

SERVICE IN THE KING'S GUARDS
BY
TWO OF THEM

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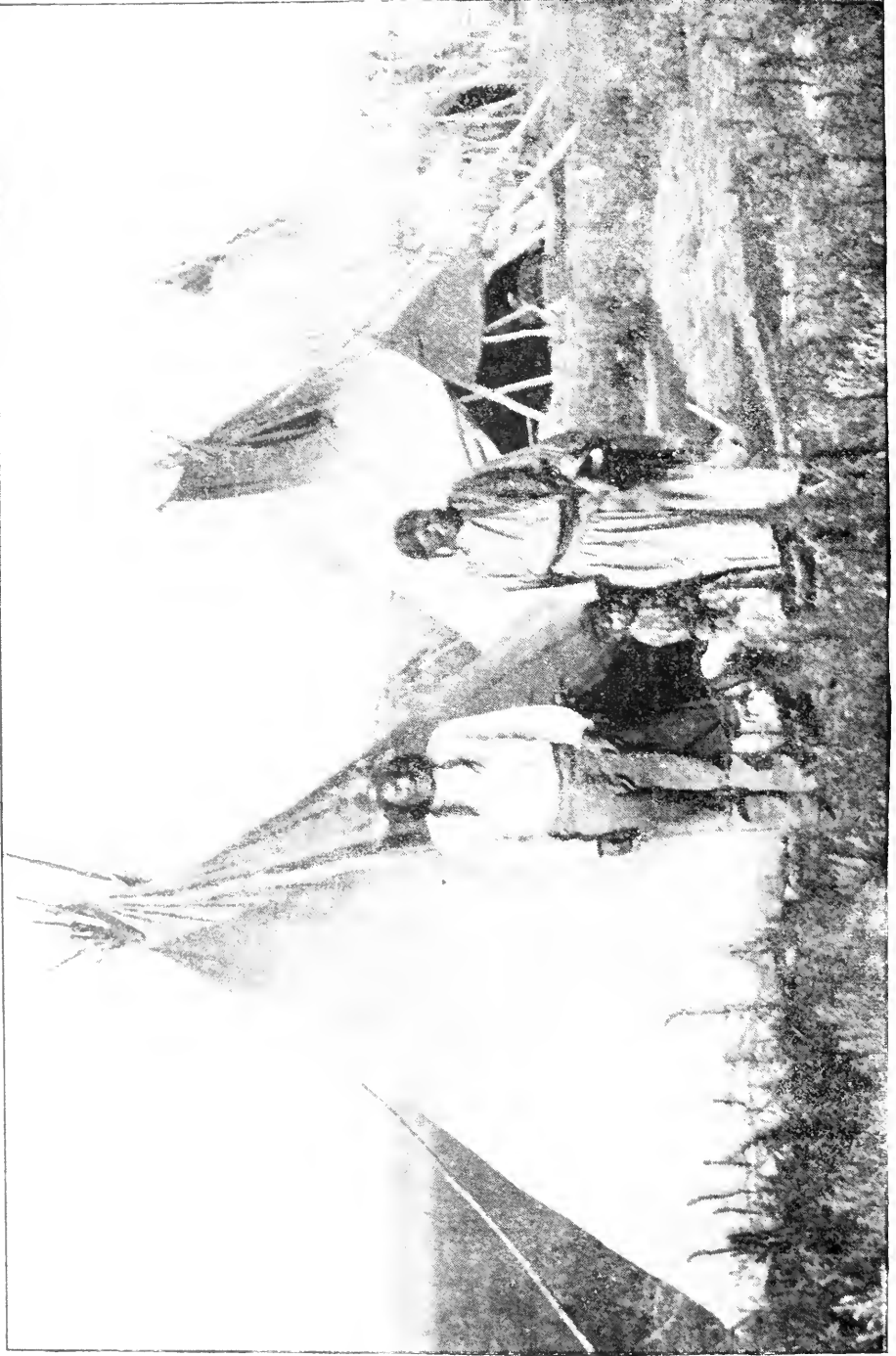
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INDIAN TEPEES

SERVICE IN THE KING'S
" GUARDS

BY TWO OF THEM

With an Introduction

BY

REV. WALTER M. BARROWS, D.D.

LATE SECRETARY OF THE AMERICAN HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY



BOSTON AND CHICAGO

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TO THE PATRIOTIC AND CHRISTIAN
PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY,
WITH ALL
WHO ARE PRAYING
THY KINGDOM COME,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHORS.



INTRODUCTION.

DR. JOSEPH P. THOMPSON, in one of his London addresses, said:—“No page of history presents a record of more silent, patient heroism or more self-sacrificing patriotism than the all unwritten, unpublished lives of the teachers and missionaries of the west.”

That the lives of so many of these faithful workers have been unwritten is doubtless due to the fact that they have been too busy in making history to stop to write it. Now and then a letter will appear in a missionary magazine or paper giving to the world a glimpse of their frontier experiences. But never before, to my knowledge, has such a full and graphic record as that contained in this volume been published. It appears to me that the writers have succeeded admirably in catching and photographing the ever-changing aspects of life in a new country.

As one of the secretaries of the Missionary Society under whose auspices they labored, it was my privilege not only to carry on a correspondence with the writers of this book, but to visit them in the new territory

which was their field of work. I can vouch for their fidelity and success as Christian missionaries, and for the truthfulness of their story. But all who read this record of "Service in the King's Guards" will need no other witness than that found on the pages themselves of the consecrated spirit of the writers.

Their narrative will entertain by its charm of style and its freshness of incident. But unless it does more than this — unless it arouses the patriotic and Christian people of our country to a sense of their responsibility to render help in building up the new communities on Christian foundations — it will not serve the purpose of those who have here written this faithful account of frontier experience.

WALTER M. BARROWS.

PREFACE.

THE experiences here chronicled are not written because of any exceptional value they are supposed to have. They resulted from service undertaken in much weakness, with no extraordinary expectations, but, it is believed, with an eye single to the glory of God and the good of man.

No experience but that which came to us naturally and unsought is related. With the omission of many incidents which might have been narrated, had time and space permitted, this is the simple story of about three years, set down for the most part in chronological order.

The need—long felt and urged by those who have a wide outlook over the whole field—of bringing into closer touch the hearts and minds of those who pray and give at the east and in the interior, and the daily lives of those who pray and toil at the west, has led to this endeavor faithfully to portray the experience of one home missionary family, as a humble contribution to this end.

“Tell us just how it is out there” has been an oft-repeated request. For this reason, small details have been given, as well as glimpses of the larger aspects of life.

Doubtless other tales of missionary life, many of which must remain forever unwritten, far outweigh these, both in hardships attendant and good achieved. In all such good we do and will rejoice.

No apology is offered for the introduction of scenes among the Indians. All missionary work is, in reality, one. It was on the border-land of so-called home and foreign missions that our appointed field of duty lay, for the most part, and we have given some of the glimpses we were privileged to gain, in the prosecution of our work for the white men, of far more toilsome and self-sacrificing work for the red men.

With devout thanksgiving for the privilege of following the standard of our great Captain, we offer these campaign reminiscences to our comrades in the army of the Lord, commending all failures to the forgiving mercy of our divine Leader, and with the prayer that he may condescend to use this narrative as an instrument of his glory.

THE AUTHORS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The Call and the Journey	11
II. The Reception and the Outlook	18
III. Beginning Housekeeping. — The Blizzard	26
IV. Getting Settled. — Our Hymn	37
V. Among the People	44
VI. The First Communion. — Our Sunday-school. — A Journey	48
VII. The First Funeral	57
VIII. The Schoolhouse. — New Friends. — The Church	62
IX. A Neighboring Church	69
X. Summer Diversions	73
XI. Temperance	80
XII. Our First Meeting with the Indian Mission	93
XIII. Another Field. — Our Church Home	108
XIV. Thanksgiving. — A Young Visitor. — Our New Surroundings	118
XV. Forefathers' Day	128
XVI. Our Literary Society	131
XVII. Difficulties	145
XVIII. The Parsonage	151
XIX. Immigration. — A Journey in the Opposite Direction. — Frontier Life	157
XX. A Frontier City	163

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXI. The Daughter. — Sitting Bull. — Preaching at the Fort	169
XXII. Aspects of Nature. — Extremes. — A Tornado	175
XXIII. Our Fourth of July on the Indian Reservation	180
XXIV. Outside Missionary Work	186
XXV. Ration Day at and near the Agency . .	192
XXVI. Visitors and a Visit	199
XXVII. A Meeting of General Association . .	209
XXVIII. Getting into the Parsonage	223
XXIX. A Visit. — Missionary Boxes	233
XXX. Thanksgiving. — Christmas. — Improvements	242
XXXI. A Funeral on the Indian Reservation .	254
XXXII. Incidents of the Winter. — A Revery . .	261
XXXIII. Missionary Raids	272
XXXIV. Revivals	281
XXXV. A Promising Beginning	285
XXXVI. By the Way	295
XXXVII. Forty Miles and Two Churches in One Day	301
XXXVIII. Autumn Meetings	306
XXXIX. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"	317
XL. Three Days Together	324
XLI. A Song. — A Mirage	334
XLII. Multiples	340

SERVICE IN THE KING'S GUARDS.

CHAPTER I.

THE CALL AND THE JOURNEY.

