacher came to me and said: "A stranger, but you are welcome." I said: "Oh, can I come here always?" Of course I could! That night I literally skipped down that lane, and my friend laughed to see me so happy. I kept saying: "Jesus is coming back, and I must be ready for Him. But do you have such Bible

readings as that always? It was almost all Bible!" Even my mother was pleased to find I was satisfied and happy.

I united with that church by baptism on Sunday, June 7th, 1885. The pastor left in about eight months, and we had various supplies for some time. It was during this period that I received the "second blessing," or, as it is often called, "sanctification." It came about in this way. I read in the religious notices of a "Holiness" meeting to be held in South Providence, and I decided that I would like to attend it. I was not well enough acquainted with Providence to know where to find the place, so I spoke to one of the members of our church about going with me. "What is a Holiness meeting?" I asked. "It sounds good to me." Sarah shrugged her shoulders and advised me not to go at the risk of being thought queer; but all that she said only made me more determined, and at last she promised to accompany me.

As we neared the place of meeting that Sunday afternoon the singing was inspiring—"You may have the joy bells ringing in your

heart"—and the music seemed to fill me with such joy that I felt that I was getting a new experience already. As the room was seemingly full, seats were found near the door. Everything impressed me favorably. There were about three hundred present and their faces were shining with intelligence and spiritual power; there was no display of dress or jewelry; I felt that I was among my own, and I was ready to listen to the word that proceeded from such wholesome sensible people.

The preacher opened his Bible. That was right; I opened mine too. We read the twenty-third verse of the fifth chapter of First Thessalonians: "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." As the preacher emphasized the word sanctify the people responded, and I said to myself that this must be the keynote of holiness. I marked all the verses that the speaker gave us; it was really a Bible reading on the subject. I was delighted. New visions were opening to me out of the

old Book that I loved so well. Why had I not seen these things before? Had I been blind? Jesus said them; John, Peter, James and Paul had preached them and had written them for my benefit; and I had been in the family of Christ for four years and had not seen them. Why, the preacher was giving us the very honey and cream of heaven; and I was so hungry that I was just swallowing it down.

As soon as the speaker finished my friend and I left the hall, as I had to lead the young people's meeting that night and we had about three miles to walk. We had only gone a few streets, and were now in Adelaide Grove, when Sarah said: "What do you think of the Holiness people?" I was not thinking of people just then, but of the truth which I had heard, so precious, so real, so true that its power was coursing through my being in electric quivers, and I said: "Sarah, on my seat in that hall I accepted Jesus as my Sanctifier. I believe this is a second definite, positive work of the Holy Spirit in my soul. I knew when I was born again; now I have seen advanced truth; I am sanctified by faith in

Jesus just now." As I finished my testimony the Holy Spirit flooded my soul, and I cried, "Praise the Lord, it is in his Word!" We stood still in that grove while I poured out my belief and my praises, and Sarah said, "Annie, I do believe God has done something for you, for your face shines." But, like Moses, I did not know it.

I could hardly walk home; I longed to fly to tell our people what God had done for me. My friend had to go home, as she had an aged mother to care for; but I went on to the church. I was a few minutes late, which was unusual for me; and the young people came to meet me. As they saw me they exclaimed: "Miss Coope, how beautiful you look! Where have you been? Tell us quickly." I thought: "Can this be true? If it is it only proves the Scripture: 'He will beautify the meek with salvation,'" Psalm 149:4. I felt the beauty within uplifting me.

I cannot recall all that I said, but I poured out my soul to them; and I had them all turn to their Bibles to verify the things which I was telling them. While thus talking the deacon who supplied as pastor came in so

quietly that I did not notice him, and after listening for a time he came forward and said to the young people; "All that our sister has been telling you is true. I have longed for such an experience myself: let us kneel down and pray that God may give us this blessing now." We then had an altar service, the first that I had seen in the church. While we were on our knees the older members of the church came for the evening service, and finding a manifestation of the Holy Spirit remained also to pray. Many were blessed that night.

All these things were only preparing me for service. I was learning to know God for myself, to find out through His Word what he would have me do. I continually kept before my own mind the thought that God wanted me to be a witness for Him to those who sat in darkness, and from this time my purpose was fixed though the way did not open directly. I was greatly interested in Sunday-school and young people's work, missions, and open-air services, and thus step by step my training was being carried on though I went to no training school.

Several American missionaries from the West Indies had spoken in our church, and as a result my interest was turned definitely in that direction. Theirs was a work of faith. They were under no Board, but went out trusting God to supply every need for body and soul, and I felt that this was just what I would like to do. I had read the life of George Müller of Bristol, England, and his great faith encouraged me to step out on the promises of God. Belief in divine healing came to be a part of my life, and I have always carried any sickness to Him rather than to a physician.

CHAPTER III

TO THE WEST INDIES AND HOME AGAIN

IT was in the fall of 1897 that I took my first definite step toward the foreign field. Some of the missionaries from the West Indies had spoken of the need for workers there, and I decided to go with them. Their conditions were absolute trust in God for all things; and that met with my approval. So after getting clearly the mind of God in the matter, I announced in the church that I was going to the West Indies by the first boat that I could catch. I knew nothing of the cost; I never asked the superintendent of the mission one question about money matters, for all the workers had said that those who felt called of God to labor with them must trust God to supply the means. So I was trusting. I had felt the "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," and I was going to do it. I went from that service and began that night

to look over my wardrobe to put it in order for going away.

It may be asked if I had not saved enough money to at least start me on my trip. True I was called a good weaver and had earned excellent wages; but, English fashion, had given every cent of it to my mother except the Lord's tenth. I took that out before her eyes, saying: "Mother, this is God's money, not mine and not yours." She said that I was a crank, and I answered: "Yes, I am a crank, turned by Bible truth and Holy Ghost power."

Mother heard before I reached home, of my declaration in church, and she at once asked: "Where are you going to get the money to go on your wild-goose chase?"

"From God," I answered; "He has called me to go, and He will pay all the expenses."

The following Sunday a young woman member of the church put a five-dollar bill into my hand, saying: "I believe God has called you to go to the foreign field, and I want to share in your blessings." It felt very strange for me to take it, and I thanked her with mingled feelings. I had never received

money from any one before, not even as Christmas or birthday gifts; and here five dollars had been given by a young woman who worked hard for it, keeping boarders. It meant sacrifice for her. I felt that God was very near; that this was a token of His approval and an earnest of what was to come. I was very glad that God had let a poor working girl help me first.

On the same Sunday, at night, one of the deacons, Daniel Potter, a godly man and the richest one in our church from every point of view, rose and said: "I will be responsible for our sister Anna's expenses to the West Indies."

What more did I need? God had provided, and that right quickly! I did not even handle the money; the ticket was given to me, and that sufficed. I did not talk of my needs; I never do. I am to be about my Father's business and He takes care of me. "I'm the child of a King," and no beggar; my Father can speak better for me than I can for myself, so I let Him.

I packed my trunk, quite delighted with God's arrangements for me; and my mother,

helping me, did not raise an objection. Some of the neighbors came in to act as Job's comforters, saying: "How can you let your only child go away so far? Why don't you stop her? She ought not to leave such a good home," and similar remarks.

But mother was staunch in her defense. "You can talk all you like about her going away," she said; "and while I don't want her to go if I could have my own way, still I would far rather see her go than marrying such men as you are giving your daughters to! No, I have confidence in my girl; she is doing right and is going to help others to do right. I'm not right myself, but that is my own fault."

That was talk that went right home, and the neighbors did not bother her any more.

Then there was my father to be reckoned with. He said that I was a fool, with an oath before and after, and blamed mother because he said she was helping me in my foolishness. All the mother in her rose to the occasion. "Harry, you have been threatening for years to put Annie out of the house because she had religion. Now she is going

herself, and you will be well rid of her and her preaching. Let her go!"

For years my father had been angry with me, often locking the door at night and ordering my mother not to wait for me to come in, though I was rarely later than nine o'clock. Mother would listen for my footsteps and slip down and let me in, frequently bringing down a storm upon her head for doing so. I was often advised to leave home because of his treatment; but I felt that I must bear opposition patiently: that it was really a part of my training for service; if I could not bear unsympathetic and unkind treatment at home, how could I bear what I would have to meet on the mission field? Besides I really loved my father and prayed for him, and I had the assurance that some day he would be saved. The road from our house to the church was a very lonely one, and father often said that he wished I would be attacked; but his wishes were never fulfilled. I was God's child and the angel of the Lord encamped about me and delivered me. For thirteen years I had a special guard, a body-guard, and I rejoice as I look back over those

experiences, for through them I learned to walk by faith, to know God as a personal companion and to lean on Him for help. God was very close to me during my three weeks of preparation for my journey, though my father never spoke to me during that time nor did he say good-by to me.

I sailed from New York on October 2nd, 1897, and stopped at several of the West Indian Islands, holding meetings and distributing tracts. When we arrived at Martinique, where this party of missionaries had opened the first Protestant mission to the French Catholics on the island, the superintendent asked me to stay for a time. I could not speak a word of French, but I did hand out tracts and speak a few times, one of the members of the mission interpreting. I saw the first Protestant converts baptized here. What ignorance, wickedness and idolatry there were in that city! It is little wonder that God overthrew it!

After six weeks' stay in Martinique I went to Barbadoes, and in January, 1898, there was an annual convention of the workers in the islands. All the native workers who could

come did so. One young woman came from Bolivar, Venezuela, South America, and she told of the Indians living in huts on the banks of the Orinoco River, of their poverty, their sad, dejected appearance and their appeal for some one to come and teach them. Her story touched my heart, and I said: "Lord, if you want me to go to the Indians of South America, make it plain to me." Like Gideon I laid down my fleece before Him, asking that He would show me by my ability to learn the Spanish language whether I had the fitness to go there. After a long talk and prayer with the missionary who had brought the tidings of this neglected people, I went out and bought a small book called "Spanish at a Glance" and began to study it. I certainly did not learn the language at a glance—far from it!—but I was enthusiastic from the start, and my teacher soon declared that I was getting beyond her. I had not much time for study, but I improved every spare moment; my book and I were inseparable. I considered that this was a leading from God, because I had never before been able to tolerate a foreign language. My

teacher stayed only a few weeks, and I was obliged after that to get on as best I could alone; but I loved the language and stuck to it.

I remained in Barbadoes for two years or more, when a party of us started for Porto Rico soon after the close of the Spanish-American War. I was the only one in the party of four who could speak Spanish, and I was kept busy for two months holding open-air meetings, visiting from house to house and distributing tracts and Gospel portions to those who could read and reading to those who could not.

At the end of this time I received a letter from home saying that my mother could not live and that I was needed at home at once. I left by the next steamer, glad to go where the Lord called me, but sad because of the thousands in darkness whom I was leaving behind me.

I found my mother still alive but beyond human aid, and still unsaved. She was very glad to see me again and we talked much that night, mostly concerning her soul's condition. She brought forward as her defense her mo-

rality and her good deeds, while I did my best to show her the way through Jesus' blood as the only heaven-appointed way. A new birth, a complete surrender of all that we think we are, belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and confession of sin, with the witness of the Holy Spirit, were the truths that I brought before her continually for two weeks, and many were praying for her at the same time.

At last, under the fire of such Gatling guns of heaven, she surrendered; and oh, what a change! She was indeed a new creature, and for three weeks she preached Jesus to all who came to see her, telling them that if she had died depending on her own respectability to plead for her she would have been lost. She urged my father to repent; but he was so grieved at the thought of losing her that he did not pay any attention to his own soul's need.

In my mother's rejoicing over her new vision of spiritual things she exclaimed: "Oh, Annie, is this what you have been talking about all these years! I thought sometimes that you were crazy, but I am so glad that

you were true to God and persevered in doing what you felt called to do. If I had known this fifty years ago I would have been a missionary and gone everywhere to tell about Jesus. I did think you were foolish to leave a good home and go out to work among black folks, not knowing how you would be treated, but now I understand it all. Go again when the way opens. You will have a hard time with your father, but it won't be for so very long. Do what God tells you. I am going home, but I shall be watching for you."

Mother went to be with her Saviour September 24th, 1900, and I could only rejoice in her triumphant death.

Now there was another complete change in my life, for plainly my duty now was with my father. For more than six years I remained at home with him, working at my trade of weaving to support us both, as he was now over seventy. We owned our home and were very comfortable. Father worked in his garden and among his chickens and was quite well for years; then he had a stroke and was unable to leave his bed, but was perfectly

conscious during the last four weeks of his life.

Nine days before he died he called to me early in the morning: "Annie, bring your Bible and teach me the way to heaven!"

I was so filled with joy that I can't tell how I got hold of the blessed Book and hurried to his side. God had answered prayer. Here was a helpless old man seventy-eight years of age, who had turned from God all his life, now wanting to be shown how to come to Him! Surely our God is longsuffering! I quoted John 3:16 to him thus: "God so loved Henry Coope that he gave his only-begotten Son, that if Henry Coope believeth in Him Henry Coope should not perish, but have everlasting life," and Isaiah 1:18: "Though Henry Coope's sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though Henry Coope's sins be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." As I finished he said: "Pray for me!"

"Oh, no," I answered; "it is your turn to pray now. I've prayed for you for twenty years; your mother prayed; your wife prayed; now you must pray."

"I don't know what to say."

I told him to tell God that he was a sinner, and he said: "God knows I am."

"Yes, but the Bible says: 'If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us.' You want Him to forgive you: tell Him so. Do you feel happy?"

"No, I feel bad, miserable."

"Then tell him so."

"Why, doesn't He know all that?"

"Yes; but He said, 'Come, let us reason together,' so you see He wants you to talk to Him. Tell Him everything that is in your heart that is hurting you and making you miserable. He will cleanse you. Do it now."

He began slowly: "God, be—mer—ci—ful to m—e, a sin—ner," holding on to his words and repeating them again. Suddenly he cried, "Oh, it is done!"

"What is done?"

"God has forgiven me! I know it! I know it!" His face was illumined; he looked fairly beautiful.

I was so happy that I fairly danced through the house, and I felt that the angels were rejoicing with me. Talk of joy! Indeed the joy of the Lord is our strength. It was four o'clock

in the morning, and I at once sat down to write the good news to some of my friends. One letter was to a preacher in the West Indies who had criticized my staying at home with my father, saying that I was wasting my time when I had a call to the foreign field; that I ought to leave him in a Home for the Aged and go and preach. I told him that though this man was my father I knew he was a great sinner, and I felt that God had given me this heathen at home to convert before I could go to the Indians; that this was a part of my training for future work and that if I wanted God's blessing I must do the duty that lay right before me.

My father began to preach to our nearest neighbor that same morning at eight o'clock, thus proving that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." For nine days he lived to tell the story that Jesus had saved him. He said he was like the Prodigal Son, but the Heavenly Father had taken him home, and he just rested with childlike confidence on the promises of God.

CHAPTER IV

UP THE ORINOCO TO SAN ISIDRO

IN a month after my father's death I had disposed of the property and furniture and was at liberty to go where I was called. Part of the money that came from the sale I sent to India and Japan to work where I could not go, for I could trust God to supply my needs. I spent a few months in the home of a friend, one of the founders of the Christian Mission to the West Indies, doing church work, and a few months more in Rescue Mission work in Providence, R. I., and Brockton, Mass. Then in November, 1907, I started to find my Indian mission field, in company with several missionaries who were to settle in the various islands of the West Indies.

I stopped at the island of Trinidad to wait for a steamer bound for Venezuela on the mainland of South America, but as yellow fever and the bubonic plague were on the

island no steamer could leave there, so I went to Bridgetown, on the island of Barbadoes, for several months, believing that God would open up the way in time. In the meantime I received a letter from one of the missionaries who had been in Venezuela a few years, traveling up the Orinoco River as a Bible colporter. He said that in his travels he came to an Indian village whose chief kindly entertained him for three days, and after listening to the old, old story of Jesus, bought a Spanish Bible, saying: "I cannot read, but I will get some one to read it to me." As he took the Book he said: "Gracias a Dios por este libro!" "Thank God for this book!" When I read that letter I resolved that I would go to this chief, and I prayed God to help me and to convert him.