IT was a case of relativity. There was enough to do, and the calls to duty were abundant in our chosen field in New England. But the workers were more numerous in the east than in the west. Above all the din of battle around us came the cry from the rapidly opening fields of the far West:—"Come over and help us." So urgent had it become that it seemed too serious a matter to be unheeded. Into that broad land the tide of humanity was setting. New towns were springing up all along the rivers and the projected railroads. Shall they be supplied with Christian institutions, or left to the seeding and harvest of sin? From the office of the secretaries of the Home Missionary Society in New York came the message: "You must be needed more at the front than where you are!"

"We can go, as many cannot," said the husband and father. "We have not a family of young

children to bring up on the frontier, far from the influences we should crave for them." Our only son was in college. Our only daughter had reached the time when she needed to pursue her education away from home. The mother hesitated. The daughter was still young, and to leave her in New England, while we put half the width of the continent between us, was to make a heavy sacrifice of feeling. "God will take care of her education," said the husband. To go was literally to leave it with God, for the salary of a home missionary could not educate the children away from home.

The calls were repeated. A correspondence with the secretaries of the Missionary Society ended with a promise to go, on the part of the minister. He left the selection of a field with the authorities. The most needy at that time was said to be a village of promise six months old, on a railroad. Letters came from the clerk of the infant church there and the Sunday-school superintendent, answering a few questions, and leaving others unanswered. For the rest, we would find out by going.

The time came when a resignation, carried for weeks in the minister's pocket, must be presented. It came upon the people unawares. They appointed a committee to seek its withdrawal, promising to "arise and build," if the minister would remain, and

asking what they could do that they had not done. Our hearts ached for them and for ourselves at the thought of parting. But there were many men who could be found for that field. There were not many who could and would go to the front. The call of duty must be heeded, cost what it might. So we prepared to go.

What should we take? What should we not take? It was midwinter. Our beautiful window plants went first, to gladden other windows in the parish. Our windows seemed vacant when they were gone, but they were windows where we had often lovingly watched the outlook. There was the hill, where a forest of firs made a Gothic cathedral with their tops outlining exquisite spires and buttresses against the clear evening sky. There was the distant mountain range, where, through the long hours of many a summer day, wonderful lights and shadows had floated in transparent, immeasurable calm, and where, as the sun sank in the west, gloom had gathered in the vast gorges, while their ridges were bathed in sheen — ridges with rose-pink ledge and gleaming waterfall, ridges gray with granite, or green with unfading forests. Along those summits floated memories of winter days when the mountains had seemed like pyramids of glittering marble. There had been days when the battlements of the New Jerusalem

seemed to be shining in our horizon ; when a casual glance heavenward would bring an uplift of spirit to be remembered a lifetime, or touch the hidden spring of " thoughts which lie too deep for tears."

From crimson and purple and gold, shell-pink and amber, blue and silver, we must turn away to the practical side of life.

The preparations for moving were made and the good-bys were all said. The farewell was taken of the pleasant home, its double parlors, high walls, wide piazzas ; and of the outlook over mountain and valley which we knew no other would ever rival. Toward the church we could not so much as look. It was too dear, and the fountain of tears was too ready for an overflow.

We had accepted the cordial invitation of a friend in Chicago to bring our daughter there for study. In an elegant city home, with devoted friends around her, and with many privileges, we left the young girl, glad in the thought of her opportunities, and remembering that Chicago was not quite a thousand miles east of our destination, instead of the two thousand which separate it from New England.

The first twenty-four hours on the train which sped out from Chicago went pleasantly. We were in the Pullman car where our friends had bidden us good-by, and sights and sounds were agreeable, except

that, as we reached the edge of Wisconsin, an early March storm of wind and snow recalled for a few hours all we had ever heard of "blizzards." But Minnesota was more propitious, with mild weather, and snow all gone. As we traversed the central and western portions of the state we identified the various localities described in that wonderful book, "Mary and I," which we held in our hands, rehearsing meanwhile the toils and self-denials of the elder Riggses. How much greater their sacrifices for the Indians than ours could be, forty-five years later, for the white men who had taken possession of these ancestral hunting grounds! Our train wound along the valley of the St. Peter's River for a time, and we had ample opportunity to admire the landscape and the stream, while at the same time trying to realize how it had looked here when in its primeval wildness "Mary and I" had spent a week floating on the river between Fort Snelling and Traverse des Sioux in a barge propelled by five Frenchmen, "sometimes paddling and sometimes pushing, and often wading to find the best channel over a sand-bar." Leaving the river, we struck across the country which the Riggses, on their way to Lac-qui-parle, had found a wide wilderness, with no sound but that of the occasional flight of a bird of passage, now dotted with villages and the comfortable homes of farmers.

The progress of the second day from Chicago showed us plainly that we were "out west." Our Pullman car was left behind, and we were in a crowded, untidy coach, where men, women, and children spent the day and night, the floors and seats covered with the litter of continual lunches; the atmosphere burned up by a red-hot stove, and perfumed by the breath of many tobacco-users, who sometimes smoked until the air of the car was blue. People were not particular "in the west," we learned, to restrict smoking to the smoking car, and remonstrances to the conductor were of no avail. Loud conversation, sometimes sharp and witty, sometimes stale and unprofitable, or a revealer of personal and family affairs, echoed from one end of the car to the other. We were not disheartened, for we had expected little better. Two or three books abstracted our attention, and when tired of reading we studied the country from the car windows. As yet, there were no faintest hints of springtime. The great treeless plains stretched away, league upon league, covered by long, dry grass, bleached and bent by departed snows. The last day of our journey was more absolutely featureless than a day in mid-ocean, where sometimes a dolphin or flying fish leaping up out of the waves, and a smokestack or sail of passing vessel, enliven the way. Hour after hour passed without the

sight of tree or bush, bird or man, and the long, dead prairie level broke into no waves for our diversion. Sometimes, at a station for refreshment, we would seek a cup of tea or coffee; but good food was only to be found in our Chicago lunch-basket, and the throngs of immigrants who rushed from the second-class cars of our long train at every considerable stop needed the change and the walk upon the platform far more than we did.

Acquaintance with fellow-travelers was easily made, but there seemed to be little call for sympathy. Nearly all were cheery and hopeful, as why should they not be, when they were bound for the land of promise, and in the glow of its first excitement? This last day was to us one of falling mental barometer. The desolation of hundreds of miles of primitive prairie, with the sparse new settlements looking even more forlorn than uninvaded nature, conspired with the physical weariness of the journey to give us the instinctive feeling that we were on a strange planet.

And yet the bright heavens above, the solid earth beneath, Christ and the promises, are the same old friends we have known amid other scenes through the passing years. "Lo, I am with you always!" What can we want besides?

CHAPTER II.

THE RECEPTION AND THE OUTLOOK.

IT was after dark before we reached our destination, where we were met at the little station by two pleasant, kindly faced middle-aged men and a lady. One of the men took us in his open buggy, a mile across the prairie, to his home, which, he said, was to be ours until we could make one. The wife and young daughter gave us a cordial welcome, and the tempting supper which awaited us had been daintily prepared by their own hands.

It was a home of two small rooms. One was kitchen and dining room; the other, sitting room, parlor, library, and sleeping room. Here were books, cabinet organ, plants, pictures — an amazing array of refinement for a frontier cabin. As bedtime drew near, the question of where we were all to sleep was to us an unsolved problem. There were in the room a double bed and a small single one. But here were five persons!

At last the little girl was nicely tucked away in her narrow bed; the host and hostess bade us occupy

the other, and closed the door between the two rooms. We did not think it best just then to ask many questions, but we never did quite know how the good man and his wife got through that cold night. We were glad to find them alive and cheery in the morning.

Refreshed by our good night's sleep, we eagerly looked forth in the morning for the first sight of our new parish. Our eyes followed the waving of the dry grass and the frozen hollows of the prairie, till we espied in the distance one long, low building of a London-smoke color. Another, of a smart drab, stood beside the telegraph line and the railway track, and a third, near the second, black as a Russian dungeon, was covered, we were told, with tar paper. This was the nucleus of the nebulous village. These buildings were, respectively, the lumber depot, the railway station, and the "section house," which, of necessity, accompanies the laying of a railway track along unoccupied country, for the housing and feeding of the railroad hands. Two small white houses, not far from the station, formed the aristocratic quarters; two or three stores and the remainder of the homes were in rude, unpainted structures, some of which were mere cabins, and some promised to assume the likeness of houses if ever paint and chimneys should come to their aid.

One of the two friends who met us at the station the evening of our arrival was the village doctor, who, with rare thoughtfulness, brought his wife, that the minister's wife might not feel so much alone among the crowd of men, while waiting for the team. The stranger asked how many inhabitants the village contained. The lady did not know. Still intent on gaining some idea of the situation, the questioner thought of five hundred, but, designing to put the guess low enough, asked if there were as many as three hundred. She "thought not," and the subject was dropped. The following Sunday the doctor, with a humorous smile, brought up the question.

"My wife and I have been counting up," he said, "and we think that within a radius of a mile from the station there must be eighty-five persons."

And this was the promising village of which we had been told, while still in our New England home, that it had a weekly paper, a flourishing literary society, and an organized "board of trade," as well as a Sunday-school and a full-fledged church organization, with a good subscription for a church edifice which would soon be built! The church membership, to be sure, was only eight; but there were others who would join, if a pastor could be secured. We now found that of these eight church members, good and true, two — our host and hostess — lived a mile from

the station, and the other six were in a community on the prairie, five miles away.

The situation was not what we expected, though our expectations had not been high. The church must be built and maintained at the village; its short roll-call must be made to reach far out on the almost trackless prairie. But we were there for a purpose. We had come to honor the King, and to help the people. We were still in the world's great harvest field, and our work was before us. The first inquiry was for a place in which to hold the Sunday morning service. "We hold our Sunday-school in the depot," said our host, who was the superintendent; "there is no other place for it." Of course, then, that was the place for the new preaching service. They had already read sermons there, and the railway authorities were willing.

Sunday morning we drove to the station, but with no sound of church-going bell. The four or five settees, which on a week day were ranged about the small room, were placed one before another on one side. Right before them was a great, rude coal-stove, larger and higher than a man. The table of the telegraph operator had been brought from the little side office room and placed on the other side of the stove. A soap-box was turned upon the table for a pulpit and covered with a spread, by the fore-

thought of our hostess. About thirty men, with a few women and children, gathered in for the service, those who could not be accommodated by the settees finding seats on boards supported by inverted nail-kegs. During our devotions some stray engine or "wild" train went thundering by; but we were not to be diverted, even when a few boys and men went from the outskirts of the little congregation to the greater excitements of the platform. The sermon had to be preached with the red-hot stove between the preacher and his audience, but he stood first on one side, and then on the other, talking familiarly and looking full in the faces of those before him. When a gospel song and the benediction had brought the service to a close, the Sunday-school immediately took what form it could. The superintendent and his wife were the only teachers. All the men and women who stayed were in his class, and all the boys were in her class, leaving the girls, as the least important element of the school, to be supplied by chance.

We remained for the opening exercises to help sing and give a word of cheer. Then, after dinner at the doctor's, we drove out to the schoolhouse on the prairie, where the second service was to be held. It was a low, unpainted structure. Forty men, women, and children were gathered within, interested participants in Sunday-school exercises, when we entered.

They listened very eagerly to the sermon which followed, and gave the new minister and his wife a most cordial welcome afterwards. The drive over the prairie, both in going and returning, was a series of experiments in finding trails, trying frozen mud-holes, and crossing miry places. The reins were in the experienced hands of the village Sunday-school superintendent, who went for our guidance and introduction. There were, of course, no fences, and the few "claim shanties" along the way seemed all exactly alike. Way marks, to uninitiated eyes, there were none, and we had a feeling of great uncertainty as to whether we were on the right trail, as well as serious doubts as to whether the horses would be able to pull through the sloughs, or stick fast in hopeless struggles to find bottom in bottomless places.

The few days following were passed in fruitless inquiries for a house to live in, but without incident, except the receipt of a letter informing us that our household goods, receipted by railway officials in New England four weeks before, were not yet shipped, owing to a new rule of the "Grand Trunk," which necessitated the prepayment of all freight bills. This involved a visit by the minister to a bank, the nearest many miles distant, and delayed our hope of getting settled, even if a house could be found.

In the evenings, our inquiries brought out tales of

experience in a new country, which we were eager to hear. The winter of the year before, the first since white settlers came in, had proved very severe, the snow falling to a considerable depth, accompanied by frequent blizzards. Further railroad construction was stopped, and trains were blocked on the portion that was in running order. For one hundred and eight days there was no communication with the outside world, except by distant telegraph. The climate had been supposed to be mild and open, and there were few supplies of coal and groceries in the territory, the small dealers expecting to replenish their stock by rail from time to time, as need might be.

Some families were so fortunate as to have milch cows, or a little pork and a few potatoes on hand. These fared comfortably during the first two months of the snow embargo. Others had little food of any kind; but there was some wheat which had been raised the summer before. This, ground in coffee-mills, was the sole food of many a large family, sometimes without even the addition of salt. One hand must needs be kept "grinding at the mill," all day, and every day of those weary months, in order to prepare the "graham" meal which supplied the mush for breakfast, the water-biscuits for dinner, and the griddle-cakes for supper. If people were well, they thrived on this monotonous fare; if delicate, or dys-

peptic, the suffering was very great. One lady, whom we afterwards knew, put her last teacupful of sugar aside, for use in case of sickness, in so safe a place that she was not able to find it for several months. Hay was the only supply of fuel. The long, dry grass was cut in autumn, twisted into bundles after the fashion of a skein of yarn, and about the size of a medium stick of stove-wood, and piled up near the homes in quantities thought to be sufficient for the mild winter expected. The fearful cold in the wind-pierced shanties soon made great inroads on this provision, and the deep snows rendered it impracticable to cut more. Long before the need was over, many families had burned their last shred of hay. With no timber in the country, they were compelled to choose between freezing, and tearing up their floors and every other board that could be spared from their rude shelters before the blockade was ended, and the welcome trains could bring wood and coal.

These were the tales, coupled with stories of prairie fires, which served to while away the odd hours of the first few days, while we were waiting and hoping to find a place for a home. Meantime we were made cordially welcome by the large-hearted hospitality of our first shelter.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING HOUSEKEEPING. — THE BLIZZARD.

DURING the alternations of hope and doubt attendant upon our search for a house it had been suggested that perhaps we would prefer boarding to housekeeping. Where could we board? In a frontier "hotel" consisting of two unplastered public rooms below and one unfinished chamber above, divided by curtains of rag carpet into apartments where all the guests must sleep! A crust of bread under a board shelter by ourselves would be riches in comparison. So we prayed and watched and waited. Soon the glad news came that one of the best houses in the place was to be vacated immediately, and we could have it. That joy was very great. On the strength of it we went across the prairie to make some calls. As we returned, in the double-seated open buggy, with our kind host and hostess, the "village" appeared, on a long, gently swelling elevation to the west, a point of view we had not obtained before. "There," said the minister, "is our house." The wife looked eagerly. For a moment her heart sunk. An unpainted shell, of one story —

only not a shanty, because the diminutive roof sloped both ways, and with a slender stovepipe projecting through the top! She remembered her pleasant eastern home, and thought of the two-story brick parsonage with its acres and its orchard, from which they had turned away; and the unbidden words flashed upon her consciousness, "Have I come to this!" She was silent, but in another moment she smiled, and soon the vivacious conversation had flowed safely past these "shallows," or "deeps," in its stream. Not afterward was the struggle of that instant repeated. We were missionaries in a new country, where all except earth and sky was to be made. We had come with a fixed purpose to take things as we found them, and make them as much better as we could.

Two or three times that week some lady asked, a little doubtfully, "Do you think you can live there?" With unfeigned cheer the missionary wife was enabled to answer, that what was sufficient for others was sufficient for her, and that she had no doubt we should be comfortable. The house was vacated on Friday, and then it needed to be cleaned. The grimy dust of the soft coal used for fuel must be washed from the unpainted boards of the interior, and the stains of prairie mud from the floor. It was five o'clock Saturday afternoon before it was dry enough for us to enter.

Our hospitable host and his wife had striven to make us comfortable with utmost success, except that they could not hide from us—as they tried to do—that they were sleeping in an attic only three or four feet high in the highest part, in order to give us their comfortable bed below. We much desired to begin our housekeeping, even at this late hour of the last day in the week. A good second-hand cook-stove had fortunately been found for sale, and the minister had purchased it, and also a few hundred pounds of coal—all, or nearly all, there was for sale in the village. He had also sent twenty-five miles to the nearest place where a bedstead could be bought, and it had already arrived—cheap in aspect, but not in price. We placed it in the little attic chamber of our house, whose foundations were twelve by sixteen feet in dimensions. Under the highest pitch of the roof only could we stand upright, and here the bed was “organized.” On the wooden slats we laid the provision for our comfort, which some of our kind parishioners had contributed from their own scanty stores until ours should arrive. There was a tick filled with wiry prairie hay, pillows, a pair of warm gray blankets, a quilt or two, sheets and pillow-cases. How luxurious it all seemed, to be under a roof we could call ours for the time, and to be setting up our own bed with such a comfortable outfit! The

two or three trunks we had brought with us were stowed away under the eaves after they had been relieved of a part of their contents by hanging our clothing on nails driven into the rafters. Newspapers were pinned up to the little six-paned sashes, one in each gable, which gave us light and air; and the stovepipe, rusty with rains which had streamed down its sides, went valiantly up from below, through the middle of the room to its escape at the ridgepole. Access was had to this chamber by a steep and crooked stair in one corner, down which one seldom went without a dizzy feeling.

So far all was well. That prime necessity, sleep, was provided for. By singular good fortune, a young man, who had brought a little washstand bureau, a wooden rocker, and six common wooden chairs, was willing to lend them to us until he could build his own shelter for them. By the generous thoughtfulness of our hostess a small round table and a little strip of hemp carpet from her home were brought to grace ours. These furnished our living room, with two chairs to spare for the chamber. A fire was started in the cook-stove, and thus we began our home. To be sure, there was neither food nor dish in the house; but we would take our meals for a few days in the "hotel," not far away, until we could purchase the necessary outfit for meals at home.

So we came, with song of praise and thankful prayer, to our second Sunday's work. Service again in the waiting room at the station, and to a larger congregation than before. The wife remained to take the girls' class in Sunday-school, and the minister went alone to his afternoon appointment on the prairie. As the afternoon waned, the wife looked from the cabin window, watched, waited; but the minister did not return. As the long twilight was deepening into dusk she reluctantly went alone to the hotel for supper. She sought the landlady and apologized for being late by saying that her husband had not returned, adding that she supposed people did not get lost on the prairie so near to a town. "Indeed they do—plenty of them!" replied the landlady. But they hoped it was not so bad in this case. When the wife returned, the minister was at home, safe and smiling; but he had been bewildered on the prairie, where one square mile was like every other, and had lost much time in consequence, though not so much as to spoil his service.