But my faith was to be tested again. For months every vessel for Venezuela was quarantined, so that no passenger from Barbadoes was allowed to go. Many said that it would be better to stay in the islands, but my heart was set on work among the Indians, and this colporter's message seemed to me to be God's way of directing me. I managed to get a let-



San Blas women in native dress. The crowning feature of the costumes is the heavy strings of beads of all colors on the neck, arms and legs, and nose-rings.



ter through telling the colporter that I was coming, and he wrote back saying that he would take me to the Indian village, although it was five years since he had been there himself, and urged me to come at once if possible.

But now came another testing time for me. Before leaving the United States I had noticed a lump or swelling on my tongue, but thought lightly of it. When I had reached the West Indies I found it was larger, and later on it began to give me some pain. I thought seriously of visiting a physician, and finally did so. He told me the swelling needed attention, and the sooner the better. I decided, however, to talk to my Saviour, the Great Physician, and carried my trouble to Him in earnest prayer. I did not speak to any one of the pain I suffered, nor did I try to think the pain was imaginary. I, however, experienced a strong faith that God would help me, and ere long I noticed that the swelling was disappearing, and in a short time was entirely gone. As a consequence, I felt in my heart a great joy, and told the glad news to all the household and to all my friends, realizing that what

I had experienced was an evidence of God's goodness, faithfulness and power.

At last one morning one of the members of our band came into the house saying excitedly, "There is a steamer in the bay now which is not quarantined and is bound directly for Bolivar City, Venezuela. It is a cattle boat, but perhaps it will take passengers."

I urged him to go at once and secure passage for me if possible, for I was all ready to start, and he was able to secure a place for myself and the two colored women who were going with me, though only after a long discussion with the agent, who said that the cattle ship was no fit place for a white woman. Finally he put the responsibility on the captain, saying that if he would take me it would be all right, and getting this much assurance we packed our belongings and went aboard, believing that God would make a place for us. We carried food for the three days' voyage and expected to eat it on deck, picnic fashion, but it turned out that we were even better provided for than we had expected.

The three days were happy ones. I had my folding organ and we played and sang for

the pleasure of all. The captain, a Norwegian, said that it was like having church all day. He told us about himself, his family and his plans, and we talked of Jesus and His power to save us now from all sin. He told us that this was an ill-fated vessel and never made a voyage without having a death; but I told him there would be no death on it during this voyage, and there was not. He told us that if he got that load of cattle to its destination in Bolivar City and the ship back to one of the West Indian Islands, he would return to his family. We urged him to accept Jesus as his Saviour; but, though he said he wished he could have the assurance and the comfort that I had, and seemed moved, he did not really yield, though he said he "would try to serve God." He was most courteous to us, for instead of letting us sit in a corner and eat our food from lunch-boxes, he had good meals cooked and a waiter to serve us at table. We, like brother Paul, had command, under God, of that ship.

The poor captain did not live long after that. He went to a town about three miles away on business and contracted yellow fever

and died before he had gotten his cargo. We heard this from one of the crew whom we met, who would not go back to the steamer, and he said that the captain asked several times for me, but they did not know where to find me in the city.

We were now ready to start up the Orinoco River when we found a boat to take us, and after seven days of waiting and looking we found a man who owned a small boat who was willing to undertake the journey. He and a young boy did the rowing. They worked steadily all day and at sunset tied up the boat in a little cove and we all went ashore. We were so crowded in the little boat that it was out of the question to think of sleeping there, and we were weary from the long journey in such cramped quarters with the sun beating down upon us, so that it was a relief to get out on the white sandy bank and be able to move about. We must sleep somewhere, but the question was where, and we were to make an early start in the morning.

After a little supper I suggested that we lie down on the sand, and the captain, a Spaniard, kindly offered us some tarpaulin; that,

spread on the ground, would be a protection from sand-fleas. My girls declared that they would not lie on the ground; they preferred to sit up all night; but I was glad to rest lying down even if it was on the sand, and I slept for perhaps half an hour when I was awakened by the excited twittering of some birds in the bushes near by. The sun had set, so I knew that the birds ought to be asleep, and I felt that there was trouble. I sprang to my feet crying: "Look out! there is some danger near!" The captain came running to the spot and exclaimed: "Ahi un cuebra aqui!"—"There is a snake here!" Of course we were all wide awake by this time, and sure enough, in a moment a great yellow and black striped snake glided near. "Look for a stick or a stone; screaming won't kill him!" I exclaimed; but instantly the captain had whipped out his knife and struck at the snake's head and he was soon dispatched.

After that adventure there was no thought of sleeping for my three girls—another young colored woman who could speak Spanish had joined our party. But I said, "A

dead snake can't harm us and I am going to sleep."

"But its mate may come to see where the other one is;" objected the frightened girls.

"Well, if it does, the birds will notify us. God has special guardians around us. Trust Him and go to sleep; you need the rest."

The girls were not willing to lose consciousness, but I slept sweetly until about three in the morning, when we were called to start on our journey again.

The next night we beached in another sheltered cove, cooked our evening meal and were preparing to sleep on the beach again when a party of Spaniards came running toward us and asked the captain if he had any rum to sell. One of the men wanted to know what I was doing here in this black crowd, and I told him that I was going to the Indians to tell them of Jesus who died to save all who would believe, and I talked of Jesus to these men. They said that the Indians were of no account; I ought not to waste my time on them. Would I not come and live in their house and teach them English? They invited us up to their house and treated us very

civilly, saying that we could hang our hammocks in the house and inviting us to play cards to pass the evening. We could see that they did not know Jesus, and I so turned the conversation on heavenly things that there was no card-playing that night.

We hung our hammocks on the piazza, as the house was saturated with their everlasting cigar smoke. The girls could not sleep there either; but I committed myself into my Father's hands and slept. The next morning the Spaniards gave us all the milk we could drink and a few pounds of home-made cheese. See how the Lord provides! These men looked ferocious with their pistols in their belts, their unkempt hair and rough clothing. But they had hearts that responded to kind words and they listened attentively to the story of Jesus.

The third day's journey took us through a beautiful country that would have delighted the heart of an artist, and I enjoyed every moment of this succession of lovely views, praising God that He had made such a beautiful world. We went ashore about five o'clock. There were still thirteen miles

to be traveled before we reached San Isidro, the place for which we had started, and this part of the journey would be by land. The first thing to be thought of for the night was a place to sleep. There was an adobe house near the shore where the traders lived and stored their hides on their trips from the interior. It was empty now, for the men were away buying hides, so our belongings were taken to the house.

I said that the house was empty, but we had no sooner entered than we found that its roof of palm leaves was inhabited by snakes, bats, spiders, and other crawling things unknown to us. There was one room with two doors and no windows, but one of the doors was so strongly fastened that we could not force it open. However we made a fire to try to smoke out the tribes, but without success; they were quite used to smoke! The bats still hung up, the whip-snakes only twined in and out to show us that they were very much alive, and the other inhabitants evinced similar activity. There was a house near by, and I asked the Spaniards there if these things were dangerous. "Esta nada;"

they replied, which meant "That's nothing," so I said to the girls: "I don't believe in being afraid of nothing. I am going to sleep"; and in spite of their remonstrances I proceeded to stretch my cot and have a good rest, American style!

We had to wait there two days for the coming of the traders who were to guide us further on our journey, and we improved the time by visiting the two Spanish families near us, playing and singing in Spanish for them and giving them Gospel portions and tracts. One man could read; we heard him reading to his family and others, so we felt that we had done a little missionary work.

On the third day toward evening the traders, who had come down with a load of skins the day before, told us that they were leaving, as it was a full moon and it was cooler to travel by night, and I thought that a moonlight trip would be delightful and that we would be in San Isidro by morning. But they had evidently planned differently, for after we had gone about two miles they came to a stop at a large adobe house. The owner of it was an old man who had a large cattle

ranch, several wives and many retainers. We found that it was he who owned the house where we had spent two nights, and he wanted us now to stay here for the night. As the men were unhitching the oxen from the carts, we knew that there was nothing else to do.

As we neared the dwelling and saw several women about we expected to find that the feminine touch had made that dwelling a home. But we were disappointed. Such filth I had never seen! We had to pick our way over piles of refuse, through swarms of flies, pigs, dogs and pools of tobacco juice. Whew! this was worse than bats and lizards and snakes! As we went into the house the pigs—fourteen of them—almost tripped us up. Everybody, men, women and children, was smoking. What an atmosphere for the old man, who was very sick! I counted the next morning, when I could see, sixteen persons, twelve dogs and fourteen pigs, all of whom did their best to entertain us. The mosquitoes and flies swarmed; lizards jumped across our laps to catch flies—everything seemed to think we were one with the crowd.

On the rafters was a gruesome sight—a coffin just waiting for that old man to die!

In the midst of that filth and confusion we were invited to hang our hammocks! I thanked them for their kind invitation but told them that we preferred to sleep outside, it was so nice and cool, and we did so.

The next morning all were astir early. The sick man wanted to talk with us again. He asked how much money we were going to get for coming up this way. We told him, "A hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting." We asked him if he understood that. He said, "Oh, yes, yes," but for fear he did not we explained that God loved the world and gave Jesus His Son to die for us; that we believed in Jesus and knew that our sins were forgiven; and that as Jesus had said that His disciples were to go into all the world to preach His gospel, that was why we were coming this way to tell the Indians, and he added: "And me." "Yes, you;" we replied. We told him that we had not bargained with God for money, and as no man or society had sent us we did it for love. He said: "Good! good!"

One of the women brought us a calabash of milk. It is true that as she carried it, her thumbs were in the milk and in one hand she held a long black cigar, but she smiled as she offered the "lordly dish." The bowl was so greasy that I had to put my thumbs as hooks to hold on to it, and there were islands of fertilizer floating on the top of the milk, but there was nothing else to do, so I blew them aside as well as I could and put my lips directly into the milk instead of against the bowl and drank it. My girls were horrified and would not touch it themselves, but my hostess was delighted to see me enjoy her hospitality.

We left that place about eight o'clock and started for our eleven-mile walk. I suggested that we follow the wagons of the traders, but our guide said that he could take us a better and shorter way, so we tramped up hill and down, wading rivers and so getting beautifully cooled off, for four hours, when we could see the top of a house here and there in the distance. There was no well-beaten track, the grass grew in humps and the walking was hard; but we were nearing our In-

dians, which rejoiced our hearts; and as we had been so cramped for three days on the boat this was good exercise for a change.

About two o'clock the man said that he had evidently gotten out of the way; and as one of the girls was very much exhausted, I told him to go on alone and perhaps he could find the road again. We prayed the Lord to direct the man, who was now very uneasy about us, because the wagons held all our food and belongings, and we might have to stay in this spot all night; then we put up our umbrellas to form a tent and I slept sweetly for three hours.

When we thought it was about time for the man to come back we began to sing in order to guide him, and by-and-by he appeared, accompanied by two Indian boys and a donkey for the white lady to ride on, a gourd full of water and some cassava bread. We just praised the Lord to see them all. The man said that the carts were unloaded and the whole village was waiting to welcome us, and that the chief had sent the donkey. I had never ridden any animal, but the Lord had evidently provided this donkey for the girl

who was so lame. She knew how to ride and mounted, the boy leading the animal and the rest of us following them. The water tasted delicious and we nibbled the bread as we walked, for we did not want to lose time, it was so nearly sundown. We soon reached the river which separated us from the village, and the Indians began to carry our things over. We would have to be carried over also, as the river was too deep to wade and none of us could swim, so while we were waiting the girls made a fire and boiled some cocoa and we had a good feast of bread and cheese before we went on.

Once over the river, the chief's wife greeted us warmly, took off my hat and tried it on, examined me thoroughly, took my hair down and untied my shoes; I had a real massage treatment. It rested my head to have it rubbed, so I let them go on. I laughed and they laughed, and so we became acquainted.

We were shown our new home by moonlight. It was simply a huge umbrella, with no walls and so of course no windows; we could have the air freely! One of the Indians wanted to know what was in the black

box which formed a part of our baggage, so I opened it and began to play. Oh, joy, what a delight that was! One of the women made us a lamp by taking a leaf, rubbing some kind of grease on it and hanging it on the door-post of our house. Its flickering light made the whole scene weird enough to suit the most romantic nature.

It was Saturday night. I played and sang until hoarse, and then we knelt down and prayed for these people among whom we had come, then I told them to go home and come again to-morrow. But they never moved! I counted seventy-five men, over fifty women and some children. When they made no move to go away I had them put out our cots and I lay down on mine. I had not been undressed for six nights, but another night would not matter. The girls said: "You surely won't try to sleep with this crowd around!" But I said: "Yes, I am through business for to-night; I can't hold my head up any longer. You may entertain them if you want to keep awake, but as for me, I am going to sleep."

About daylight I opened my eyes, and there

stood my friends of the night before as motionless as wooden men and women. "Girls," I called; "are you asleep?"

"Asleep!" they answered with such disgust in their tones that I laughed and laughed till even the Indians grunted and some of them showed their teeth in a smile. "Do you think we could sleep with these wild Indians standing over us?"

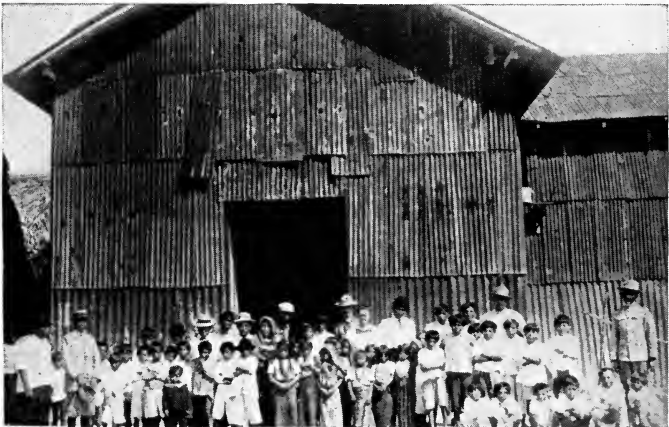
"Have they really been here all night?" I asked incredulously.

"Yes, indeed, all this time they have stood over you like that, and here we have sat with our hearts in our throats fearing that they would kill you and scalp us."

Then and there I preached a sermon to my Christian helpers about trusting in God. "Don't you see," I said, "how God has guarded us every step of the way since we came into this land? He has protected us from snakes and all hurtful things; has raised up friends where we had not looked for them, and now has let these men stand guard over us all night to protect us from we do not know what danger. Where is your faith? We



Miss Coope's "up-stairs tenement" at Rio Diablo. Native grass houses on the left.



A nearer view of the author's home. The first floor is the school-house and mission. Chief Robinson has on a black derby hat.



are on business for the King, and has He not promised to take care of us?"

"Yes, we know that, but—"

"You seem to 'but' so much against things that come in your way that the buts are robbing you of your needed rest through fear of man. Our God neither slumbers nor sleeps, and we can trust ourselves with Him." My experience for thirteen years along that lonely country road back in my home came to my mind, and I praised God for my training.

While the girls prepared breakfast I played the organ, for the first words my Indian audience said to me after my morning greeting were: "Blanca señora, toca la musica"—"White lady, play the organ;" so they had evidently waited all night for that. I played for some time, then we ate our breakfast and prayed, and then I told the people that this was the Lord's day and God had commanded that we should not work on that day. We ourselves did as little work as possible.

My first call was on the chief, who was very sick. I asked him if he had the Bible which he had bought of the colporter. He said he

had not; that some Spaniard had taken it to read and had not returned it. He said he was glad that we had come to his village, and I answered, "I have come to live here and teach you and your people about Jesus."

"Ah, white lady," he said; "that is good, but why did you not come sooner? It is too late for me: I am dying."