There was no evening service in the village, for the depot was wanted for other uses. So we two sat beside our cook-stove, read at our borrowed table by the light of our borrowed lamp, behind our newspaper window curtains, and, as bedtime approached, chatted cheerily, resolving not to write our eastern

friends anything about our domestic surroundings, the knowledge of which would only distress them, since they would feel our discomforts, while there was really much alleviation which they could not be made to see. After evening devotions we retired early up our steep stair, and slept in peace.

Monday morning we took our breakfast with the miscellaneous company at the hotel table, came home and sat down before the stove; for the morning was cloudy and chilly. Little did we suspect that we were about to learn the meaning of a word we had seen in print, without the smallest apprehension of its meaning. There was a gray, leaden look in the heavens. The stillness of the atmosphere was oppressive enough to be a warning to the initiated, but was scarcely noticed by us, as we were planning for the week, for parish calls and work, and for the immediate purchasing of food and dishes.

Suddenly there came a blast of wind which shook our roof and shrieked through our stovepipe, shrill and fiend-like as the vicious swoop of a destroying eagle. The house trembled and creaked as the awful blast struck it. Another and another came in quick succession, whistling, wailing, roaring, howling. We glanced at each other and out of the windows. Fine particles of snow were swirling in the air, and we knew that a blizzard was upon us. Already our

frail tenement was shaking continuously as in an ague fit, and its foundation was as slight as its structure. In the grip of that relentless fiend of the air, we felt that our house might at any instant be crushed like an eggshell, and that, if it could hold together, some of these gusts must send it tumbling over and over like a weed before the wind, far across the prairie. The air was now so thick with snow that a house twenty feet distant was invisible. As noon approached, the question of food and water was discussed with interest. The minister took a pail and groped his way toward a railroad ditch, some ten rods distant, where soft water could be dipped up, a nearer well yielding water so hard that the addition of soap converted it into a milky, greasy fluid unfit for washing. He returned with about half the water blown out of his pail and his clothing a sheet of ice. "It is useless," he said to his wife, "for you to attempt to stand before the wind. I will bring your dinner." He took a little tin pail with a cover, which we fortunately possessed, went to the hotel, a few rods away, ate his own dinner, and brought food to the wife. She found a little package of tea brought from Chicago in her trunk, steeped some in her one tin cup, and partook of her first meal in her new home with mingled thankfulness and fear.

As the day wore on, the gusts seemed to increase in severity, — if that were possible, — and the uncertainty of our untried position we keenly felt. In the thick darkness of the early evening the wife ascended to the chamber and lay down upon the bed, to ascertain by experiment whether rest would be possible there for the night. A brief trial convinced her that no rest was to be had in that attic. Its walls of thin boards seemed like the curtains of a paper tent, as the wind roared and raved about them, and the shrill wail in the stovepipe was varied only by shrieks that seemed both human and inhuman. The bed shivered, trembled, rocked, and that apprehension which comes of not knowing how much worse the situation may be was hardest of all to bear. Unspoken terror would drive away all possibility of sleep. The bed was brought down and the bedstead. The only place in the little room where it could be set up was with the head against the front door. It was a frail door surrounded by cracks, and we had nothing to caulk with. But the storm came from the opposite direction, and by hanging a quilt over the door we had a corner for our bed somewhat sheltered from the heaviest drafts. So, as cheerily as possible, we made our preparations for the night — kept the fire up, for the cold was growing intense; committed ourselves to God and lay down to rest, if not to sleep. All night and all the

next day the storm raged without intermission. Sometimes the minister went into the rude shed over the back door of the room, in order to replenish his coal hod. Through the gaps and crannies of the shed the force of the wind had driven the fine snow till every surface of joist and board within wore an ermine mantle several inches thick, and every projection wore grotesque curves and beautiful wreaths of snow, compact in substance as though cut from Parian marble. By the middle of the afternoon of the second day we began to discern a diminution of the force of the wind, slight indeed; but as we watched, or rather felt, the gusts, we were sure they were a little lighter. Before dark we received our first call. The doctor and one of the church members from the prairie floundered to the door of the coal shed and knocked. When seated beside the fire, the doctor opened his greatcoat and drew from its shelter our first present — a little bundle, as large as his arm below the elbow, of pine fagots for kindling. Nothing could have been more welcome, though we did not then know that wood was more precious than gold in our new parish. Far-seeing plans had been laid and patiently realized, before our neighbor could have been the possessor of such kindling, with a bunch to spare. If we, without experience, and in such a storm, had been without it, and our fire had once gone out, what could we have

done! We laid it away with gratitude, and answered his kind inquiries as to how we had obtained food for the past thirty-six hours, whether we had slept, and if we were afraid.

His companion had been caught in the storm, miles from home, had walked to the village on the rail track, and was now about to proceed five miles farther in the same direction, in order to allay the anxiety of his family and to provide for their wants. We protested at the risk of life he knew he was taking; but he proceeded, and fortunately reached home in safety, in the lulling storm.

The son of another neighbor, a youth of fifteen, had started that eventful Monday morning before the hurricane fell, to walk from the village eight miles to his father's ranch. The morning was not very cold, and he was lightly clad. Before he was two miles from the village the sudden gust descended. Experienced pioneers would have faced about for home with all speed, as some of them did in that very moment; but the boy was "plucky," and knew not his danger. He kept on and on, until he was thoroughly bewildered, the thick air and benumbing blasts closing in on every side. Still, with no house near, he battled on, until he began to feel that the cold was reaching the citadel of life, and realized, at last, that he was helpless and hopeless. At that moment he

stumbled over a harrow which he had left in his father's field a few days before, and whose location he remembered. It was not more than a quarter of a mile from the shelter he sought, and thus guided and cheered he reached the place in safety. Thus God answered the prayers of his gentle mother, whose faith alone assured her of his safety until his return the third day after.

Ten miles from us, on that first fearful night, two young men from Missouri were groping in the awful darkness. They had come in spring clothing from their warmer home, to look over the country and select a new home. When the storm had subsided they were found stiff in the embrace of death—their spirits dwelt in “another clime than ours.” No volume will record the like fate of scores, perhaps hundreds, who perished, “unwept, unhonored, and unsung,” because unknown, in that fearful storm. There they rest, until the prairies and the sea shall give up their dead.

CHAPTER IV.

GETTING SETTLED. — OUR HYMN.

OUR first half week of dwelling figuratively “under our own vine and fig-tree” had passed when Wednesday’s fitful sun broke through the struggling and retreating battalions of the storm demon. The snow had melted, and the mud was unspeakable. Not a sidewalk, not a board, before the low threshold of our cabin! Every foot labored heavily through the rich, tarry loam of the street, and ours brought their quota to reinforce that which already encumbered our floor. The soft coal sent its clinging, greasy dust over every inch of surface which the mud deposits did not cover, and the scanty hard water and soap made with the mud and coal dust an amalgam more disgusting than either of its original constituents. The minister made an improvement most heartily welcomed by the wife, when he deposited an armful of hay, given by a kind neighbor, before the front door, to serve both as sidewalk and doormat. Not long afterward there was an announcement made with the design of consolation. It was the result of continued musing on the subject,

and of observations gathered in the course of various calls on our neighbors similarly situated. "It is of no use," said the minister one day. "No one can keep tidy in these conditions. You must resign yourself to them without resistance, and be content to have the house 'hoed out' once in a while." On this prospect the wife meditated without present comment. We now set out on a prospecting tour among the two or three "stores" which the settlement possessed. More than once we found gentlemanly attention from behind the counter, but we did not find much else that we wanted. Of the coarse white crockery, nearly every piece was warped or otherwise imperfect; and the dried fruits were so poorly and untidily prepared that we could not bring ourselves to purchase any. Anything was evidently quite good enough for frontier trade, and the more unsalable at the east, the more astute the business capacity of the merchant who could sell it at good prices here. Our larder was at length furnished. Small paper bags of flour, graham and corn meal, a pound or two of butter, and a few potatoes and eggs, occupied our storeroom, which was a hole about two feet by three beneath the stairs, and our cellar, which was another hole about three feet by four, under a trap-door in the floor before our stove. Soon the prairie at morning and evening would be white and gray

with flocks of wild geese, alighting for rest on their way northward. The boys in the family of one of our prairie parishioners were expert gunners, and we were often remembered by the gift of some of their trophies. Geese and other wild fowl, however, had so strong and "gamy" a flavor, that only experience in the cooking of it could make it palatable. In the first two months of our residence we had no fresh beef. A neighbor, who had killed a pig for his own use, kindly made us a present of a small quantity of fresh pork. Canned meat and a little salt pork and salt fish from the store were our provisions for chief dependence. Only green tea was to be had, which we did not drink; but green Rio coffee yielded its fragrance when imprisoned in a dripping pan in our oven, and the doctor had a cow, and generously gave us daily a pint or quart of milk.

There was neither cupboard nor closet. When the wife had brought in the shallow tin pan which had been kindly bestowed upon her as a gift, and washed and wiped her new dishes for two on her round table, she was puzzled as to where she could keep them when the table was needed for the writing of sermons. Her eye fell on a little compartment formed by the lowest stair, which had been made with a removable top. There the dishes would be comparatively sheltered from mud and coal dust until a better place

could be contrived. This was the only cupboard for some time, although, in spite of paper and cloth to guard them from the dust made by frequent passing over the rattling stair, they always needed careful attention before "setting the table." A bit of chintz brought in our trunk was made up into a curtain and hung before the repository of paper bags which served instead of a meal chest, and we settled down to housekeeping with no further outfit until our goods should arrive, when we hoped to improve our arrangements.

Meantime the spring rains had begun to fall. We had been in our new home now long enough to take a "sober second thought" as to our environments. To our poor human vision the outlook was far enough from fascinating. Depression and doubt were on the alert, and, like the scriptural view of sin, they seemed, like a wild beast preparing to spring, "crouching at the door" of our hearts. Never willingly, nor of conscious purpose, had we yielded to them. No word of discouragement had either of us ever uttered, for the momentum of our purpose was still upon us, and we still hoped to help this moral wilderness yet to blossom as the rose. The indulgence of homesickness would have been treason to the high ends which had brought us hither. To the unbidden and resisted secret temptations of each heart an

answer unlooked for soon came in a "Thus saith the Lord."

For three weeks a continuous northeast rain storm had prevailed. Our front door faced the east, and was hardly an inch in thickness. The thin panels had cracked widely under the combined influence of rain and sun the previous season. Underneath the door was a wide gap which no ingenuity of ours, with the means at command, had been able to stop. The wind and the rain knocked at the door night and day. Every morning a dismal stream had beaten underneath it and ran nearly across our floor, leaving, when swept out, dampness and discomfort not to be removed. The piercing wind was a constant guest at our breakfast table.

One morning in the third week of this rainy season we moved back from our simple breakfast, the wife adjusted the little loose strip of hemp carpet as best she could for our comfort beside the fire, the minister read, as usual, from the Book, and each opened a Gospel song book. What instinct led the wife to suggest, "Let us sing No. 40"? We had never sung it before, and knew neither what the words were to be nor the tune. Though all was strange, we started in bravely, the husband's tenor voice on the soprano, supplemented by the wife's alto. Cheerfully we sang, —

“Holy Spirit, faithful guide,
 Ever near the Christian's side,
 Gently lead us by the hand,
 Pilgrims in a desert land.”

Voices were softening, but we went on, —

“Ever-present, truest Friend,
 Ever near, thine aid to lend,
 Leave us not to doubt and fear,
 Groping on in darkness drear.”

Tones were trembling now. The unspoken heart-sinkings of all the past weeks were gathering and culminating, unbidden and unwelcome, and, for an instant only, our self-control seemed on the point of taking leave. But the song paused not, the tune and the words carrying us forward to victory. Though our hearts were melted like wax, tears, not of depression, but of holy exultation, fell like rain from our eyes, while voices grew stronger as the strain went on, —

“When the storms are raging sore,
 Hearts grow faint, and hopes give o'er,
 Whispering softly, Wanderer, come,
Follow me; I 'll guide thee home.”

Peace and triumph came with these words. It was as though He who stood by night beside his apostle, saying, “Be of good cheer, Paul!” had even come

also to us, his humble messengers. If a voice from heaven had audibly spoken to us assurance of sympathy and encouragement and divine leadership, the impression could hardly have been stronger, the comfort more real. Scarcely conscious of our need until the Word came, it was as with the tender comfort of one "whom his mother comforteth." The prayer that closed our morning devotions was little else than the breathing out of broken and contrite spirits into the ear of an eternal Friend.

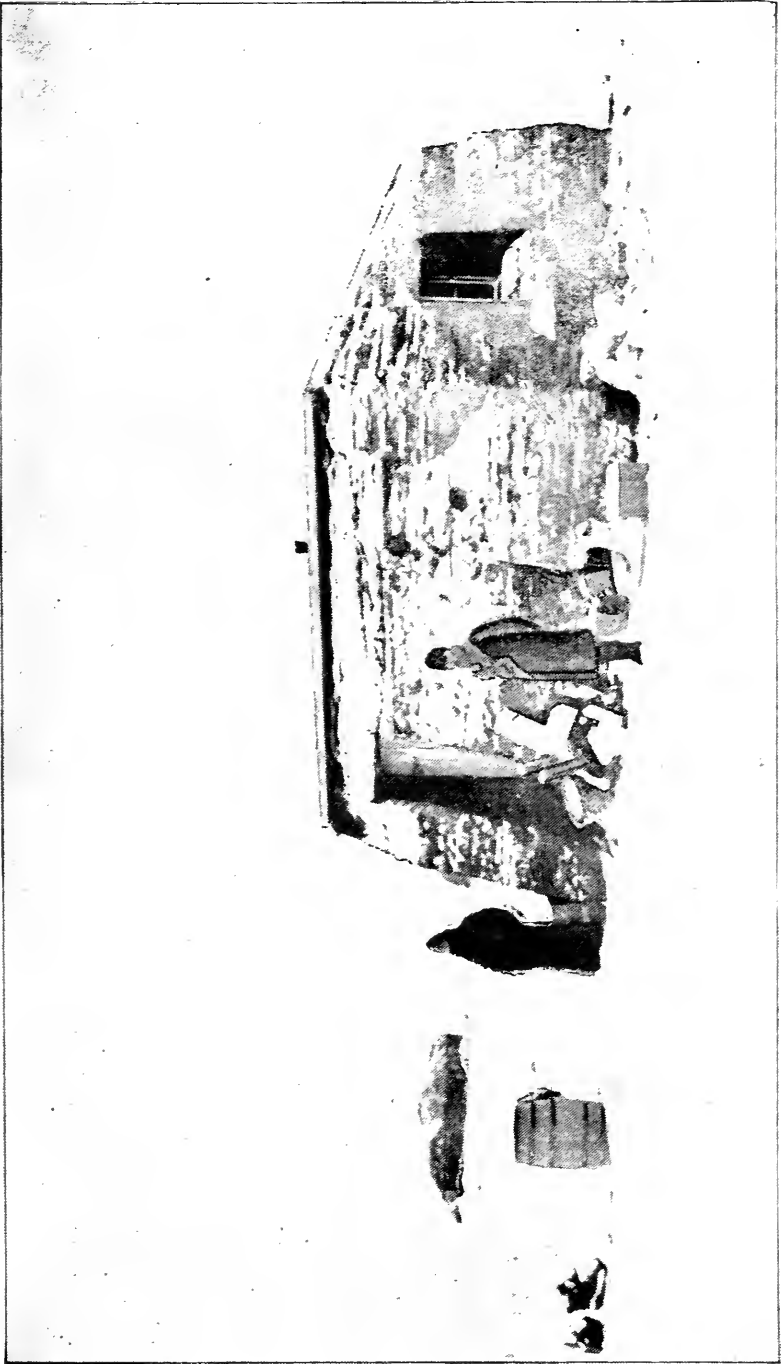
From that hour forth there was, in our pioneer work, a freedom from small annoyances of spirit, a smoothness in the running of the wheels of daily life, a sense of the upholding, protecting presence of the Lord in degree beyond what we had known before, and without fitfulness or much variation. Thus early was gracious reward made to walk hand in hand with endeavor.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG THE PEOPLE.

THE clouds at length began to clear, and the mud to dry. It was time that we made acquaintance with the more remote of our parishioners.

An early call was on a family who lived in a sod house. Sod houses are built where there is no supply of lumber, or no means to buy it. A furrow is turned from the stout sward of the prairie, about a foot or eighteen inches in width, which is then cut by the spade into squares. These squares are piled one on another to form the thick walls of the house, one side being carried higher than that opposite, to afford the requisite slope for the roof. Openings are cut or formed in the walls as they rise, for door and window. A few rough boards are laid slantwise from wall to wall, and covered with sods, which thus form the roof also, with a hole in one corner for the stove funnel. A window sash or half sash and a rough door complete the outfit. Sometimes the luxury of a rough loose board floor is found within, but often only a floor of hard-trodden earth, with a piece or two of board by way of rug, before the bed.



THE LITTLE SOD SHANTY ON THE CLAIM.

The walls of this first sod house which we entered were very thick, and we congratulated the owner, one of the best farmers, on having a dwelling which shut out the cold winds.

“Yes,” he said, “but the roof leaks wretchedly. It leaks mud on us, and I must do something.”

The sweet-faced mistress of the house was tending her two beautiful children cheerily; but how our hearts sank at the close proximity of cupboard, bed, stove, table, and crib! This mother proved a quiet but efficient helper in all good things, whether church social, temperance meeting, or Sunday-school festival.

Another call was upon a young man and his wife, persons of intelligence from a college town in an eastern state, who brought letters of highest recommendation from their former pastor. The house—this one of boards—was about ten by twelve feet, and contained one room. Within was neatness itself. The cook-stove shone with spotless luster; the neat wardrobe, made and painted by the husband, concealed unused clothing; the stand which matched it was faultless, and so were the floor, and the bed in the corner. The wife’s father, mother, and four brothers (two of them young men) had just arrived from the east, and taken up a temporary residence with the young couple until the spring crops should be planted, and they could build a home for themselves.

We asked how these eight persons slept in this one little kitchen.

“On straw ticks laid on the floor at night,” was the reply.

We did not press inquiry further, but on our way home meditated on the situation. The father and mother doubtless had the bed; the master and mistress probably slept on a “straw tick” produced from some impossible place and laid upon the floor. The two older brothers had another. But two straw ticks would fill absolutely every available foot of the floor space. Where *could* those two younger brothers sleep? All at once the solution occurred to us both. Those two boys of ten and twelve must have slept *under the bed!*

An early call of the minister's was upon his nearest ministerial neighbor, several miles distant. This neighbor and his wife had come a year or two before our arrival, passing through the exceeding severity of that long-to-be-remembered winter. He told us that he had just ten dollars in money on his arrival, and that he bought lumber on credit with which to build his house. The frame was constructed of a few small scantlings. On this slight framework were nailed thin boards for the covering. Within, the walls were lined and partitions made, not of laths and plaster, but simply of brown paper tacked on the

studding. This, in sheets, with their frequent loose overlappings, helped but inadequately to keep out the cold of winter. It was the habit of that minister and his wife during the first winter to wear all the clothing they could command when about ordinary household duties, including overcoats, shawls, mittens, and arctic overshoes; and then they were seldom or never comfortably warm out of bed. For this reason they spent many daylight waking hours in bed during the severest weather.