I hardly knew how to answer that poor dying Indian, but I put up a petition to God for wisdom and told him that I had come as soon as I heard about him. That seemed to pacify him somewhat, but here was another question: "Did your people know this a long time ago? Why did they not come? My people have died and did not know; no one came from your land to tell us."

I was smitten with grief at the backwardness of our people and could say nothing. What would you who read these words have said? What will you say at the Judgment?

The chief was so weak after our talk that it seemed as though the end was near. Here I had come to tell this man more about Jesus and his salvation, and he was going to die right before my eyes, in the dark, with only

reproaches on his lips that we had not come sooner. I felt a wave of faith sweep over me, and said to the chief's brother: "Oh, let us pray! This man must not die yet; he is not saved! He must be saved, and I believe God will raise him up for that purpose."

I knelt down by the side of his hammock and told him that I was going to pray to God to heal him so that he might live and hear the gospel of Jesus. He nodded his head feebly. I laid my hands on him and prayed and he broke out in a perspiration. I left him and went to visit others, returning home about five o'clock. We had just started a song service when the chief's wife came running to the place of meeting, crying: "Oh, white lady, the chief is better, is better, is better!" She said that he slept after I left, for two hours, the first in two weeks, and when he woke he asked for a drink of milk and it had stayed on his stomach; now he was sleeping again. I told the wife to praise God, for He had done this. God surely answered my prayer, for in a few days the chief came to see us and accepted Jesus that very day.

On Monday I asked the Indians to build

a wall of bamboos around one corner of our house so that we could have a bedroom, and we made the cots up with clean linen, hung up towels and arranged our belongings as tastefully as we could. When we had finished our new home looked delightful to us, and to the poor Indian women who watched every movement, talking volubly over every arrangement, it must have seemed like a bit of fairyland. They exclaimed over everything and touched things as if they were afraid they might be alive.

After I put up a piece of burlap to form a door they did not seem to think they could go past it, so I called one who seemed very anxious to look and took her inside. I showed her my looking-glass, and she ran toward the others with childish delight to let them see their faces; some were afraid of the self that they saw in the glass. After that exhibition she wanted to go in again, so I took her. This time she noticed the red and yellow cot cover one of the girls had, and taking it off of the cot she put it around her Indian fashion, slipped her feet into a pair of red carpet slippers, then taking down my hat and putting it

on she walked out again wondrously arrayed. Her companions were delighted.

I next showed the woman my cot, and she examined the springs and motioned to me to get in, which I did and drew the mosquito netting down. She thought that was fine; and when I got up she got in, and that was still finer! She brought all the women in to see the things from far away, and it was a great day for them.

There were three brothers who lived eight miles from us who had lived with a Spanish family and learned to read. When they came to see us I gave them a New Testament and had them read to us and we read to them. They were so happy that they spent the day with us, and soon they accepted Jesus, and visited us often to learn more about the way of life. I often found them in the other houses talking of Christ and His love for all men.

We had a service every afternoon, as that seemed the best time to reach the people. The Indians go to bed early and rise early as a rule. They stopped work about three o'clock, and we had our service from four to

six usually and retired at sundown. This was really the most practical thing to do, for the mosquitoes came out in droves about that time and we were glad to get under the shelter of our nets. The netting did not shelter us from the snakes in the roof nor from the larger ones that sometimes came into our houses; but God protected us and we were never bitten. Every morning we visited each house in the village, talking, reading, praying and singing, and so, with the afternoon services and the morning round of visits, we kept in touch with both the men and women in a public way and in their home life.

CHAPTER V

WORK ENDED IN VENEZUELA

FOR four months we lived in San Isidro. The chief sent men to the woods to cut logs to build us a house, and we picked out a lot high and dry and were planning to settle, when the chief became ill. He was apparently not seriously sick and was only a few days in bed. I called on him and talked of Jesus, and he seemed cheerful and did not speak of dying until the last day, when I said to him: "You are not going to leave us so quickly, are you?" and he replied; "Oh, no, sister, but if I do I shall go to Jesus. He has forgiven my sins and I am glad."

After talking with him I visited other houses, finding several sick, and then went home. Soon the wife of the chief's sister came running to me crying: "The chief is dead; he has gone to Jesus!" I could scarcely believe the news and went at once to the

house. He had died two hours after I left him. His body was rolled in a sheet and laid in his hammock, with his hat, sandals and gun laid on top. Every one was weeping. I went to the widow and put my arm around her and wept with her. I could only say, "Gone to Jesus!" and she nodded understandingly.

Two other persons died that same week, and a fear came upon the rest that some disease was going to carry them all off. After four days of mourning, weird singing and dancing around the chief's body, they carried it eight miles away to bury it. I went to the funeral. After that was over they burned the chief's house and many other houses, and the men came to tell me that they were going to the mountains; they had no chief, and until they appointed a new chief they would not live together again, and never on that spot, for death was there and they must go.

"I will go with you," I said; "for I don't want to live here without you all. I have come to teach you and I will stay."

"Oh, no, white lady, you go back to your people! The mountains are no place for

you; in the rainy season there is much sickness. We are glad you came to tell us about Jesus, and will not forget, but we are going far, far away."

About that time an old man who had traded for years along that territory, going by mule-back with a pack of cloth, tobacco, etc., came to the village and saw the condition of things and talked with me. He said that this breaking up was their custom, and he showed me the charred logs of a once large village where this tribe had lived. There had been small-pox, many had died, and wisely they had burned the houses and the dead to stop the disease. Then they had scattered, and about eight years ago had built this present village of about thirty houses, "which they will now desert," he said, "and live here and there scattered until they rally around a man in confidence to make him their chief."

I have not spoken of these traders, but there had been several of them at the village while we had been there, and there were some incidents of our work that were brought about by their coming. They always brought rum and tobacco, and we had witnessed several

sprees as the result of their visits. They were really thieves, for they robbed the poor Indians shamefully. One of the industries of the village was the raising of cassava. The men cultivated it and the women grated, pressed and dried it, then made it into cakes, which were sold for ten cents apiece in the city. They made a great many daily, and when the traders did not come to rob them in exchange for liquor and tobacco, the men took the cakes overland on the backs of their donkeys and sent them by boat to the city.

But often five or six men would come up with a load of rum and give the Indians enough to make them drunk, when they would take the cakes in "payment" for the liquor. That night two or three of the men would go off with a load of cakes, and the next morning when the Indians were sober there would be a reckoning, when the traders would claim that they had not been paid or paid enough, and then more cakes had to be made to pay their "debts." In order to coax them to do this the traders would give them more liquor, thus robbing them wholesale. The chief was wise and did not trade with them, and he and

some of the others told me about the robbery that went on. I told them that the next time a band of traders came the men must come to my house and not take any of the "treats" of rum offered to them.

One afternoon a party came up and there was a great display of bottles. I sent one of the men to call all the village to my house and we kept them until sundown. During that meeting two of the Spanish traders came in, one with his machete, a long sword-like knife, and the other with a revolver in his belt. One sat behind me, the other sat in front. I spoke to them and they turned their heads. The girls, always fearful, said: "Miss Coope, let the Indians go. These men are up to something bad; the one behind you will stick his knife into you."

"Oh, no, he won't;" I answered. "You pray and trust God and He will keep us from harm."

This conversation went on while I was finding another hymn, and we started to sing "Down at the Cross." As we sang the man in front of me took out his revolver and pointed it only about a foot from my face.

I heard the girls exclaim, but I sang on and looked at him, and then one of the Indians, who, thank God, was sober, as were all the rest of them, sprang at the man and struck his arm from my face, while another caught him by the scruff of the neck. They made him fire his revolver six times into the air and held him while he unloaded all his ammunition, and while this was going on the man with the machete slipped away. The service went on, and every man of the village except the two who were taking care of the would-be murderer stayed until sunset, when they quietly marched single-file to their own homes. There was no spree that night, and the traders, defeated, left early the next morning, threatening to kill us because we had prevented the Indians from buying their rum. But I rejoiced in the words of David:

“In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid;

What can man do unto me?”

I was threatened with death another time, and it came about in this way. A Spaniard

came to the village with a woman to whom he was not married. He could read, and I talked to him of Jesus and read to him and gave him a Testament. He went to the home where they were staying for a few days, and God's Spirit took such hold of him that he could not sleep. He got up and read the New Testament and was convicted of sin. He told the woman that he was a sinner, and God would punish him and her too; that they must separate; he would send her home in the morning. She vowed that she would kill me, as I had made all the trouble, and she started out with that intention. Her countenance was fierce as she entered my house, but I smiled, and as we were at family worship I gave her a seat and asked her if she could read, and as she said she could I gave her a Testament. She held the book, but kept looking at me, so, wondering if she really could read, I asked her to read a verse. She did it, and from that moment her attention seemed riveted to the book. Then as we were about to pray I told her so in order that she might understand our next move, but she began at once to talk about herself. She said

that she was going to the city; that "her man" was sending her back; and she began to cry.

"Why, is he not your husband?" I asked.

"No," she answered; "and it is all through reading that book that he has turned against me."

I saw that here was my "woman at the well" who needed the water of life, and I spent the morning talking, reading and praying with her, letting my usual visiting pass for that time. She confessed that she had come there to kill me, but added: "I can't do it, for you are a good woman. I am bad, but I will read this book and pray to God to help me." She left in peace. The man remained a few days longer, then went farther into the interior, carrying his Testament with him. Truly the entrance of God's Word giveth light!

The very day that I was planning to leave for the city this man returned to the village. That morning before daybreak I had prayed very definitely, "Lord, what shall I do?" and this scripture came forcibly to me: "Rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." I just thanked the

Lord, for with that scripture there came into me a "Go ye" spirit, and soon after I rose, this man went by the house. I called him and told him that I was going to leave and asked him if he could get word to the man with the ox-wagons to come and take my things and he said that he would. We had a long talk, and he showed that he was very happy in his new life and said that he read the Testament daily.

Another conversion made glad our hearts during our stay in the village. A young Spaniard of intelligence called on us. He had come to buy sugar and cakes from the chief and was told that there was a white lady in the village. He said that he could hardly believe it and he came to see if it were true. I told him that our reason for coming was to teach the Indians about Jesus, and he seemed to think that we were wasting our time. I quoted Jesus' command: "Go ye into all the world;" adding that this was a part of the "all," and that we had come at His command and because we loved Him. That opened the way to ask the young man about his own soul's condition and I gave him a Spanish Testa-

ment. He was glad to get a new book and sat there and began to read it at once.

This young man lived about sixteen miles from the village with his father and mother, two sisters and a little brother, and he announced that he would bring them to see me. The following Sunday the father and mother came, riding in style mule-back. They brought milk and fresh meat and spent the day with us, and we told them of Jesus. They invited me to their home, but as I had no mule, and there were several rivers to ford, I never was able to visit them.

The young man came to see us twice a week, however, eager to read and to question about the great things of salvation. The father was worried, asking when he came over one day: "Will any one go crazy from reading God's Book? My son tells my family so much about the Book that you are teaching him that I am afraid they will all be crazy. They sit up all night to read and talk." I told him that it would never make them crazy if they obeyed what they read, but if they disobeyed when they knew the truth it might make them crazy. I urged him to pray to

God in Jesus' name to help him and all of them to believe what they read and to obey it, and they would be made new creatures by the power of God coming into their hearts.

I was not able to stay to see the results of this preaching of Christ; but I believed that God would take care of the seed sown in their hearts, and having given a testimony there among the Indians and seen the results, I could leave with the consciousness that I had done what I could and was ready now to go on to another field if it was God's will.

Once more we packed up our belongings, said good-by to those whom we had lived among for four months, and started toward the river again. On our return trip we stopped at the home of the sick man on the cattle ranch where we had spent the night on our way up, swinging our hammocks in the porch. The man was much better and walking around. We told him what God had done for the Indian chief of San Isidro and he asked us questions about heaven. I gave the family a New Testament that they could read for themselves, and they gave us milk and fruit. We did not spend a night at the

landing-place, as the boat arrived almost immediately and we left. The boat was larger than the one we came up on, so that we slept on it even though there was not much room. It suited the girls better than lying on the beach and they were able to sleep.

On my arrival at Bolivar City I found a quantity of mail waiting which the colporter had sent by some Indians that he knew lived in San Isidro. In one of my letters was a clipping from a religious paper about a woman missionary in Colon, Republic of Panama, who was going to the Panamanians, asking prayers for her. On the margin of the paper the sender had written: "This may be of interest to you." I wrote at once to the missionary and also made preparations to go back to Barbadoes, for my girls were not willing to go through any more experiences among Indians. We left Bolivar City May 1st, 1909, having been in Venezuela exactly six months. I went first to Trinidad, where I labored two months in the Christian Mission, and then returned to Barbadoes.

CHAPTER VI

MY ADVENTURES IN A LAUNCH

AFTER two months at Barbadoes I started for the Isthmus of Panama, and not having received any answer to my letter to the missionary inquiring about the Panamanians, I wrote to some of the members of the Christian Mission inquiring if they knew of any Indians around there to whom the gospel had not been preached, and they replied that they had seen some walking along the streets of Colon, barefoot and poor looking, who evidently had not been reached by any missionary.

When I reached Colon I found that the woman to whom I had first written had been sent to Jamaica for her health, which probably accounted for my not hearing from her. Inquiring further, I found a Methodist minister in Panama City who said that he had had six men in his house from the San Blas

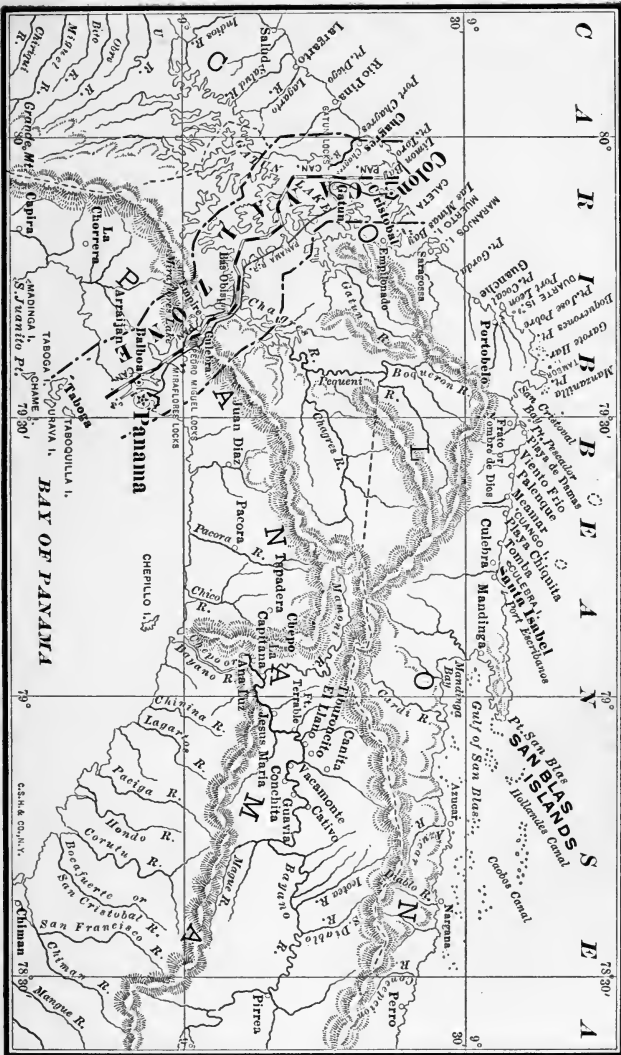
coast, one a chief and the other an ex-chief, who had pleaded with him to send a teacher to them, a woman, because no white man was allowed to stay on their islands over night. The ex-chief, John Davis, had left his boy of eleven with the minister, and as he brought him to me I spoke to my first San Blas Indian.

At last I had found Indians who wanted a teacher, and more than that a woman teacher! I was ready to go at once, but there was still a delay. I had difficulty in getting a passage on any of the traders' vessels. Their plea was that their boats were not fitted for passengers. One man said that the missionaries would spoil his trade.