One excellent result of calling among our parishioners was to send us home cheered by the contrast between their family accommodations and ours. We were so much better off than most, that our little cabin usually looked positively attractive when we got back to it.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST COMMUNION. — OUR SUNDAY-SCHOOL. — A JOURNEY.

THE first weeks had passed, and the time of May communion was approaching. This ordinance had been enjoyed but once before — at the organization of the little church. It was desirable that as many should be gathered as possible in the village for its celebration Sunday morning, and, after it, be quickly ready to go to the afternoon service on the prairie. Our little cabin now rejoiced in a pine cupboard, a rag carpet, window curtains, and sundry provisions of canned fruit, meat, white beans, etc., which had arrived in our boxes, as well as a few pieces of table linen, china, and silver. So our country members were invited to dine with us after the morning service, and also the pastor and deacon from the nearest church, who had signified their hope to be with us on this important and joyful occasion. Every possible preparation was made on Saturday. Sunday morning the little waiting room at the station witnessed a memorable scene. A small white tablecloth was spread over the office table; a china plate and

pitcher and a common glass tumbler serving to convey the sacred emblems, of which the unwontedly large congregation of believers partook, with tears of thankfulness, while children and rude frontiersmen were interested spectators.

The pastor's wife excused herself, immediately after the service, from the Sunday-school, that she might hasten home, well knowing the difficulty she would experience in preparing dinner in the tiny cabin when all the guests should have arrived to crowd the space, in the center of which the table was already set. But a number of the guests also declined the invitation to remain to Sunday-school, and were crossing the street toward the house before she had laid aside bonnet and gloves. The visiting minister sat between the stove and the table, his feet warming in the oven while he socially discoursed to the hostess on high themes in a most interesting way. With scarcely opportunity to turn, or to collect her thoughts on the duty before her, the hostess inaudibly sighed for "six feet of kitchen" to herself, and felt almost dismayed at the task of serving dinner in an orderly way to ten persons in these circumstances. The husband gladly shared with her the privilege of serving the guests, but eight were too many to find room at the little round table, which had neither "extension leaves" nor room to spread them in. Six of

the guests were men, one was the visiting pastor's wife, and one the little daughter of a judge who had come as one of the guests. The lady guest assured the hostess that she could be handsomely accommodated by spreading a napkin beneath her plate on the broad step at the turning of the stairs, and sitting on the step below ; and knowing that it was both nature and habit to this gentle woman to rejoice in the lowliest place, we yielded to the necessity. After the lady and the seven around the table had been served, the minister had his dinner on the stand, for he also had to go immediately to the second service. Never, it seemed to us, was a meal more enjoyed in Christian fellowship. Then the lumber wagons and other vehicles bore away the whole company towards the prairie schoolhouse, leaving the hostess to restore order and neatness to cabin and cupboard. This was a task which filled nearly the whole afternoon, and left her almost too weary for even Bible and hymn book to bring their wonted cheer afterward ; but it was felt to be strength well spent.

The Sunday-school grew perceptibly in interest, and as the spring came, several children, who had not been able to attend in winter, joined the classes. The large and small girls were still all together in one class, and made a pretty picture. The tiniest would sit in the lap of the teacher, and another little one would

stand beside her, while the older girls would each take one or two little ones to hold also. One girl, eight years old, walked alone two miles across the prairie to the school and back, except when she caught an old white horse and rode on his back without a saddle, as she used to do sometimes. One of the older girls, about fifteen, was an orphan and lived with her grandparents. She had never been to school a day in her life because she had always lived on a frontier where there was no school. She had at home learned to read and had mastered a little arithmetic, but she seemed not to have had much religious instruction. One day her cheek flushed and her eyes grew eager, as her teacher told of the Saviour and about asking for his help and care. As they talked on, the little one standing at the teacher's side said artlessly, "I know a verse about Jesus," and then repeated a beautiful little prayer her mother had taught her. Then the youngest of all, in the teacher's lap, said *her* prayer, in a way so sweet as to bring tears to the eyes of the teacher. They had perhaps never been to Sunday-school before, and prattled on, not knowing enough to be afraid, until the boys' class, and even the Bible class, had stopped to listen to the children's talk about Jesus. Again, as so often in the world's old story, from the mouths of babes was the praise of God perfected.

The children of this village were more than a year without any day school whatever, and the Sunday-school was their privilege and their joy.

Not long after the opening of the spring flowers circumstances called for a journey of about two hundred and eighty miles "across country." Though all the way was a public thoroughfare, if it had been planned with an especial view to discomfort and inconvenience it could hardly have been arranged more effectually to accomplish this object. First a few miles were traveled by rail, and then came the variety of about twenty miles by stage. Sloughs and rough roads and showers did not make this particularly agreeable. For some miles before we reached a point where we were again to take the railroad a white church spire rising from trees which crowned an eminence was conspicuous. This welcome sight was the church connected with the first Indian homestead settlement in the territory. At the village, which had grown up at the nucleus of this settlement, now twelve years old, and composed of whites and Indians, we were obliged to wait for our train from noon till nearly midnight. Accompanied by the genial and obliging host of the hotel, we went to call on the Indian minister, whose work here was already rising to "praise him in the gates." He and his wife were absent, but we were courteously received by three

Indian maidens, and shown the building used by the school, of which this minister was also the teacher. His residence was in the front part of the building. As we were courteously ushered through the rooms by an Indian girl, with the dress and manners of a lady, who spoke perfectly correct and polite English, we caught glimpses of a well-ordered bedroom, with a cat curled up asleep on the bed, of a sitting and dining room, with extension table, cushioned rocking-chair, and well-filled bookcase, — signs of civilization most welcome to our hungry eyes. The schoolroom was furnished with modern school furniture, large blackboard, wall charts, clock, and outline maps. On the teacher's table lay a handsome Bible with a gilt clasp, and a red morocco-covered hymn book, both translated into the Dakota language by the missionaries, Williamson and Riggs. The unpronounceable Indian words in the hymn book look strangely under the English titles, "Old Hundred," "Coronation," "Dennis," and so forth. On the fly leaf was written the pastor's name in lines singularly clear, delicate, and graceful, and opposite was pasted a little printed slip containing the hymn, "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour!" in the Dakota tongue. The school register was shown us, containing the names of thirty-four pupils, with the attendance for a previous month carefully marked for each half day.

Beside the school was the public granary, where grain for seed and other special needs was stored ; and below, on the river, beside which an Indian trail has run from time immemorial, was a large flouring mill, not built by the Indians, but situated on an Indian claim. Walking out to the bank of the river, we picked a dozen varieties of flowers, — anemones, violets, buttercups, and several unfamiliar and unnamable specimens, — and enjoyed the landscape, which here had the charm of native oaks, elms, and cottonwood, growing along the river's course. These Indians are the Santee Sioux, then numbering about one hundred families, or between three and four hundred individuals. They resided mostly outside the village, on farms which they owned and tilled, and their comfortable homes were in no way to be distinguished from those of well-to-do white settlers. Good frame houses, many neatly painted, and with goodly groves of trees around them, planted and grown by themselves, attested the possibility of civilizing the Indians. These were, at least in part, those Indians concerned in the Minnesota massacres of 1862, who were long imprisoned at Mankato and Davenport, and among whom that wonderful revival took place so graphically described by Dr. Riggs in his book, "Mary and I." In prison, while the leaders were taken from them and executed, and many of their number were dying from exposure

and prison diseases, hundreds learned to read and write, and many were truly converted. At length they were transported to a point on the Missouri and liberated, but after a few years' experience of life as dependents at a government agency they emigrated hither to form this homestead settlement on the Big Sioux.

This refreshing detour within the bounds of civilization had rested our bodies and cheered our hearts, so that we prepared with alacrity for the midnight train which was to bear us still farther towards life a little removed from the first raw, uncouth stage of ever-surrounding "newness." The unwelcome hour of two o'clock in the morning set us down again from our railroad train, but this time near an excellent hotel, where we snatched a few hours' sleep. By seven o'clock A.M. we had breakfasted, and were again on our way. Though still in a new land, the country looked old in comparison with the frontier counties. Painted and plastered houses, brick chimneys, wire-fenced pastures, bespoke a few years' vantage in the struggle of civilization with the "boundless contiguity" of primeval prairie.

Soon we had our first view of the Missouri River, in length the grandest river in the world, its clay-colored banks giving color and almost "consistency" to the majestic stream, on which the significant name, "Big

Muddy," was bestowed by the Indians. The object of our journey accomplished, we returned by the same route with gladness to our frontier cabin. The thirty-six hours consumed in making the journey either way compassed less than three hundred miles — time which would have sufficed to make a journey from Boston to Chicago with far greater ease and comfort.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST FUNERAL.