"Spoil your trade!" I exclaimed. "We are not traders; what could we do to hurt your trade?" As he did not answer I added: "Of course if you sell rum to the Indians I shall certainly do my best to spoil that trade."

He made no answer again, because he was guilty. He took it by barrels to sell to those people. That trade has been stopped now, however, I am thankful to say.

I finally secured passage to Nombre-de-



Map showing location of the San Blas Islands and country round about.

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Dios on the American tug that went there daily for sand for the foundation of the Gatun Locks. While waiting there for further transportation I preached Jesus and scattered tracts to a few who could read. This roused the ire of the Roman Catholic priest, who stood afar off one day when I was holding an open-air meeting. Some of his flock were in danger! He took the tracts and tore them up, scattering them along the street.

At the end of a fortnight a small gasoline launch going up the coast stopped at Nombredios and I secured passage on it. When the priest found that I, a Protestant, was going to the Indians with that dreadful book, the Bible, going where some of his brethren had tried in vain to enter, he was furious. He tried to persuade the captain not to take me, but as my things were already aboard the launch and several were there to see me off, I said to the captain: "You'd better not touch my baggage! Those people around us are Americans; and Americans can do things!"

He laughed and said: "Well, the padre does not want you to go up to the Indians."

"Never mind the padre;" I said decidedly. "I am going up on your launch to those people because God wants me to!"

There was much palavering between him and the priest, but I kept quiet and prayed, going aboard the launch and taking my seat next to the priest because there was no other place to sit. Still the boat did not go; they were waiting for me to change my mind. But there was no prospect of that! The Americans who had watched the proceedings thus far came up to the launch and said: "So you are going!"

"Yes, I'm off."

"It really doesn't seem safe:" "Look out for that man; he is very angry." "That priest will harm you if he can." These were some of the comments; but as they were in English, which the priest did not understand, he did not get their meaning unless he judged by actions and looks; while as for me, my mind was made up and there was no turning back, whatever the danger might be. Finally they started, with me on board!

We stopped at several small villages on the mainland and slept that night on the

launch. The next forenoon we arrived in the vicinity of two islands near the mouth of Rio Diablo, the Devil River, in the Department of Colon. The chief of the smaller island came on board the launch. He could speak a little English and asked me where I was going. I told him to Mona, which is about forty miles farther west in the Department of Panama.

“Why will you not stay here and teach us? We want to learn English;” he said.

“But you have the priests here;” I reminded him.

He said that the priests did no good, and yet he bowed to my fellow-passenger and kissed his hand. He said that the priests had been on the island for several years, but none of their children could read or write; they only taught them to pray to the saints.

I told this chief that John Davis wanted me to come to Mona, and I asked him about the chief on the other island as we lay anchored in the bay between the two islands. He said that he was his nephew, that his name was Charles J. Robinson, and that he was away on the mainland working on his plantation,

so I did not meet him. The chief with whom I talked was Joe Harding.

The priest who had come up the coast thus far with us remained at Harding's Island, but he engaged two Indian men to go on with us to Mona, giving them rifles from a box of twelve which he had with him. The last words which he said to them as he rowed away from the launch were: "Pelear por mi," "Fight for me," and some of the men said: "These Indians will kill you;" telling me what they had heard him say. I said: "Never mind; I trust in God and He will keep me safely." The captain swore and said that I was going to get him into trouble; he wished he had not brought me.

We left the bay in the afternoon and arrived at Mona about five o'clock the same day. The Indians of course got a boat and were taken to shore before I was, and as soon as I could get a man that understood Spanish or English—I used either language as the case demanded—I inquired for John Davis. One of the men pointed him out on the beach and rowed me to him. As John could speak good English we were soon chatting eagerly. I

gave him the photograph of his son which the Methodist minister in Panama had sent by me, and he seemed glad to see it and asked about him.

While John Davis and I were talking the two Indians who came up on the launch had called the people into the chief's house and we were summoned to come there too. There was a great crowd; it looked as though the whole island was there. I was seated by the side of the chief, while John Davis, being an ex-chief—now second chief—sat at my left. The crowd was in front of us, the two messengers, each with a rifle, at the front looking very important and trying to impress me with their importance. But I was very busy looking at the women and babies and refused to be properly impressed. There seemed to be an endless chain of women and girls, each with a baby on her hip.

When everybody came to order John Davis spoke. He told the chief that I had come to teach them the Bible and how to read and write in English, as they wanted that language. With every few words the chief grunted, as did everybody after him, and

finally the tension was getting so great that I grunted too and felt better! I do not know whether the whole story was told, for it seemed to me that in the middle of it there was a sudden break, the two men jumping to their feet and crying: "Pelear! pelear! pelear!" Every one took up the cry, and I felt like doing the same, so great was the excitement, only I felt that I must watch proceedings, so I sat still, as did also the two chiefs. When the confusion stopped I asked John what it all meant.

"Oh, white lady;" he said, "I am sorry, but you cannot stay here. The padre has told these two men that you are a bad woman and we must not let you stay."

I had no thought of being sent away in this peremptory fashion without at least a protest. I understood the influence at work and how these simple-minded people had been influenced against me, but I would not go without a plea for them to hear me, so I asked John Davis if he could not quiet the people so that they would listen to what he had to say about me. The Indians were gathered in clusters and were all talking at once, here, there, and yonder. It was very interesting and exciting.

The women were talking too, of course, though what their attitude was I did not find out until later.

While waiting for the decision I was restful regarding the whole matter and prayed to God to overrule. Finally John said: "You had better go! These two men will kill you if you do not."

He had hardly spoken the words when one of the willing-to-be murderers caught me by the wrist and pulled me from my seat and pushed me forward. Then I found out without any questioning what the women's attitude toward me was. They screamed when I passed them, pulled the children out of my way as if I would contaminate them, spit at me and made faces. I could not help thinking of the way many so-called Christians treat a woman of the street, shrinking from even the touch of her clothing. These Indian women are made up of the same sinful tendencies and can show them when they are under provocation. They were not going to be contaminated by the touch of such a one as I!

In the midst of all this turmoil, instead of

having fear I was very conscious of the presence of God, and said to myself: "This must be one of the 'all things' that I can bear through Jesus' help. I did not understand, but I could trust God and I did.

As the man who was leading me put me into the canoe he was so excited that he tipped it in such a way that it filled half full of water, so there I sat up to my shoe-tops in water. As there was no accommodation on the launch except to sit in one place day and night, I could do nothing but sit still and let my clothing dry as it could. But there are worse things than that, and I did not catch cold or have the fever, as some of the crew said I would. The captain frankly said he hoped I would die from the exposure; but the sinner's hopes are vain. My hope was in God, and He did not fail me.

CHAPTER VII

BACK TO COLON

THE launch which had brought me thus far had to go up the coast three days' journey, and as there was no other boat by which I could return to Colon I had to go on also. When I went aboard at Nombre-de-Dios I had carried only a little luncheon in my bag, for I expected to be at my destination in a few hours, but it took the better part of two days. The second day I had asked for some of the rice and freshly caught fish that the crew were cooking only a few feet from me, but they would neither give nor sell any of the food, so I was hungry yet not suffering. I had part of what my Father had promised me to keep up my strength, namely, water, so I drank that and thanked Him, feeling sure that the bread would come later, because God has said: "His bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Not having had the

privilege of unloading any of my boxes from the launch when we stopped at Mono; and the chief and John Davis not having had time to entertain me even if they had felt so disposed, I had no food that day or that night. But "He giveth unto His beloved sleep," so I had that rest and refreshment. We went on all the next day, coming to a large island toward evening, and I had nothing to eat that day either.

As the launch stopped in the bay I spoke to some of the Indians and found a few who could understand English a little. I told them that I would like to see the chief, but they said it was too near sundown; that no foreigner was allowed on shore when the sun set. I promised that I would come back as quickly as possible, so they took me to the chief's house. He received me very graciously, bowing low, and I bowed slightly and was made to take a seat of honor at his right. By means of several of the chief's men, some of whom understood a little English and some a little Spanish, I made them understand that I wanted to come and start a school among them. They talked together volubly

for a time and finally told me that they did not want a school. They were Indians, and no Indians learned to read or write; it was not good. Then with a very gracious bow from the chief I knew that I was dismissed, and I turned to go to the launch, being escorted by a curious crowd. The women centered their attention on my clothes, with an interest quite similar, only differently expressed, to that of women of more enlightened countries when something new comes before them. They felt the texture of my garments, and touched my hat and my hair and my shoes in such a way that I exclaimed: "Oh, vain woman, everywhere the same! Color does not change the natural curiosity and vanity."

The men on the launch had somehow managed to get some rum. I knew that the water tank was empty, and I asked one of the black men to have it filled. He turned to another man more intoxicated than himself, who said in a maudlin way: "We drink rum; we don't drink water." I said nothing, but tried another man, who finally put in about a pailful. That was far better than none and I thanked the Lord for it. I asked the captain to let

me get a box that had food in it from the hold, but he refused to open it up, saying I could "go to——"

"Oh, no, thank you;" I replied; "I am going to heaven."

The brains of the crew were so befuddled with drink that instead of anchoring for the night they determined to sail out by moonrise. They said that through me they had lost so much time that they must now make it up! We had not sailed more than half an hour before the boat ran into a sand-bank; and I praised the Lord, for I felt that it was a deliverance from something worse, as the crew were all so intoxicated.

We lay quite still that night, and the next morning many Indians came with ropes in their canoes to help pull the launch off of the bank. But in order to get the boat off they had to lighten it by opening the hold and taking out the things, and in this way I was able to secure one of my boxes that had food in it! I slid it under the seat and covered it with my dress. When we were off the bank and they were refilling the hold, I opened up my box and had a good meal of condensed milk and

soda crackers. They tasted delicious, and I found that I was certainly hungry. But the dear Lord had kept me from the gnawings that hunger brings. I had cocoa also in the box, and I asked the cook to let me have some boiling water, but he refused me. I did not mind very much; I was getting used to being refused.

We went on our journey quickly that day, arriving at Port-o-Baldia before sunset, and on the following morning leaving there on our return trip. Four passengers for Colon were taken on, two being policemen and one a prisoner. Their provisions ran short and they eyed my box of soda crackers and wanted to buy. But I was glad to heap coals of fire on their heads, and it was a real delight to see the change that came over many of them when I shared the crackers and gave with them a message of love for Jesus' sake.

When we arrived at Rio Diablo the padre who had sent the two Indians up the coast with me came aboard the launch; he was going to Colon. We only stayed in the bay a little while, and I sat in the boat and looked at the two houses built by the padres and the

Indians, little dreaming that in both of them there would some day be Bible schools and that I would write this story in the room in one of the houses which the padre used for his bedroom. It never entered my thoughts that the houses built by the enemies of the truth would one day be under my control and be used for spreading God's truth; but we walk by faith, not seeing the path ahead but trusting all to our Heavenly Father. I did have faith that I should come back there again, but God in bringing me back has done the "exceeding abundantly" above all that I asked or thought.

We had not sailed more than three hours, cramped up in the launch so closely that our knees touched, when the padre spoke to me. I had been sitting all this time with my Bible in English and Spanish open on my lap, and the priest could not help seeing it and reading it if he cared to.

"Do you speak Spanish?" he asked, and I replied courteously: "Yes, sir," not of course using the title "father."

Then he opened the battery of his abuse. He said that I was no good; that I had no

faith, no religion; that I did not eat the body of the Lord Jesus, so I had no life. He said that I had no business to come up to the Indians; that he and his associates had come to give them the true religion and that I must not interfere. He was so excited, so angry evidently to find me alive after my trip up the coast, that he went over and over his statements and denunciations, not knowing how to stop.

Finally I asked the priest if he had finished; that if he had I had something to say; and then I lifted up my heart to God in prayer to help me to speak wisely, to wield the Sword of the Spirit so that my listener might feel its power. Holding the Book out toward him, I said: "Sir, I come to these Indians to teach them to read God's Word, whose entrance bringeth light." As I held it out I gripped it tightly, fearing that he would lift his hand to throw it into the water. He did throw out his hand toward it, exclaiming scornfully, "El Protestante!"

"Yes;" I said, "this Book does protest! It protests against many of the doctrines of your Church. It forbids the making and worship-

ing of graven images. You lift up the Virgin, the Pope, scapulars, rosaries, holy water and a wafer god. We preach Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the whole world. Jesus himself said: 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself.' He did not say that His Mother would do this, or Saint Peter or Saint John. They are dead, but Jesus is alive forevermore. His blood cleanseth from all sin. He says: 'I am the way and the truth and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by Me.'

"Now, sir, if you would read God's Word and obey it you would have this life in you. You say that I do not eat the body of Jesus. It is true that I do not put a wafer in my mouth, nor let any man deceive me by doing it, and then call that a god. It may be your god, but my God is in heaven, and by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus shed on the cross for me I have the life of God now in my soul. And this news is too good to keep to myself; I have for years been telling to Englishmen, Spaniards and Indians that Jesus only can save. No Church, no creed, no ceremony, no saint, no water, no wafer, can do it; it is

Jesus only. I came to these Indians to tell them this, and you have done your best to prevent me. But, sir, mark my words, because I believe God I shall be back here again, with this Book, to teach this people. I shall be in and you will be out!" Truly this was a prophetic utterance, for it has been fulfilled to the letter, with more added. Now I am in and he is out.

The padre squirmed and twisted, but there was no chance to get away. He did stand up as if to pass me, and I would have had to move sideways in order to let him, but I did not; I stood up too, and with the Word of God open in my hand I quoted passage after passage. I felt a special unction in my soul; this was my hour to glorify God, to lift up Jesus to this man; he had a chance to receive the light if he would. He tried to get by me to go to the hold, but I kept on quoting Scripture to him, and when he did sidle by me and peer down into the dark hole as if very anxious about his luggage, I followed and talked earnestly. My soul seemed to be on fire for God, and I gave him a clear, straight exhortation; he could not get away from it. I

heard that he afterward returned to Spain and died there. God's word does not return to Him void, so that the seed sown on that launch may have borne fruit to his saving; I do not know.

I told the padre that I should report his treatment of me to the President of Panama, and I did when I reached the city, and had his sympathy. I did not go to him for sympathy, however, but to get a letter as an official passport which would let me go into any part of the Republic in safety. The President—who is now dead—said that the padre did not do right in threatening me and sending the men to thwart my plans, and that he would be glad to give me a letter of commendation, but that I needed no passport; the Republic was free.

"I know that," I replied, "but some other people do not seem to know the rights and privileges that belong to a free republic, and I want a letter to teach them."

He smiled and said: "Brave little woman! But why do you want to go among the Indians? They are very treacherous; I would not go up there for anything."

"I want to go and tell them of Jesus who died for them," I answered; and though I had told him the whole story of my desire to teach the Indians, he seemed so interested that it had to be re-told. Then I preached Jesus to him and told him how God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. "We all need it. You need it as President in guiding the affairs of this Republic. God wants to save you; if you read His Word and obey it He will save you now."

He seemed interested, and I just praised God for this privilege of being brought before rulers for the truth's sake. He told me that if a certain official would write such a letter as I wanted he would sign it, and I was ushered into the presence of one of Rome's emissaries, I felt sure. The President sent one of his servants to tell this important person my errand, so I was invited to tell him the whole story.

"Do you not know," he said as I finished, "that the education of Panama is under the Roman Catholic Bishop?"

"Oh, then I see!" This was an explanation in a few words of a power I had to combat.

"Yes, and if you want a letter you must go to him."

"Indeed! Then Rome has its foot on the neck of the Panama Republic so that it is not free after all!"

"Religiously, no. The religion of Panama is Roman Catholic."

"Then do you think the Bishop would give me a letter?"

"No."

"Then why do you send me to a man who you know will refuse my request when it is in your power to grant it, and the President said that he would indorse the letter if you wrote it?"

I felt that it was a plan on the part of both to put me off, but it gave me an opportunity to speak to them about Jesus and to magnify the Word of God.

"We will neither help you nor hinder you officially," was his answer. "If you want to go to the Indians you must fight your way through."

"Thank you, sir, I will," I replied; "but I won't carry rifles or pistols, but the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."



Chief Robinson's House. Open door leads to store. The American as well as the Panama flag forms part of the decorations.



The "San Blas"—the Panama government steamer which plys up and down the north coast.



I left feeling encouraged in God, rejoicing that I had unloaded another cargo of heavenly ammunition for Him.

When I went to the home of the Methodist minister who had given me the directions for my journey he was surprised to see me. He supposed that I was all settled down in my new home, and was planning to send Philip back, as he and his family expected to return to the States in a few months. I told him that I had learned some very valuable lessons that I was going to use as stepping-stones to greater victories for God. He did not think it would be wise or worth while to try to go back while that priest was there to influence the Indians, but I assured him that the priest was going to be put out and I was going to have the privilege of going in; I felt that God was going to do it.

After laboring for a few months with the Christian Mission (colored) on the Isthmus, I received an invitation to go to a party of missionaries in Mexico, so I waited on the Lord for the money for the journey if He wanted me to go. I did not give up hopes of returning to San Blas, but the way surely was

not open at present, so I started for Mexico in August, 1911; labored there four months, and then went on to California, where I stayed two months with friends in Los Angeles, in all my travels never once mentioning money to any one; my Father supplied every need.

While in the home of two young missionaries who were under a Board I learned many valuable lessons, and I had to say to them: "Truly the way of faith is the best." Many times when things ran short they had to hope that the Board would send their money on time so that they would not be too much inconvenienced. They wondered how I got along, not being under a Board. "Oh," I said, "I am not under; I am on top, for 'underneath are the Everlasting Arms.'"

In January, 1912, I sailed to San Francisco, God providing the means in the same way that he had done for years, "according to your faith." Faith is not air; I did not walk on air, but on the promises of God, and I have not yet walked to the end of any one of them.

I visited friends and cousins in different States, speaking in many churches and missions of God's love and leading, and requesting

prayers of faith for the entrance into the San Blas territory on my return to the Isthmus. I believed that God wanted me there and that He would in His own good time open the way.

CHAPTER VIII

AT RIO DIABLO

I STAYED ten months in the States, visiting Canada by way of the wonderful Niagara Falls, which I had longed to see from my childhood days. Father had planned to take mother and me to see them, but his plans failed. But my Heavenly Father often gives me the desires of my heart, even as He has promised to do to all of His children if they delight in Him. All through my trip I met God's chosen ones, had my faith strengthened by their faith; and the change of air, scenery and food all helped to build me up, so that I started out again with renewed vigor.

Again I sailed by the West Indian passage, stopping off at several of the islands, telling how God had led me and asking all the rich in faith to pray, reminding them of Jesus' words: "All things whatsoever ye pray and

ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," Mark 11:24.

Sailing for the Isthmus, I landed in Colon August 24th, 1912, having been away just two years, during all of which time I had not ceased to believe that a door would be opened to the Indians. Remembering the two islands at the mouth of Rio Diablo, where I had stopped when I went by launch to Mona, and the wish of Joe Harding, the chief of the smaller island, to have me stay there and teach, I decided, if it were possible, to meet Charles J. Robinson, Harding's nephew, who was chief of the other island. Knowing that the Indians came to Colon with their boatloads of cocoanuts, I went to the wharf where they landed, hoping to see him among them. I asked every Indian that I saw about Chief Robinson, but many understood neither English nor Spanish, and for some time I made no headway. But, searching in this way, I made the acquaintance of an Indian who had married a light-colored negro and they lived in Colon. He could speak English well, and he said he would let me know if he heard that the chief was coming to the city.

While I was waiting for news I gathered in my room a class of young lads who wanted to learn English, one of whom could speak it very well and acted as interpreter; his home was only six miles from Chief Robinson's island, and he was watching for the chief. I talked of Jesus, and the young man said, "The Indians have their own religion; they do not want to learn about yours; they only want you to teach them to read and speak English so that they can make plenty of money like the Americans."

"Is that so indeed?" I replied. "Well, if they will listen to me and learn about Jesus, some day they will walk on golden streets and have more than any Americans can give them." I talked earnestly to the lads every time they came; that was my business for my King.

In January, 1913, I was told that Chief Robinson would be in on the 17th, so in the morning I was down at the wharf, and I saw him and two other men just going across to the Government Building to get a pass on the railroad to visit Panama City. My heart beat fast for joy; this was my hour! Going

up to the leader, for they walked single file, I asked if he were Chief Robinson of Rio Diablo.

“Yes, I am.”

“Do you want a teacher to come to your island and teach your people the Bible and English?” I asked.

“Yes, I do. When can you come?” was the prompt reply.

That was business and rejoiced my heart, and I answered: “Now.” He smiled and said that would be all right.

“I will go back with you if you say so,” I suggested, anxious to seize the opportunity.

“You could not very well, for my canoe will be so loaded,” he answered. “You had better come on one of the large schooners.”

I said that would be quite satisfactory to me, and we talked together for a few minutes. He said that he been taken by the captain of one of the trading vessels when he was nine years old to a place called Old Providence, near Jamaica. The captain’s name was Robinson, so he named the boy Charles Julius Robinson. He sent him to school for three years, so that he learned to read, write and

speaking English, and at the age of twelve he went to sea, traveling on the schooners to New York, Nova Scotia and other places. When about twenty-five he returned to his home, was married, settled down, and was soon afterward appointed second chief, then chief at the death of the old chief, Henry Clay.

During the reign of Chief Clay the Roman Catholic priest came and somehow got in. Many were against him, but Chief Robinson was one who was in favor of having him stay because he wanted his children to be educated. The people helped him to build the very house that I now occupy, the priest supplying the galvanized iron for the roof and sides and the Indians cutting down trees and hauling most of the wood, each helping a little in gifts and in free labor.

"We are sorry that we ever let the priest in, however," said the chief. "Our children have not learned anything but to chant to images, saints and the Virgin. I was taught to read the Bible and I want my children to learn to read it. I am glad that you will come."

We parted then and I went to my room to

begin packing, my heart singing for joy. One morning a week later I was awakened early by a knock, and on opening the door I saw three Indians, one of whom pushed an envelope into my hand. I opened it and read:

San Jose Nargana, Feb. 2nd, 1913.

Dear lady I sent my 3 Indians to Bring you up to San Blas Coas to my country My people like to see you Dear lady if you can By A B C Book Engles and Bring your Piano up with you no more for Present. Mr. Charles J. Robinson.

How much that letter meant to me! and here were the three living red Indians waiting for me to speak the word! Had not our God answered prayer?

I hastily strapped and roped things with the aid of the Indians, then to the canoe we went. It was the largest canoe the chief had, but was very small for us to weather heavy seas in, and I had heard much about the roughness of the sea at this season. But I believed that God would overrule the sea and everything else. However, my friend in Colon came down to the wharf just as we started out and called to the men not to take me, the wind

was so changeable. So we put back to shore and the men put off one of my trunks, a deck chair and a box of canned foods, then they went on. I waited two weeks and then secured passage on the two-masted schooner the "Agnes E."

We were nine days getting from Colon to the first group of the San Blas Islands, and as the captain had business to attend to of course I had to wait until it was finished. But I was quite comfortable and simply felt that I could rest for a little. We were now about fifteen miles from Rio Diablo. During the day the Indians came aboard, and I opened my "piano"—the folding baby organ—and played. The captain and crew who could speak English sang the Moody and Sankey hymns and we spent a pleasant time. But the news spread that a white woman was on board who was going to Chief Robinson's island, and early on the morning of the tenth day out we were awakened by the splash of oars and a voice calling: "Ai es the Missi ar?"

"Yes," I answered in Spanish; "I am here," for I was quite sure that I was the Missi who was meant. One of the men could speak Eng-

lish (I have since found that he was one of the two who dragged me off from Mona Island), and he said, "Chief Robinson sent us for you; come now," so I just stepped off of the schooner into the canoe and we were off like a shot. A few hours' sailing and we landed safely at home!

Of course the whole village was out, and I was graciously received by the chief and his brother Alfred, who also could speak English. I sat in the store, for, by the way, Chief Robinson had and still has quite a grocery and dry-goods store, and for two hours was, I might say, on exhibition. The chief had an old iron stove in which he burned logs when he wanted to cook after the white man's style, and here my dinner was prepared, or rather my breakfast, for although it was now afternoon I had not eaten. But then I must suffer some inconveniences, even as these people were doing to have me there in their home. After a meal of something fried in grease and soup of some kind, and some eggs fried till they resembled sole leather, and some kind of black liquid to drink, all of which I took, "asking no questions for conscience' sake," I

felt better able to walk, as I was expected to do after that feast, to see the sights of the town. Then I was taken to my new home, a native house with palm-leaf roof and bamboo walls. The chief had said to me, "We have no house for you to live in," and I had answered, "Oh, the same kind of house that the natives live in will do for me."

So this was my home! One corner was arranged for my sleeping room, and there the Indians hung my hammock. They cooked for me until the schooner came up four days after bringing my household effects.

I arrived on the island on Friday, February 28th, and started school the next morning. Before sunrise I was awakened by voices calling my name. Here were my scholars ready for school! so we began at once and continued for eight hours; then the chief said that they wanted night school, so for another four hours we recited and sang A, B, C, and went through all kinds of exercises, until I dreamed of hands and feet and faces all mixed up with letters and red Indians.

The next day being Sunday, I taught them John 3: 16. That, and: "Onward, Christian

Soldiers," was the order of exercises that first Sunday in San Blas. We marched and countermarched around the schoolroom; the earthen floor was humpy, but it did not matter! My school was composed of all ages. There were tottering old men; Olibebeah, the chief's grandfather, was said to be over a hundred; and wrinkled grandmothers, and middle aged and young married women also, each with a child straddled on her hip. Logs were brought in, and they sat on these when they were not marching; but I kept them pretty lively, and they were equal to the occasion. Shirtless boys came in to march; we had great times in those early days! A parrot came every day and learned to sing, "Onward, Christian Soldiers." After he had sung he would laugh at his own smartness, and of course we laughed too. I used him to spur the boys on by saying, "Dear me, the parrot has beaten all of you!"

The chief came to the school every day to tell the scholars what I wanted them to do, and I learned a few Indian words so that I could make them understand some things, and so for three months we had school three

times a day seven days in the week. On Sunday night it was different. Then I had the chief interpret the stories in the Gospels of Jesus and His love, and the people learned many hymns. The organ was a great attraction. I only played it on Sunday nights, partly to help make the service interesting, and partly because when I was teaching there was no room to move my arms, the space was so limited.

During the first three months of my stay the house which the priests had formerly used was occupied by a man whom they call a Christian Brother, not a priest, but a member of one of their orders who teaches. He had a few boys every day, but as my school grew in popularity his twelve boys left and came to me, and before long the Brother left the island.

In June I went down to Colon on a new gasoline launch that had just begun to run up this coast. The captain very kindly offered to take me down and bring me back in ten days, and this was too good an offer to be refused. The chief asked me to take his eldest boy, Charles, who was about seven years old,

with me, that he might see the city and hear English spoken all the time. I bought many things for school use and also a new three-burner oil-stove with an oven.

This oil-stove created a sensation on the island. Again and again I had to demonstrate the lighting of that wonderful fire-box. Chiefs and their body-guards came from far and near to see the stove—and the lady who owned it, perhaps!—to hear the children sing in English, and to listen to the organ. If I had had a moving picture machine I certainly could have gotten some interesting scenes.

In a couple of weeks the chief had sent for an oil-stove just like mine. He told me that all the women said the evil was in it. They were afraid of it and preferred to sit on one end of a log while the other end cooked the fish, regardless of the smoke and dirt. All my dishes, forks especially, were carefully examined; they wondered what a fork could be for. When I was cooking they would come in and smell around the pan, and if it was so that they could dip a finger into the concoction they would do so, and in every case they were disgusted with the white woman's food.

Two months after the Roman Catholic teacher had left, as the house was standing empty, the chief said that they would pull it down. I went in to look it over. It was a large building about twenty-five feet by thirty. There were three rooms downstairs and five rooms above. The largest room downstairs had been used for religious services only; its walls were hung with pictures of saints and the Virgin, and there were wooden statues. The confessional box was there, which I have found very useful as a library, and the baptismal font.

About this time a Panamanian official came up to see my school, and was so well pleased with it that he advised me to leave the grass hut and go into the large house. I told him that the priests had built it and I wanted no trouble with them by occupying their property. He said that it would be all right; that they would not return, and that it would be better for me to go into it at once, adding: "This house is no fit place for a woman." I told him that I was very happy and felt that God who led me here was keeping watch over

me continually, and to have His approval satisfied me; that I was never lonely or afraid.

When the rainy season was on, which lasts from May to the first week in November, there certainly was much to be desired in the way of comfort in my grass house. Often my floor was in such pools that I had to wear my rubbers all day, but I hoped for better things when the dry season came, and endured the discomfort. But one morning in August when my floor seemed nothing but one great puddle, I decided that perhaps it would be wiser for me to move into the house. The Indians had not torn it down, so I told the chief that I wanted them to open it up, clean it and make it ready for me. They went to work at once, and the next day, Saturday, I was moving into my upstairs tenement. Wasn't it fine! I had doors that I could shut and thus have a little privacy; I had a good board floor to walk on upstairs and a smooth cement one downstairs. There were three long desks that would seat six at a pinch, and the men made me three more; so with six benches our room was soon looking like a

real schoolroom. I took down the pictures of the saints and other paraphernalia of my predecessors and put up pictures of flowers, birds and animals that I cut from the magazines and pasted on white paper, and we all felt proud of our new quarters.

I kept one of the images to use as an object lesson, and when the boys recited the 115th Psalm I touched each part of the image as they recited: "They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not," etc., and questioned them about it. When we had finished I laid the image down and stepped on it, asking: "Can it feel, can it help us, can it hurt me, can it get up?" One of the boys, who was very bright and could speak Spanish well, and had lived with the priests as their errand boy, said: "Miss Coope, I knelt before that wooden man sometimes two hours at a time, and kissed it, and always bowed my knee when I passed it. But I see now that it cannot help us. I will never worship an image again."

I can only pray that Joe may be kept in the knowledge of God and that the word may prove a savior of life unto life in his case.

He was the son of the chief of Mona Island from which I had been ejected, and had been sent to school on this island, living with Chief Robinson. But even before the Catholic Brother left he had come to my school, and for a year he was with me, professing to accept Jesus as his Saviour. He learned to speak Spanish well, and when the Spanish official who told me to go into the big house saw him he took a great fancy to him and took him to Panama City, where he is putting him through school.

CHAPTER IX

HINDRANCES AND PROGRESS

ONE of the great hindrances to the reception of Christ and the uplift of the Indians on the island was, as it is everywhere, liquor. There were ten rum-shops for a population of 800. They had bottles of Balboa beer on their shelves, and they built a special cubby-hole of wood with a thatched roof which was set apart as a shop, and this was owned by the chief, or, as he said, by his brother. The traders brought up demijohns of rum, so they all sold this, the "Chriss-tians'" liquor—the captains and sailors all called themselves "Chriss-tians" when talking to the Indians—and they had their own home-made rum; so liquor was plentiful, and every week during the first year that I was there they had what is called a "chee-chee," which really is a drunken spree over a girl's coming to maturity. It was the woman's day. The

girl was bathed three times a day for four days by the women, and during that time the father was in the woods shooting game of any kind and up the river catching fish, and the mother was cooking on a large scale and making the rum, which was put into large earthen jars.