ON a beautiful July day the doctor called to say that a man had died seven miles from the village, and the minister was requested to attend the funeral. The doctor added, "The family live in a sod house. That is a comparatively comfortable place while people are well, but if they get sick it is likely to go hard with them." With the needed offer of his horse and buggy for a conveyance, after giving a few particulars of the history of the family, the kind-hearted doctor departed. The hour of noon saw the minister and his wife well on the way toward the place of sorrow, for the road was long and untried. We rode for miles over the prairie, often uncertain as to the way, fearful of missing the track, and of plunging perhaps into impassable sloughs. After stopping almost as often as we came in sight of a shanty, to inquire the way, we reached at last our destination. It was such a July day as we have never seen elsewhere. High overarching heavens of intensest blue and white, a cool breeze, magnificent sunshine flooding earth and sky, combined to spread over the vast,

green, billowy prairies of waving grass and grain a glory all their own.

As we came, at last, in sight of the house we could see the neighbors gathering from their humble homes, some of them from miles away. Death is wont to be sad, and every funeral service has gloom enough. But in this case the sadness was unusual, and the gloom seemed almost without relief. Arrived at the place of mourning, a glance revealed sorrowful faces of parents and children within the house. In the only room was a single window, through which the afternoon sun was shining, a stove, a rough pine bedstead before which lay two or three small pieces of board on the floor of earth, and a few pine stools or benches. A rude pine table stood in the shade of the house, outside the door, on which was a pine coffin stained black, which already enclosed its sad burden. There was not a chair, nor an article of cabinet furniture of any description. The neighbors who had assembled were not invited to enter the house. It was a kindness to allow them to arrange themselves on extemporized seats, taken from their wagons, or made of a few boards on small boxes, by the shaded wall of sods on either side of the door.

Within this single apartment a family of nine had made their home about a year before. The grandparents had come from Scotland to Canada long ago.

Not yet threescore and ten, they, with a son, his wife, and five little children, had now come in poverty to seek a home where land is waiting for the poor. Here, on this "claim," the grandmother had died in the first winter, and here, on a day when wind and storm forbade even the presence of the nearest neighbors, except two or three, — minister then there was none, — she had been buried. Now, after a few months of loneliness without her, they were to carry the grandfather to be laid beside his wife.

Just inside the door of the house, in presence of the mourners and assembled neighbors, with the grass in blossom on the sod roof waving in the air above his head, the minister stood, with his Bible and Gospel song book, to read of the "many mansions," and to sing of the "land that is fairer than day." What a privilege and a refuge was prayer in such circumstances!

Soon the closed pine coffin was in the wagon, with a bunch of white petunias and sweet alyssum on the lid, reviving for us sad memories of other scenes where cultivated flowers more beautiful, but not more rare than these were now, exhaled their fragrance for the tomb. The children, from two to seven years of age, were left in the hut, the eldest to care for the others, while the father and mother followed the coffin on foot. Then came the conveyance of the

pastor and his wife, and four or five other vehicles with sympathizing neighbors.

The knoll on the farm where the grandmother had been laid was now ready to receive the grandfather to its bosom. But for that solitary, unmarked mound of green, it would have seemed like lowering a coffin overboard at sea. On that lonely hilltop, around that open grave, in such circumstances, what comfort was there for the bereaved family, crushed by sorrow as really, in their poverty, as the wise, the great, the rich, might have been amid surrounding luxury? What could be said to the hard-handed, tawny sons of toil who stood around them in awe and sympathy?

Human words are empty here. But the divine Word was uttered for such a need. Every man bared his head as the minister read the words, which, to more than one heart, seemed to have been written for such a time as this, as for none before.

“That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: . . . It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. . . .

“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

To lift one's eyes was to look to the far sweep of the horizon in every direction, and to see, stretching thither, vast fields of grain waving for the harvest, some of which these men before us had watched, as planted by their hands a few weeks ago; they knew the seed had died in mold and darkness to nourish the new life which now clothed these fields in beauty and rejoicing. Who shall say that the lesson did not sink into their hearts as though they had never heard it before? Perchance in some bosom there was planted

“The seeds of holiness, to blossom
In fragrance and in beauty bright and vernal,
To spring eternal.”

And this perfect day, worthy of “the new heavens and the new earth” in its exquisite beauty, laid its balm upon our souls. Gazing upward into the deep, transparent blue of the overarching sky with its magnificent opening clouds, our tears of joy mingled with the inspired words, and we could almost see, coming “in like manner” as he departed, the tender, radiant form of Him who is the resurrection and the life.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE. — NEW FRIENDS. — THE CHURCH.

THE first school meeting after our arrival was held in the office of the lumber depot. Important action, affecting the welfare of all the people, was pending, and all the people believed in having both school and church. If any could be found to acknowledge no higher reason, it was necessary for the real estate interests that there should be both. It was curious to note how these interests were uppermost in the thoughts of nearly all. Several times we were the objects of unmasked sympathy because all the good "claims" near the village had been taken up before our arrival, and great was the surprise when it was ascertained that the minister did not wish to take up land. Indeed, during the years of his residence west he was continually urged, in a friendly way, not to neglect the opportunity of securing the three "quarter sections," which, as "preëmption," "homestead," and "tree-claim," it was in his power to obtain, and it was also intimated that the wife might "file" on land in her own right. The negatives courteously given in reply were received with unfeigned

astonishment sometimes ; sometimes, it is to be feared, with silent contempt. Not to have come for land was thought to be incompatible with good sense, even in a minister.

The intense worldliness filled head and heart and hands of the people to such a degree that even school interests were left to the control of a very few. At this school meeting the office of the lumber shed was quite large enough to accommodate the four or five men and two women who attended. The minister and his wife were of the number, and when the vote was taken, both, as qualified voters, exercised their rights under the law. The result was unanimous.

It was not long before the foundations of the schoolhouse were laid. It was to be built on a plan previously adopted, and on a scale commensurate with the expectations of the people in regard to the future of the town. How we watched the progress of the work ! Every sign of advance was hailed with a heartfelt joy which surprised even ourselves. It could hardly have been pleasure more real if the house had been only for our own personal benefit.

When it was enclosed with sides and roof, and floors laid, the Sabbath congregation joyfully migrated from the railroad waiting room to the new edifice. Only the lower story was at first to be finished, so to the

upper, where we could be unmolested by workmen for months to come, we repaired until the lower floor should be completed. It was in the long summer, when the rains fall not, and we needed not to wait until the window openings were filled with sash and glass. The room was large enough to accommodate the growing congregation, and that alone was cause for gratitude. How our songs of praise floated out through the open windows of that unfinished upper room on the delicious prairie air of that unclouded Sunday morning! The company were seated on boards supported by nail kegs, the feet of a number of the grown persons and all the children swinging at various distances above the floor, and with only the rough inside of the siding and the studding for backs to the seats; indeed, most had no backs at all. But there was hope of better accommodation ere long, and even this was a palace compared to the quarters which the congregation had met in for now many months. Never, it seemed, were people more thankful, and our schoolhouse was better to us than a cathedral would have been with Gothic spire and vaulted aisle.

The immigration of the year had been large in the whole country, and, though not so great as had been expected to this particular locality, new faces were constantly seen in the congregation, and new homes

were constantly made around us. On one of our Sunday mornings at the depot a well-dressed family had appeared, consisting of a gentleman, his wife, and lovely little son. The contrast between this service and that of the city church of two thousand members which they had left needed no emphasizing. When the minister led in the closing hymn, "I've found a Friend," tears rained down the face of the lady, and we knew there was small room in the homesick heart for the welcome that awaited the newcomers when the services were over, and the introductions were made. Yet this lady proved one of our valued helpers, and we knew no one more resolute than she became in battling with the trials of a new country.

One day, near sunset, an English gentleman and his wife appeared at our door, inquiring for the home of a distant parishioner. They had, a few moments before, left the railway train, to end at our door a journey made without a break from Manchester, England. Two thousand miles of ocean, and two thousand miles of land, placed not the barriers between them and their old home which were interposed by the change of situation and customs.

Learning that the friends whom they sought lived a few miles from the village, they set out with alacrity to walk. They knew no English oaks and no hedges would diversify the scene, but they did not know

the difference between following paths through English meadows and over English stiles, and following trails over uncultivated American prairie. Soon the lady's shoes were almost cut from her feet; but her greatest difficulty was yet before her. They had come to the edge of a large morass, almost impassable to those who well knew the way across it. Here they paused, in anxiety and doubt, for the night was falling. Soon, however, a man driving an ox-team before a wagon without a box approached from behind them. Joyfully they accepted his offered help. The lady, seated on the long "reach" between the wagon wheels, made the transit safely, and soon they were at the home of the friends they sought—a home, like all the others, in name and in feeling, but with little else. On the following Sunday morning these English friends were among the congregation in the schoolhouse. Friendly sympathy was not wasted, for the lady confessed that she had scarcely been able to listen to the sermon, because of the abundance of her tears.

Erelong the first floor of the schoolhouse was finished, furnished with seats and table, and became the sanctuary—its only use, for as yet neither teacher nor school had "materialized." A cabinet organ was brought from the home of our first friends, and the Sabbath service took on an orderliness and dignity most welcome, both in the congregation and the

Sunday-school, which latter, now graded and supplied with teachers, made rapid gains in the bright, warm weather.