When all was ready they fired a gun to notify all to come, for the feast was to begin. The girl passed around to the guests portions of meat, fish, vegetables and other things, and they in turn presented her with rings, beads, and cloth. Then they drank and sang. They have a special song, and if the singer does not finish it in two days the feast must go on, and of course he does not finish until he sees that there is no more rum. Sometimes the feast has gone on for five days, and I cannot describe the howling and yelling; it is hell let loose! All the men are drunk, and all the women, especially those of the girl's family, screaming night and day. The men walk the streets with bottles under their arms, asking every one they meet to drink with them. The "babblings, the wounds without a cause," the bloodshed were terrible! One morning when

I went to the door of my grass hut there were great spots of blood before the door. The boys said: "Men fight—drunk!" The chief came by and told me not to come out; it would not be safe. He was sober, and sober in more ways than one. He was acting as policeman, for all his four policemen were drunk. There was a big fight on, and he had tied them all to a post and was walking around my house to guard me.

After that terrible spree was over—it lasted from one Sunday morning till the following Sunday—the chief came to me and said: "This is too much!" He felt ashamed to have me, the first foreign woman that had ever lived on their island, see how beastly they were. When I had talked to him of Jesus as a personal Saviour, he would say, "I am not a sinner; I believe in Jesus; I am all right," and yet he kept a rum-shop and allowed their sprees to go on.

But matters had reached a climax now. When the people had sobered up he called a meeting and told them that this thing must stop. Many were up in arms against him. They said it was their custom and they could

not and would not stop; the "white devil" must leave; it was she who had put the chief up to this move; he had never stopped them before she came.

As a result of the chief's stand the women refused to come to school; not a girl came for several weeks. But the boys all rallied around the chief and said: "Miss Coope is good; she not drink rum and fight; we ashamed of our mothers." I told the chief that he ought to accept Jesus as his Saviour if he wanted to help his people; that Jesus would guide him by his Holy Spirit in this fight for the right; that his idea was to stop these drunken bouts, but he kept his own rum-shop and so how was he better than his people? When I spoke of that he said that the cubby-hole was his brother's.

"But you sit there and drink and smoke with the rest," I said; "so they think if drinking is right for you it is right for them. You can't tell them to stop drinking rum while you go on drinking, selling and encouraging your brother to take their cocoanuts for your liquor."

Chief Robinson talked with his brother,

who was so vexed that he took his wife and daughter and left the island for a long visit to his wife's brother on another island. In the meantime the chief tore down the cubby-hole and gave orders that all others should do the same. If they wanted to drink they must go somewhere else to do it; he wouldn't allow it here. So when a girl was to have her "coming-out" feast, as we may term it, for she is then brought before the public as of marriageable age, they took her to another island for the festivities. For a few months after, if they could only afford one or two days' feasting, they would beg the chief to let them have "a little drunk"; they would be so good if he would let them have just a little one! and he did, so that for a year and a half or more we had the "chee-chees" at intervals, but never so bad as that one terrible one and the others previous to it.

The other island, which was so near to us that we could halloo to each other, still kept up the feasts, and many from our side went over there. The chief, Joe Harding, of whom I have spoken, was an old man. He said that his nephew, Chief Robinson, was do-

ing wrong; that all the Indians got drunk at such times, and God made the rum; the captains, the Chriss-tian captains, had told him so; and if the men wanted to drink he'd let them. I used to go and visit him and talk to him of Christ. He was ill all the time; had one foot in the grave. He wanted me to come and live on his island; then, he said, his people would be good like Charley's.

"I can't very well teach two schools at once," I told him; "but as you and your people visit us and I visit you and tell you just what I tell my people, why won't you ask God to forgive your sins, make your heart good, and teach your people by His Holy Spirit?"

"I do," he answered.

When I had been teaching a little over a year a lady came out to me from my own church in Providence, R. I. I had often written letters to our church, and she had heard one; her heart was touched by God's voice, and she came. I told the chief on the other island that this lady would come over to his side and teach, but he shook his head, saying that the priest was coming back and

he couldn't let her come; he would let me come, but nobody else. My chief said that his uncle was "a terrible liar."

Finally, about five months after my friend came, a priest did visit our island; he spoke to me in Spanish. He smelled so of beer that the boys held their noses. I said: "Do you want that man to teach you?" and the answer in chorus was: "No, no!" Whether he was one of the many who had visited these islands before, I do not know. He went into what was once their chapel, but it was greatly changed in appearance; "the gods had come down." He asked if I taught school, and when I said: "Yes, sir," he looked at me blackly and went hastily out, leaving the fumes of his beer and cigarettes behind him. He went over to the other island where he would find "no Protestants," and looked into the empty building with its walls covered with pictures and images. It was the hiding-place of bats, lizards and all kinds of creepers. The chief was flattered by the bottle fumes and the cigarette, and soon spread the news which was received with expressions of delight, that the "padre" was going to open a

school. He was a fine man, he said, and he was going to give him money.

When I heard that news I said to my friend: "Let us pray over this matter. I feel that we must do something unusual. If we expect God to do unusual things we must fall into line." After we had poured out our hearts before God I rose from my knees with a determination to conquer. I said: "Come, we will close our school and go over and talk with old Joe and find out if these reports are true."

We went, and found old Joe lying in his hammock smoking; the priest had left for Port-o-Baldia after staying only a few hours. I asked if what I had heard was true, and he said yes, the padre had said that he would open the school again when he came back.

"See here, Joe," I said; "you have been asking me to come here for over a year. Now I have an assistant who would have been here five months ago if you had said the word."

"I want you," was his reply.

"All right; do you want me now?"

"Well, wait till the padre comes back; I'll talk to him."

"Do you want me now!"

He wavered and I saw my chance. I said: "I am coming over to-day to open up the house." That night we slept there.

While I was talking with the chief, two young men who had been coming to my night school said: "Yes, we want Miss Coope," and their word seemed to have a good deal of influence with the old man. He called in the second chief and they had a smoking consultation. While that was going on I marshaled my forces, sending every canoe that I could get over to bring the things that we needed for the house.

The next morning early we two started the school. I told Chief Robinson that I'd give my school a vacation, and many came over to the other island to see the starting of another Bible school. We held the fort until the priest passed back to Colon, chagrined, outwitted by a woman. I stayed a week, working hard with the children and helped by several of the big boys who had been in my other school. The chief was delighted to see all his children so enthused, and feeling that the crisis was past I returned to my island, while

the sister remained to carry on the work and is there to-day. I went over every week to hold gospel services until the old chief died. The new chief, who can speak a little English, is a very different character, truthful, industrious and kindly disposed, so that we have had no trouble under him. The population is about 400; the school registers 50, with an average attendance of 40 daily. My school registers 107, with an average attendance of 90 and many of kindergarten age who come because big sister comes. The "big" sisters, from six to eight years of age, carry the littler ones on their hips so much that it is no wonder the two-to-five-year olds expect to be carried back and forth to school, so I have over 120 at times. The girls were very backward for over a year, but have begun to speed up, and many are gaining on the boys, who at first did very well, but owing to sickness and having to work have fallen behind some.

One day while I was living in the grass hut two men walked in. There was nothing unusual in that; I received callers at all times. I shook hands with the first one who came toward me, saying: "New-a-dee?" which is the

Indian "How do you do?" As I put out my hand to the second one he held it and looked me straight in the eye, saying in good English, "Don't you know me? I am John Davis." So he was, but I did not recognize him. How glad I was to see the dear old man! His companion was the chief of Mona Island and the father of our little Joe, who had been in school about two weeks. So here were the two chiefs who had wanted me two years and a half ago, and had seen me dragged out by two men who came from this very island where I was now teaching! Both John Davis, the ex-chief, and the chief himself had a boy in school, and the children of the men who dragged me from Mona were in my school also. Here we all were together again, but under such different circumstances! How marvelous are God's ways, truly past finding out!

John had aged greatly; his hair was now almost white, and he said he suffered greatly from a cough which seemed to tear him to pieces, that he had rheumatism, and that he was poor. I had a long talk with him, urging him to accept Jesus now. He prayed

and said that he believed and asked me when I could come to his island, but I could not give him any promise, as I was so busy right here on these two islands.

Both of the men said that they were sorry they had not let me stay on Mona, and asked me to write to America for another lady to come out to them. Before they finished their two days' visit to our chief I did write a letter to the church at home telling them of John's request and his earnestness and asking them to pray for him and also that some one would be led of God to volunteer for this work, walking by faith. The letter stirred several in the church, but only one was led to step out definitely. She came after months of waiting on God to be sure that He wanted her; but in the meantime John Davis died, and his son Philip came to tell me that he would have to go home, for he was the only man in the house and would have to go to work. I trust I shall meet John Davis in glory. The chief of Mona often visited the school, was delighted to hear that his boy was so smart, and wanted me to send him to the United States for further education.

CHAPTER X

SOME OF MY BOYS

ON May 31st, 1914, three of my boys accepted Jesus in the Sunday-school. One was little Joe Harris, the son of the chief of Tupeelee; the second was Lonnie Powers, about twelve years old; and the third Andrew Ferguson, who is, I think, about sixteen or seventeen. That Sunday as we read in the New Testament class of boys of Jesus' command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation," I explained what it meant, telling them as simply as I could the love story of Jesus; that when we believe in Him with all our hearts we want to tell some one else; that it was He who had sent me to tell the San Blas Indians about Him and His love for them. "Now you can read it for yourselves. If you will believe, God will save you and then send you to others;" I said. Little Joe's eyes were full of tears.

I drew in the net. "Who of you will take Jesus now for your Saviour, to save you from sin and fill your heart with His love and the Holy Spirit?"

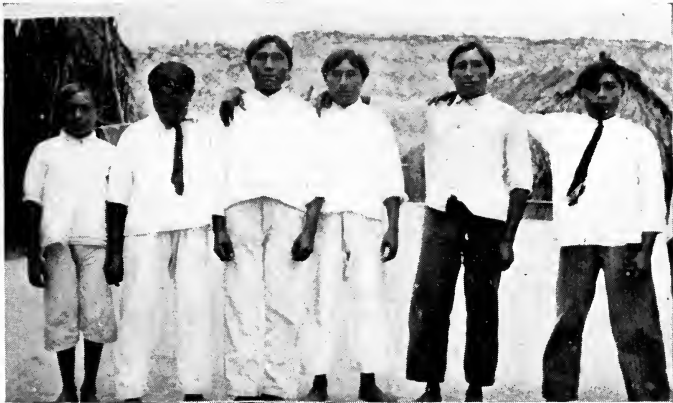
"I will believe in Jesus now!" Joe said, and struck his chest with such earnestness that we all looked at him. His face was eager, his body trembled.

"Let us all pray now," I said, for every boy in the class was deeply moved, and each one prayed.

"Jesus, make me thy child—good now—so I preach," was one prayer made brokenly. Another prayed: "Good Jesus, I want good preach. I love preach good. Amen." A third: "I believe you Jesus me for died. Make heart good. Amen." One boy said: "Jesus, make Indian good heart now, my good. Amen." Joe said, "Jesus, I believe you died for me. Make me good now; I love you. Amen." I led them all in prayer, and at its close each one said: "I feel good now."

Two of these boys have developed wonderfully. Lonnie Powers was always very bright in his lessons; he craved knowledge and rapidly passed every boy in the school,

always crying for more work, more information. He was just as loving and obedient as he was bright, and I became convinced, watching his progress in spiritual as well as intellectual things, that God had a work for him and wanted him to have a wider training than I could give him. My thought was to send him to the Academy at Nyack, New York, and after much prayer I got the assurance that God would have him go. I had often written about him to my church people at home and now I wrote again telling them how I felt about him. I did not know who was to be the honored one to pay his expenses through school, but I knew that God was talking to some one, for a week after I had laid the matter before the Lord and was sure in my soul that Lonnie was to go, I received in my mail, which had been seven weeks on the way, a letter from a man, almost a stranger, who said that he had had a talk with me at Old Orchard Beach, Me., about five years before. I had told my experiences with the Indians and he had gone to hear me speak. "Now a few days ago," he added, "I was led to send this five dollars to you. I



Boys from the school. Andrew Ferguson is third from the left.



Beads for the legs. Dame Fashion is as tyrannical in San Blas as in other parts of the world.

trust it will be helpful." So I saw that God had begun to talk money matters to His own children. I only sent my order to the Bank of Heaven, and my Father cashed it through various bankers. This five dollars was the earnest of Lonnie's going through school; more would come. When I received the next mail all that was needed for his passage and outfit came, with a letter from Emmanuel Church saying that they would support Lonnie in school.

The next step was to gain the consent of the parents and relatives, for Lonnie was very eager to go. His mother and grandmother wept for two days before he left home, saying that they would not see him any more, and it seemed as though Lonnie's way would be blocked. He said: "I do want to go, and I keep praying that God will let me." Finally the father and older brother took the reins of government into their own hands and prepared Lonnie's clothes—for it is the men who are the tailors in the San Blas Country—packed the box, or rather threw the things in, for they do not know how to fold or press their clothes, and finally all was ready and

he was to go. I was going to attend the Latin-American Conference at Panama City from February 10 to 20, 1916, and planned to take Lonnie Powers and Andrew Ferguson with me and to send Lonnie on to Nyack from there. His mother and grandmother wept before he left, but finally ended by submitting to his father's wish.

While we were in Panama both of the boys were baptized by the elder in the Christian Mission, and their testimony in that Mission Hall aroused many of the young people, who had heard the gospel all their lives and had not accepted Christ, to do so then. I arranged for Lonnie to sail on the steamer *Colon* leaving the dock at Christobal on Thursday, February 24th, 1916, and he was to arrive in New York on March 1, exactly three years since I had started my school. He was one of the first fruits of my work going to the United States to be trained for a missionary to his own San Blas Indians.

Andrew Ferguson, the other boy, has been used of God since his return from Panama to preach to his own people so that several men, one woman and over sixty of my boys and

girls have been prayed with and say that they have accepted Jesus Christ; that he saves and helps them now in their studies and all that they do. There has been a great change in their behavior. Andrew plans to go and preach to the mountain Indians if God opens the way. Meanwhile he has a great burden for his family. His father is under conviction and is giving up little by little and says he wants to be a real Christian. Andrew tells him that he must give up all, not his mouth only to speak good words but his whole heart; then God's Spirit will come in and bless him. Andrew is my right-hand boy: his life is a constant testimony for Jesus. Through his example and pleadings many of the boys have accepted Christ, and he is like a young shepherd, watching them, praying with them and encouraging them. His manner of life is simple. He works with his father on their plantation, cocoanuts being their chief means of support, and they raise cane, corn and other vegetables. Their wants are few and easily supplied.

One Sunday several men were getting sand to put around their doorstep, and An-

drew's father went to work with them. While working he cut his foot, and when he came into the house and showed it, Andrew said: "Well, father, God says to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. You forgot God's command; this is what the Devil gives you for pleasing him." His father admitted that he was right, and he came to the gospel service that night and told me what Andrew had said to him.

Before the priests came to the Island Andrew's father wanted him to be a "Camdulay" singer, one who sings at the chee-chee feasts, and he had taken some lessons and had gotten drunk too. But when the priests came his father told him he must learn to sing with them and to drink and smoke as they did. But Andrew did not fancy the priests with their shaven heads and long black robes and did not learn their ways quickly. If the priest had been awake to his opportunity Andrew might have been trained for the priesthood, but he was not; God had his hand on the boy and was holding him for His own work. When I came his father was very anx-

ious to have him in my school, and in a year's time he gave his heart to Christ.

Joe Harris, the third boy who accepted Christ at the same time, has had quite a different history from the other two. He came to me after my school had been going about two months. He had lived with the priests and spoke Spanish well, and in a year from the time he came to school he could speak English very well. He is a bright, jolly little lad and every one is fond of him, and he is easily influenced by the company he is in. A young man came from Colon who had earned a few dollars there, and he celebrated by "treating" his friends. Little Joe was with him, and the next morning he came staggering past the door of the school at nine o'clock, drunk. My heart fairly stopped beating at the sight and I nearly fainted away. The whole school received a shock. I could not teach any more that day. I had never had anything grieve me so. I closed the school and went to the home of Chief Robinson, with whom Joe lived, because he came from another island where his father was chief, and

was here to attend school. I found that the whole family had gone to one of the plantations early that morning, and that Joe refused to go because the young man wanted him to stay and drink with him.

Some of the men said they would send Joe home to his father, but the next day he came to school repentant enough. As I talked with him he cried and wanted me to pray for him. He prayed too and told the Lord he would not touch rum again. He said it was not the first time he had been drunk.

He seemed very earnest after that. He learned seven chapters in John's Gospel and several Psalms, was an excellent reader and speller and fine in arithmetic. Long Division was his delight. He was full of fun: his laugh was contagious, and he would have kept the school in an uproar daily if left to himself. He remained with me until May, 1915, when a Government ship came up to the island, and one of the officials, seeing how bright he was and how quickly he answered several questions, took a great fancy to him and took him away with him. I was sorry to part with him, but I was not consulted either by the

official or the father and would not have known he was going if the boys had not run to say that Joe was packing up his clothes in the chief's house. I went down to the boat and gave him a New Testament in Spanish and English. I had promised him one when he finished learning the 119th Psalm. He had not finished it, but he was going away where he would speak only Spanish, and I felt that he must have God's Word in both languages. I have not seen him since, but the man who took him gave a fairly good report of him after eight months. I pray for him daily.

Joe's father is quite an intelligent, good-looking man about forty years old. He was very eager to have a school, and now the Government has built one on his island. They need the light of the Gospel; but as they do not know their need we must carry it to them.

Many of the other boys are very interesting; indeed all of them are, and very human too. Sometimes it is very hard for them to apply themselves to study. One boy told his father he was too tired to go to school, and he started to walk about the town; but his

father said, "Oh, boy, if you are too tired to go to school you are too tired to walk about the town. You had better go to bed." That settled it; he went to school, for what boy wants to go to bed in the afternoon?

Eustace Farnum, about eleven, finds it very hard to concentrate on his books, but if a crab scratches its nose he hears it. He is very affectionate, and if he can't keep in my good graces by well-learned lessons he tries to smile his way into my heart, and he is an adept at that art. He does like to go fishing; but what human boy could resist that temptation when the fish are jumping up by the handfuls and fairly begging: "Come and catch me!" I believe Eustace can fairly hear them whisper. He complains of a headache sometimes, but it all disappears when he gets a fish-line in his hands. But he is not the only boy that has the same disease and is as suddenly cured.

Everett Bertram is an excellent reader and plans to be a missionary some day.

His father is very anxious to have him in school regularly, so does not give him any encouragement to listen to the fish, and if he has aches of any kind a dose of medicine is

promptly administered and the order "To bed" is given. His father is also a believer in Solomon's remedy, and rod and moral suasion go together. Not long ago Everett stayed away from night school. On making inquiry I found that his father had gone to Colon: that was the secret. The cat was away, and this mouse played truant. The next night, however, he was the first one in, and at the close of the session, when we all pray, he asked God to forgive him for sitting at home the night before. He had heard bad words, and the "Devil's spirit" gave him bad dreams; he promised he would not do it again. I was glad to know that he understood that he had done wrong. I tell my boys that if they will only remember the first Psalm and ask God to help them, he will keep them from bad company.

Ned Williams is the eldest child of the chief of another island about eight miles away. His father often comes to see how Ned is getting on. When he was in the Primer reading "A fat cat sat on the mat" his father, pointing to a shelf of books, asked if Ned could read all those!

Ned's mother does not want her boy away from her, and in order to get him home some time ago she sent word that she was sick, so he went home; but as his mother began to get better he wanted to return to school. She tried to persuade him that he knew enough, but no, he wanted more, and refused to eat until his father brought him back to school. I think he is about eleven or twelve; but the boys and girls are so tiny that it is hard for me to guess their right ages. Of late when his father comes and Ned can interpret for me, it is wonderful! The father begs me to take him to New York with me when I go. The fathers all say that there is nothing here for their boys to do and they are eager to have them go to New York, which is the goal of their ambition.

When the San Blas boys marry they go to their wife's home and work hard for her family, so the parents are willing to give their boys away but not the girls. Mr. Phillips says that he will send his only girl, Agnes, to an American school some day. He makes her American style dresses; yes, he makes them, for the men are great sewers. But when it

comes to the question of Agnes' going away it will have to be taken before the whole family, of which he is only one member. He, being in the home of his wife's mother and father, has not the entire control of his children. If his wife died and he married again, he would not be allowed to take one of his children with him to his new home—a blessed relief from stepmotherism! There are plenty of stepfathers, however, for if a man marries a widow with children he has to work for her children, but is not allowed to correct them. Oh, no, there is no rule of the stepfathers!

Here is Freddy Phillips, about nine years old. His father speaks very good English, for he was a sailor and visited many foreign ports; and he is anxious to have his children become good English scholars, offering to let them go away to school. Freddy is one of my pupil-teachers. He makes a fine report of his scholars: "Miss Coope, my boys are very good to-day. Clifford had one mistake first time reading; second time none. Edward had no mistakes first time reading; second time none," etc., until all the boys are

reported on. With a bewitching snap in his eyes he gives me his slate, and I read the report to the whole school. Why not? Such a helper as that must be encouraged. He says he loves Jesus too, because he has forgiven him all his bad and made his heart clean. He has learned the Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and eight Psalms and is now working on the 119th Psalm. He is Lonnie Powers' cousin, their mothers being sisters.

Charles Robinson, the son of the chief, is also a bright little helper. His father would have sent him North with Lonnie if his mother had not begged so strongly not to have him go: he was so young, only nine years old. He is the only one on the island who knows his birthday. He likes to teach.

It is very amusing to hear the comments of the class on their boy teachers: they are very plain spoken: "Miss Coope, the teacher is no good."

"Oh, dear me, how is this?"

"He does not open his mouth and speak plainly."

Sometimes the teacher is discouraged—who

would not be with such critics?—and says: “Miss Coope, I won’t teach any more.”

“Oh, yes, you will, because you want to help me; and you are going to open your mouth the way I do: see?”

Then follows an exercise in mouth opening, watched by the whole school with their mouths opened; then everybody is in good humor, and I have volunteer teachers in abundance, all eager to show how they can open their mouths; then follows another exercise in keeping the mouths shut.

These are some of my boys, and you see they are just as human as the boys in America. Some people have an idea that if they could only go to a far-away heathen land where the people are so different from those at home, they could do great things with them. But let me say for the benefit of those people that the heathen have as much knowledge of evil as our educated teachers at home, for the fallen nature is theirs to contend with just as much and it comes to the top in a remarkable manner. The color of the skin does not hinder its manifestations, and education does not eradicate it; only the blood of Jesus Christ

can do that. We rejoice that we are called to lift up Jesus as the only Saviour from the power of the Devil, who is as busy out here as elsewhere, and we are not ignorant of his devices.

CHAPTER XI

“THE CHIEF MAN OF THE ISLAND”

FOR a long time after my coming to the island I worked for the conversion of Chief Robinson without his surrendering to Christ. He resisted the Spirit, saying, when brought almost to the point of surrender, “Some other time,” but I prayed on and believed for him. Often when I interpreted the gospel invitations to believe and accept Jesus now, he would preach to himself, saying: “Yes, it is true, and it is against me, but I will believe soon.” Then he would come to me for a talk, and just when he seemed almost persuaded some one would come and call him, and he would go away still undecided. Often he would avoid me by going to his plantation on Saturday and returning on Monday, so that for several Sundays I would not see him. When we talked he would try to justify himself by arguing that all the old Indians be-

lieved that if they did not murder a man they would go to heaven; that he was not bad; he used to be when he was a sailor, but he had turned over a new leaf! How like so many with far greater light than he who try to reason themselves into the belief that they are not sinners needing to be born again!

After he had stayed away from the Sunday night services for three weeks, saying that he had to work or he was sick, or some other excuse, I said to myself: "Yes, you are trying to get away from God, but He will get you yet!" Then he began to tell me of the trouble brewing in the midst of the people. It seems that they wanted a big "chee-chee." There were four girls of marriageable age and they had planned a bigger affair than ever. They thought that they had obeyed the chief pretty well for months now, and he ought to let them have another spree. He was in a quandary, and with his own heart's convictions to battle against, he was having a hard time. He stayed in my sitting-room for three hours, and we talked of God and his power to save, to help and to guide. He agreed that

all I told him was right, but pleaded: "Don't I try my best to get my people to do right?"

Then I turned his own argument against him. "Yes," I said, "you are trying, and because they refuse to see as you do you feel bad about it. It is for their own good, and yet they positively refuse to be helped. How about you and God? You admit that I am right, that I am giving you the best I know of God's truth; and yet you refuse to obey God, who is over you, and expect your people to obey you! If you will surrender your will to God he will teach you how to lead others. You need God at this particular time, but you must surrender first, then your people will."

But he was not willing. After much persuasion, after he acknowledged that it was the right thing to do, he jumped up as though he had been shot and said, "Not to-night; some other time," and left without saying good-night. My heart was grieved, but I had faith in God; I was not discouraged; I knew that God was talking to him.

This was on a Thursday night. The chief went away again on Saturday, returning on

Monday, and again the week after, but had to return Saturday night as quickly as he could. He reached home at midnight and was in agony the rest of the night with bodily pain. Early Sunday morning he sent for me, his boy saying, "Oh, come quick! My father is very sick, vomiting blood." I went, to find him rolling in his hammock in great pain. As I went in he said: "Oh, Miss Coope, do pray for me! Do pray now!"

"Oh, not now," I replied. "Some other time will do. There is no hurry; go to sleep."

"But I can't sleep; God is talking to me. Pray for me!"

"No, you pray for yourself now. If God is talking to you, you must talk to Him. I've done all I can; I can't help you now. I can't relieve you; only Jesus the Saviour can do that."

"I know it! I should have given Him my heart long ago. He has been talking to me, but I didn't want to obey. I will obey now."

"Well, then, confess your sins first. Are you a sinner?"

"Yes."

“Then tell God and ask Him to forgive you now.”

Between groans he prayed, and when he had confessed and asked God to pardon him, I thanked God for convicting him and asked Him to heal the sick man, that he might glorify God and lead his people to know Him for themselves. I then began to inquire about his body; that was secondary; we had to settle the spiritual sickness first. I had them get me some eggs and gave him the whites of eggs only that day and the next. The pain in his stomach ceased and he slept. I stayed up with him all night. His little boy of three was sick also, and they were going to chant some Indian nonsense over him, at the same time waving a wooden image the length of a man's hand, to drive away the bad spirit that was making the child sick. I told him to tell them to pray to God, and if the child was to get better God would heal him. He sent the message to them, and they did not go through the incantations; the boy recovered.

Meanwhile preparations for the great feast were going on. The chief called a meet-

ing and was carried downstairs into his brother's house, where the men gathered to hear him tell what God had done for him. This was on Sunday. On the Wednesday following some of the men murmured against him, saying that they would have the "drunk." The chief sent his four policemen to gather up every vessel that would be used for holding rum. The men had gathered a great quantity of sugar-cane and insisted that they must have the feast now in order to use the cane. The chief's answer was: "You can eat the cane or use it in some other way, but you shall not make rum!" and they didn't! The vessels were all put in a pile in the house in front of the chief's hammock and I was called in to see the sight. It reminded me of what the Ephesians did after hearing the preaching of Paul: "Not a few of them that practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all," Acts 19: 19. The chief broke the vessels, and there has not been a drunken feast on this island since that day.

The date of Chief Robinson's conversion was November 14th, 1914, and from that time



The main street on the Island of Rio Diablo. Native woman carrying her husband's canoe. Cross indicates the last rum shop, now closed.



A Panamanian policeman with some native boys and girls. The steps to the new government public school are in the background.



he has preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not regain his strength rapidly; it was three months before he could work again; and during that time he learned lessons of obedience. As the Mountain Indians visit him he spreads the gospel to them, and my boys tell me that he often talks of Jesus to them in the store.

During the chief's illness the leader of the faction who had wanted the drinking feast stirred up a revolt, urging the people to make him chief. As the office is not hereditary, but usually lasts until the death of the chief, they tried to kill Chief Robinson by giving him some fish that was a deadly poison. He discovered it before he had eaten much, but the little that he did take made him very sick. God needed him, however, and he recovered. The rebels went on holding meetings and planned and carried out a spree on another island, at which the leader made such a beast of himself that the people on that island beat him and he came home somewhat humbled.

But now a new element was introduced into the situation. Before I left Colon to come to this island I had called twice on the

new President of Panama. The second time I asked him for a letter as a passport, telling him why I wanted it. He replied: "Oh, you do not need a passport. This is a free country and you can go where you please and start a school." I thanked him for that, and then he asked me why I wanted to go to the Indians; he said they were a very treacherous people; that the Government had to send soldiers to Port-o-Baldia to keep order, they were so terrible.

I answered: "Mr. President, I am going because I feel that God wants me to tell them of Jesus who loves them. I want to teach them God's Book."

"Are you not afraid?"

"No, because Jesus has said, 'I am with you always.'"

"But are you going alone?"

"Yes, alone, yet not alone. God has said, 'Certainly I will be with thee,' and I believe God."

"Oh, surely, but I would not risk my life going to them. They will kill you."

"No, they will not; I am not in the least afraid of that."

"Well, you must be a brave woman, a very brave woman!"

"I get it all from God. I am not naturally brave, but he makes me so, and I love to obey Him."

"Then I wish you much success."

Two years and three months after that conversation in his house President Porras knocked at my door in Rio Diablo. I never was more surprised. Here we stood face to face again, this time among the "treacherous" Indians. He shook hands heartily, saying: "I am so glad to see you, Miss Coope. You are looking well."

"Yes, you see the Indians have fed me instead of feeding on me," I replied. "But, Mr. President, are you not afraid to come here?"

"Not now. Your bravery has encouraged me. I dare to follow you. I need not ask if you are well; I see it. I have heard great reports of your school and I appreciate your good work."

It is safe to go where the banner of Jesus has been raised, but it is blessed to go and lift it for Jesus, He leading to the spot!

Seeing how the school had affected these "treacherous" Indians, how clean their dress, houses, and streets were, and hearing the children sing the national anthem and gospel hymns in English and Spanish, the President was surprised and made arrangements with Chief Robinson to have a school here supported by the Government in which only Spanish should be taught.

Now the would-be chief and his followers were not in favor of my Bible school, because their wickedness was exposed by its teachings. They would not send their children nor would they attend the gospel services. Having had the light, they shrank back into the darkness. So when the President proposed the new Spanish school to Chief Robinson he of course had to call a meeting of his people. All were eager to know what President Porras had said, for a little of it had leaked out, and the rebels wanted to know how the chief would act now. If he had another school they were surely going to kill him, and if they got into power they were going to close my school. So they came to the meeting for spite, with murder in their hearts.

I was called to the meeting, although I understand very little of the Indian language; and there in the midst of five chiefs and their bodyguards and the leading men from the other smaller island, whose chief is led by Chief Robinson, with every man, friend and foe of our noble chief, I sat, wondering, praying, watching the faces of the rebels, who sat on the back seats as backsliders always do.

The chief stood up and told them all that the President had said. There was perfect stillness aside from an occasional grunt; then like a bomb in their midst he dropped this decision: "I have decided to resign as chief. You can appoint a new one and settle with the President."

He sat down, and the assembly were dumbfounded. For several seconds there was not even a grunt! Then the second chief here, who was partly for the existing order of things and partly for the new would-be chief, rose and in a very determined manner declared that they could not let him resign.

Such a hubbub as followed, all airing their own views! After much palavering, during which the chief sat and listened and I could

only pray that the right might prevail and the rebel party be broken up, several men stood up voicing their decision to this effect: they had unanimously voted to have Chief Robinson remain in office, and all the rebellious ones would return under his leadership, and whatever his decision was concerning even another school, they would abide by it!

Then the chief talked to them. He told them that as they were citizens of the Republic of Panama they should be obedient to its laws, its President, etc.; that as Indians they would still be Indians, only with more advantages (some had gotten the idea that if they had an education they would cease to be Indians), because they were hindered in their business transactions by having to have interpreters, and if they knew how to read and write the Spanish language they could attend to their own business; that the young people ought to have a chance. He said that he approved of the new school, but that they could send their children to either school or keep them at home; there was no compulsion; that they need not mix with the foreigners, as only the teachers would be allowed to live on the

islands. (They have a great dread of the white man taking their women.) He said that he would not allow a priest or nun to come as a teacher; that for his part he wanted the Bible taught, not creeds or prayer-books, images or crosses.

After this speech there were grunts and grunts, and at times a man would get up and take the floor. It was a very well ordered meeting, and at the end of three hours we all went to our homes. The President returned the next day and was told the result of the meeting, which held for three islands, for the chief of Mōna was there, having learned a sad lesson when he put me off his island. Although his own son attended my school his island was in ignorance.

So now there are three Government schools on the three important islands, Rio Diablo especially being called "the New York of San Blas" by traders and visitors, and there has been progress along all lines. The chief has learned to bake bread, and now has a bakery on the spot where he once had a saloon and is selling daily all the bread that he can make, using two three-burner oil-stoves. Four

other men, each of whom was formerly a rum-seller, have ordered stoves also; and besides this in their stores there are Bibles, hymn-books, slates and pencils for sale. Praise God for this wonderful change! This is a sample of what God can do among "treacherous" Indians!

Before closing this account of Chief Robinson I must tell how staunchly he defended me the first year that I worked on the island. Chiefs from two of the other islands were much against me for coming and opposed to Chief Robinson for letting me in. The idea that Indians should learn to read and write was preposterous! No, they should never be like the pale-face! After waiting impatiently nine months for me to get weary and go, they came over, one hundred naked red Indians, in their canoes, with a red flag on the prow. They had not notified Chief Robinson that they were coming, but as the old saying is, "murder will out," and he heard about it, and what he said was carried back to them. He said that he didn't want any fights, but he wanted his people educated and he was going to have them educated, and the school teacher

would be protected by their lives. If Chief Neegah wanted to fight he had better look out, as he had plenty of ammunition, and if they came it would be the worse for them.

After threatening a few times they did come. The women on our island were so afraid that the men came to my house and nailed up every door but one, intending to put the women and children in there. They believed in preparedness! It was reported that the enemy had passed in the night to gather forces from another island, and that in the evening there were two hundred coming.

Men with rifles walked around the town and they fired off a cannon that the chief owns to warn off intruders. It sounded like war-times. The next day little Joe said: "Miss Coope, the mountain Indians and Neegah are coming to kill you."

"Yes? Well, will you let them?"

"No, no!"

Then began a sham battle among my boys to show how they would fight to defend me, and Joe tumbled over four or five boys in the fray, at which we had a great laugh.

At noon the enemy came. I saw twelve

men get into a three-by-nine foot canoe and paddle towards the island. Our men fired, the cannon boomed, and one boat-load was captured without a man being killed or wounded. Our men soon hauled down that red rag and dragged it on the ground. They took the captives to the chief, who lay in his hammock giving orders. He talked to the prisoners and let them go, and they have never visited us since. This battle was on November 5th, 1913.

CHAPTER XII

SOME CUSTOMS OF THE SAN BLAS INDIANS

IT is always interesting to know something about the family life and peculiar customs of any people, and the San Blas Indians have their own rules of domestic government. One of these is that a girl when married never leaves the parental roof-tree. The man has to come to her home and make it his as long as she lives. If she dies and he marries again, he goes to the home of the new wife, but the children of the first wife stay with the grandmother or aunts, so not many women here have to fill the position of stepmother and wait on and train the first wife's children.

Chief Robinson, however, had ideas of his own and did not propose to follow the Indian custom. He had been among white people in various ports for several years, and he chose to follow their way in this matter. He did

not want to be a slave to his wife's father or her unmarried or even her married brothers, for even though a son is married he is responsible for his sister's comfort if she is single, and if she is married he watches his brother-in-law. Although he may be a slave to some other man, he does not show much mercy to his sister's husband.

The chief did not want that kind of guardianship; but when he planned to take his wife into a house built as the white man, or wah-gah, builds it, he had not only her family against him but the whole islands; he was breaking their custom; it had never been done before! His wife refused to go into the house, which was not yet built, and her husband, who was not yet chief, left her and for a month they lived apart. Finally she decided that he was a fine man, that he knew something, and that he had a will of his own, and she would accept that will for herself! The custom is that all that the husband owns is claimed by his family, so she wisely reasoned that if he built a house of his own, when he died his family would claim it, and she, having left her father's home, would then

have no home. She told her husband her conclusion, and he straightway made a will giving all his property to her and their children. So the house was built directly opposite her mother's home, a two-story structure with a cement floor. The ground floor is used for a store; upstairs they sleep. The wife lives most of the time in the kitchen of her mother's house, for of course they could not burn logs in a "wah-gah" house, and she must cook! so that relieves her.

I once asked John Davis what his wife's name was, and he answered: "John Davis same me." Although they do name their wives as it suits them, they generally address them as Homey, while the husband is Suey.

The San Blas marriage I have never seen, but I have heard it! They marry at night, and never on a moonlight night when I could see. The chief told me that the father of the girl makes the arrangement. He asks the father of the man for his son. Sometimes the son refuses at once; but if he is willing, or if his father chooses to have him married, the ceremony goes on. The girl is put into a hammock; then several young married men

go to the house of the bridegroom-to-be and carry him bodily to the girl's house. If he does not know beforehand what is coming he knows now, for as they carry him they yell, "Suey! Suey! Suey!" Then they put him into the hammock, and if he does not want to be married he jumps out and runs away. The young men run after him and bring him back, and again he runs away, sometimes into the sea. The third time they bring him back, and if he wants to be married he stays and his friends go home and leave him. He is now married. If he really does not want to marry he jumps out of the hammock once more and goes home, and they do not run after him; they leave him until another moon, hoping that he will change his mind. Sometimes he does, and marries that girl, sometimes he does not. But marry he must, and if he won't be married when sober they will get him drunk so that he can't run or resist; and when he sobers up, often he is vexed and leaves the girl and the island, taking a wife of his own choice, arranging the matter with the girl's father, as she is not to be spoken to by her sweetheart.

The girl at her wedding gets no presents, no feast, no new clothes; these are given to her when she is "chee-cheed," which is only a short time before she is given in marriage.

Some of my girls are refusing to be married so young; they say they want to come to school and learn something; and the chief is persuading the parents to let their girls develop more. The girls are only like little children when they become mothers, which has much to do with their dwarfed stature; few are taller than I, and I feel very big towering over some of the women, who stand under my arm. They are very strong, however; the men guard them and seem to think a great deal of them; they do not work in the fields. The women go in canoes to wash their clothes in the river, and they bring the drinking water in calabashes and gourds. The men make their own shirts and trousers and teach the boys to do so; the women do not sew for the men.

These people are peaceful and quiet, going to bed early and rising early and working their plantations. Cocoanuts are the chief product, and the traders do a big business bringing rice, sugar, soap, tobacco, cloth and

much rum to exchange for them. The rum importation has been stopped of late, however, so that when an Indian wants it he has to go to Colon in his canoe and get a demijohn. The people's needs are few—cloth for the shirts and trousers of the men, beads and cloth for the women, and a little extra when the baby girl comes, not for clothing but for a gold ring for her nose. The custom is to pierce the nose and ears of the girls on the third day. Since Andrew Ferguson gave his heart to Jesus he says he has persuaded his father and stepmother not to have the baby's nose pierced. The chief's wife has had two daughters since I came here, and neither one has had its nose pierced, so that now several of the baby girls have escaped that horrible custom, which even the men approve, saying it "looks pretty"! I told the chief he ought to bore these men's noses!

I have the pleasure of naming the babies. I keep a record of births, and give the mother a paper; she is pleased to have the "letter," as she calls it, and when I visit a home I am often asked how old the baby is and what its name is. They have a custom of naming a

baby according to what they see or what the child does. If he eats plenty of rice he is called Abahdoomah, Big-rice-eater; if he is fair-skinned he is Me-me-see-puha, White Baby; or if he is tiny he is called Pee-pee-wah. Generally to boys they say Machee, which is an abbreviation of Machee-malo, the word signifying boy. To girls they say Puna, which means girl; often to babies just Mee-mee, which is baby, until he or she is named, after our style of nicknames.

The San Blas Indians have a peculiar custom of "making a friend." This is done in childhood days by both sexes. A boy will ask another boy: "Will you be my friend?" If the one asked says that he will, then the first boy gives him a piece of cloth, enough to make a shirt; then he boils an egg and cuts it in two and they sit down and eat it together. Ever after that they are friends. The next day or week perhaps the second boy returns the compliment by giving to the other a shirt and boiling an egg; the girls do the same. I was puzzled when I first came here and would ask a boy regarding a companion whom I had seen him walking around with, "How is your

friend?" to have him answer, "He is not my friend; John or Ned is my friend," and yet he would not be with John or Ned. So they explained their method of making a "friend," saying that the companion whom they are with is not necessarily their friend; they may not associate with their "friend" very much, but still he is their "friend."

The girls of San Blas are interesting as well as the boys and I have had numbers of them in my school. Some of them I call my New Testament girls, and they are earnest Christians. Owing to their early marriages—for there are no old maids or bachelor girls among the San Blas—many of my pupils are mothers, but that does not especially interfere with their school life, for the baby can be left at home with the grandmother while the mother comes to learn to read and write.

The photographs which are reproduced in this book show how the girls and women dress. The skirts are not sewed; they are just a piece of cloth put around the body and tucked in at the waist. The yoke and sleeves of the waist are of many colored strips, and over the yoke is the bodice, which is very elaborate.

It is made of several pieces of bright-colored calicoes put one on top of the other, and each layer cut in figures or designs, letting the next piece under show through. Often there are six layers of cloth sewed on in this way. They do not use a thimble in sewing, and they push the needle from them. These tattooed bodices are often quite artistic and are much better than the African custom of tattooing the body.

But the crowning feature of the costume are the heavy strings of beads of all colors on the neck, arms and legs and the nose-rings. A girl does not wear finger-rings until she is married, and then she has two on every finger and often three and four. The beads are not strung for a certain distance, so that only the strings lie against the neck in the back, and the beads, sometimes a hundred strings in one necklace, hang in heavy masses in front. In the photographs many of the beads appear white, but they are not; the women are too fond of bright blues and reds and yellows to wear white. The beads for the legs are strung on pieces of wood about the size of the ankle but bound on so tightly that they stop

the circulation and the flesh is in ridges. Sometimes the girls tell me that they cannot sleep because of the pain from that tight binding; but Dame Fashion is as tyrannical in San Blas as in other parts of the world, and suffering is endured if the wearer is conscious of being in style. However many of the girls and women are not now binding their ankles and arms and a few have taken off the nose-rings.

These Indians are sailors born. When the traders come they depend on the Indians to pilot their vessels. They have eyes like a hawk, and often start to Colon at midnight, moon or no moon; a good wind is all that they wait for. If they have a good wind they will be in Colon the next night by sunset, but often a squall comes, upsetting their small canoes. They lose much, but they say: "An Indian can't drown; we never heard of an Indian drowning." Their cargo is usually cocoanuts, sometimes alligator pears and mangoes. They buy to bring back cloth, sugar, rice, and beads for mother, wife or daughters; they would not be Indians without

beads, though the men do not decorate at all; that is reserved for the women.

We had a new thing last Christmas. I told the boys to bring a flagpole and place it in front of the schoolhouse. They did this and then put one in front of every home in town. Why not? Then every man, woman and child made a raid on my Standard Dictionary to get patterns of the flags of all nations, and to save my book I had to cut out the three leaves of lithographed flags, and the making of flags was entered into with enthusiasm. There are now 105 flags on three streamers from the schoolhouse pole and countless others in town. No photographer could resist taking a snapshot of us in our beflagged condition. I have never used a camera myself and have to depend on tourists for the pictures that we have.

CHAPTER XIII

GOD'S LEADINGS

MANY have asked me how I came to work among these Indians, and in answer to that I can only point to God's leadings. I have given each link in the chain, each one seemingly small and unimportant yet absolutely necessary to bring about the thing that God had planned. He sent me into a home where I was not wanted, where I was not spoiled by doting parents; by a facial disfigurement he saved me from vanity; he chose me from among the beautiful and attractive and wise of my native land and of America, my adopted land, touched my heart, and I responded, obeyed and went. That is the story in a nutshell. The results: Honor for me and salvation from God for the Indians. As I look out of my door as I write these lines and see twenty-five of our Christian boys and forty of our girls working

in the burning sun, as they have done for two days, to fill in the large holes washed out by the sea at the foundation of my house, and know that before they began the work they met at the school at five o'clock in the morning to pray that God would help them to make the foundation and the wall good and strong and that none would quarrel and fight—because, you see, they are human, and some of the girls are not yet Christians—I can only praise God for these trophies of His grace. He has the power to save and civilize “treacherous” Indians a hundred miles from the wonderful “Big Ditch” that slides and stops traffic; and He is building canals through which His grace is flowing unhindered, to the glory of His great name and the joy of angels.

If any who read these lines would really like to know God's will for them, I can only say, Ask God. He will show you better than any human being can. He will make difficult things stepping-stones and enable you to do His will as he makes it known. See God in everything and make everything work for His glory. Do not think that God will send you off to China or Japan or India at your first

impulse to go. The impulse is good, and may be one of the links necessary. But seek His will, and He will let you know in His own way what is best. Stay at home until He says: "Go," and use the mop or the spade, the pen or the typewriter, for His glory. When your faith grows strong through every-day experiences He will promote you. Dish-washing is a necessary part of a missionary's training, for I have to do it between teaching and preaching and leading precious souls to Christ. And I scour my pans and clean just common barn lanterns to light my school, and wash, iron and press clothes—all common things that I learned to do long ago. I bake bread and have taught an Indian chief how to bake it and fitted up the stove, for a knowledge of tools is pretty likely to be required on a mission field.

Do you sing over your home work? Do you pray over the common, everyday things of life? Are you obedient to those over you, whoever they may be? Jesus learned obedience "by the things which He suffered." Do not use human arguments or reasonings when you come to God. Talk to Him, let Him talk

to you, then obey, and you will be surprised at the results.

I am surprised that God chose me to come to this people so near to the spot where big men were digging a big canal, the wonder of the world. Big minds turned that way, and one would have thought that big Boards that do big things would have seen an opening to get the gospel to these Indians. But the opening was so small that they didn't see it, and God let me in through the opening because I believed. "Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord." Luke 1:45.

If some one, after reading this simple account of what God has wrought, would step out by faith on the promises and do something, go somewhere, write, pray, sing for God, let it be over the garden wall, in the kitchen, across the street, in the field or factory, in Sunday-school, mission hall or slums, God will be honored, the doer will be blessed, and souls will be saved.

In closing let me say that I have never been lonely, sad or blue. I have so much to do

that time seems to fly. Some ask me how I have time to write letters. I take time. I have no spare moments; I have busy moments, each one a gem. While the water is boiling for my cocoa perhaps I have two minutes, and I take a piece of paper and write to this one or that. I am kept by the power of God from the assaults of the enemy and often from His suggestions. I have learned to rest by change of occupation.

The same God who enabled Daniel to purpose in his heart to keep clean in morals and in food is here in San Blas to keep me. The same God who preserved David Livingstone, who was over a year without letters or papers, can and does keep me company. Oh, my mouth is enlarged like Paul's when I begin to speak of God's leadings, His presence, His love and power! My soul is full of joy because Jesus, the Son of God, is my Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer, and soon-coming King. The saved ones here are looking for His return with joy. Pray for them and for me, for I am looking ahead for more land to be possessed by the saints of San Blas. We are marching on by faith.