The church edifice, too, was going upward. When the foundations were to be laid, every man, except one, was overwhelmed by the demands of seeding time on the new farms and of business in the village. The stone had been brought by freight train, and the lime for mortar, precious in proportion to its scarcity, had been burned in kilns hundreds of miles eastward. One farmer, who felt an interest in the work, at length came to help with a wagon and a yoke of oxen. This was a great reinforcement to the mason and the minister, who were on the ground alone. The mortar was to be made, and the stone hauled from the freight depot, and the wall was to be laid. The mason superintended the work and laid the wall, the farmer and the minister alternating, according to convenience, in driving the oxen, which drew the stone, and carrying mortar to the mason. The first time the minister drove the oxen with their load through the chief street of the village, even the rush of trade and speculation was for a moment suspended, as men and boys turned out of their places of business to see how he did it. He knew that practiced eyes and ears would instantly detect any signs of inexperience, but, thanks to his boyhood training on a New England farm! he was

enabled to pass the ordeal with credit, and even to be conscious that from that day he had a new advantage in preaching to those same men and boys. Their minister, after all, was a man of affairs. His subsequent ability to unload the rocks and the lumber, sift the sand, mix the mortar, and his privilege of carrying the first hod, made less impression on the community, if not less demand on his strength and skill. Slowly through the delightful days the good work went on, and the interest we had felt in the school-house was superseded by the greater joy with which we watched the uprearing of a house of the Lord. As became a frontier church, it was modest indeed, but beautiful in outline against the background of sky and prairie. And when its spire was completed our eyes were gladdened as by "some tall palm" overshadowing a well in the desert.

CHAPTER IX.

A NEIGHBORING CHURCH.

LETTERS missive had come, inviting the pastor and church to participate in the organization of another church in an adjoining county. The pastor's wife was elected a delegate from the church, — no one else could go, — and on a bright summer morning we set out. Our strange horse proved to be kind and tractable, and, in this dry season, our light buggy was adequate to the toils of the road. The way was delightful. The long swells of the prairie were carpeted by grass, which now, under an August sun, had everywhere turned to a dried feathery mass of a beautiful fawn color. In this delicate setting the purple and lavender of the "thimble flower" were massed in patches so thick as to be worthy of an expert gardener in "ribbon" effects. Then there were acres covered with other compound flowers, which seemed to be the peculiar favorites of the prairie soil at this season. Great yellow ox-eyed daisies nodded in the winds by the thousand; "wild sunflowers," large and small, in a dozen varieties, made the distant view bright with their blossoms.

Never had we seen elsewhere wild roses of so rich and deep a pink, set in leaves of so exquisite a green, as those which grew along our track under this fervid sky. The harmonies of color filled one's soul with nature's inarticulate music. And, what joy! Here were twin lakes, with a roadway between, along which real trees were actually growing! This was our first sight of trees in this part of the world. There had been days in that shadeless summer when, if a tree had been on exhibition miles away, with a high price for admission, we would gladly have made the pilgrimage for the sake of beholding it. And now here was a strip of land, two or three miles long, washed on either side by the waters of a lake, where the prairie fires had been kept away, and trees were growing. Not the majestic elms and maples of New England and the middle states, but willows and scrub oaks, twenty or thirty feet high, whose tops had been depressed, and whose scrawny arms had been stretched awry by the relentless winds, but whose roots were deep and whose leaves withered not beside these waters. A luxurious wild grapevine mantled one of them; in places there was thick underbrush, while in others only thin grass overspread the sandy soil beneath the grateful shade. All prairie land seemed more homelike and cheerful when we had seen these trees, and in the strength of that uplifting we

fared on our way rejoicing. Part of the way we had a well-marked wagon track. Then for miles we were out of the sight of human habitations, following our instincts only, over a trackless prairie. Once we drove into the tall grass of a dry slough which extended far and wide across our way. We feared no mire because we were in the dry season, but a multitude of prairie hens fluttered and screamed out of their invaded nesting places, the fledgelings hardly tumbling out of the way fast enough to escape the footfalls of our horse. Both hens and "humans" were almost equally startled and uncomfortable over the unexpected encounter. We had spent the first night with a family within the bounds of our own large parish, and the journey was ended on the second day in time for the afternoon service in the school-house where the new church was to be organized. The young pastor told modestly the story of his coming to the place, the success of his labors, the presence of a number of Christian people who were willing to enter into covenant together, of the room for such an organization, and its promise of growth; and then the church was solemnly constituted and commended to God. We remained for the night, had an evening service, and early the next morning set out on our return. The likeness of the country to the region where we lived was so great that for much of

the way, if we had been blindfolded and led to the spot, we could not have affirmed that we were not in our own county. This journey of seventy miles, all told, left the traces of an August sun and wind, hot as from a furnace, upon our faces, notwithstanding all practicable precautions. It was Saturday night when we drew up at the door of our little home with blistered faces. There was not a morsel of cooked food in the house, but we got through the Sabbath with more comfort than we had feared, and rejoiced in the privileges of Christian fellowship, and of a share in the foundation of Christian institutions in this new land.

CHAPTER X.

SUMMER DIVERSIONS.

IT was early in our first summer that our cabin began to show improvement. June had come to clothe the earth with its beauty. The spring rainy season was past; the winds, though high for an eastern country, were not so for the far west, and with beauty and comfortable footpaths out-of-doors came the hope that more comeliness and comfort might be had within. Wire screens tacked over our two little chamber windows kept out the myriads of mosquitoes that filled the air at every nightfall, and green cambric curtains helped to shut out the blazing sun by day. Many a time did we resolve to paper or cover with sheets the alternation of unplanned boards, black and odorous tar paper, and rough rafters of the roof which shut close down over the head of our bedstead, but more pressing needs prevented the realization of that plan.

The rough and open coal shed at the back door was made over, by the skill of a man with hammer and saw, and the help of the minister, into a comfortable summer kitchen, which rejoiced in the dignity

of two small glass windows and a door with a latch. The rough floor was covered with oilcloth brought from the east, which served its purpose well, except that it could not keep out the scores of centipedes which found their way into the kitchen every day for weeks. However, these were small trials compared with the lizards, of a peculiar species, which sported in uncountable numbers in a cellar, on an adjoining lot, half-filled with water in the early summer. To some these creatures were more disagreeable than snakes, which were not very numerous, though one nest of thirteen had been destroyed in the street a few rods from our door. They were harmless, however, and it was said that no rattlesnakes had ever been seen in this strip of country, forty miles wide between the two large rivers which bounded it, although they were plenty on the opposite banks of both rivers. But the lizards were reputed to have a poisonous bite. They exuded a milky white fluid when enraged, and were altogether very repulsive. They seemed to swarm in multitudes which no man could number. A gentleman told us that on one occasion during the summer he was driving, when he came upon a double line of lizards, all traveling one way, in the ruts worn by the wagon wheels on a prairie road; that he drove at one side of this unique procession for about half a mile, leaving off

counting in weariness, after he had numbered thousands of them! He thought they were migrating towards a certain lake, but of this he was not certain.

Flies were not very numerous, but mosquitoes made the nights of man and beast miserable for two or three months. One day we were driving over a patch of prairie recently burned. As we approached the blackened stubble and ashy soil a cloud of mosquitoes arose from the ground, which literally darkened the air, and we escaped them only when we left the burnt prairie behind us. But in the house, with the precautions of fine wire screens at the windows, as little opening and closing of doors as possible, and no evening lights, we were able to get through the mosquito season in comparative comfort.

In our new kitchen were set up cook-stove and cupboard; and a home-made table, neatly spread, sufficed for meals when no company was present. With our main room freed from the uses of a kitchen, the possible improvement became a delightful reality. A shelf high on the wall, behind the front door, held the few indispensable books, which were the only ones unpacked, the remainder of our eight hundred volumes being stored with superfluous carpets, pictures, and bedding, in the lumber depot, awaiting better accommodations. From the edge of our one bookshelf depended ample curtains, of cheese cloth

edged with scarlet, making underneath the shelf a clothespress more ornamental than the unpainted board wall which it hid. Dotted white muslin curtains hung in graceful folds from the two windows, a few cherished landscape pictures were hung on the walls, and a bright scarlet and drab carpet lay on the floor. A bed-lounge, which would accommodate a chance guest by night, and made an attractive sofa by day, was procured from the same distant place where we had procured our bedstead. These, with the comfortable easy-chair we had brought with us, the borrowed round table in the center of the room, with ample drapery, books and lamp, and a few chairs, made us a little parlor of which we had no reason to be ashamed. There was a new feeling of cheer from the day when our carpet, bright even in cloudy weather, was laid, and these few simple touches given to the little home. "I only fear," said the minister, "that we are getting too fine. I do not want our neighbors to feel the contrast unpleasantly. Do not let us embellish any more."

There was small need of this last caution, for all the resources possible to us had been exhausted in this effort. And no neighbor seemed either to be shy or envious.

We had neither horse nor buggy, although our parish was so large, and the Sabbath services were far apart.

Parishioners who had both, however, kindly furnished conveyance when it was absolutely necessary. For air and exercise we wished to keep up the habit of a daily walk. With neither sidewalk nor good roads, we soon found the railway track our most available place of recreation, and here, as the day waned, we communed with each other and with earth and heaven, while the flower-covered banks of the track, the wild meadows and morasses, or the cultivated stretches of wheat, corn, and flax on either side grew familiar, and we felt an interest in each akin to that we would have experienced had the field been our own. That rail track, and the long train which thundered through our village twice every twenty-four hours, had seemed during our first weeks of residence like the only links with the civilized world. A sense of indescribable joy would distill upon the heart, as the shrill scream and ponderous thud heralded the coming of the train. Now that we had grown more accustomed to life in these strange conditions, our friendship for the railway track was not lessened, but rather grew stronger with the familiarity which breeds, "not contempt, but kindness," between friends in constant intercourse.

From the safe vantage ground of the railroad track we learned the continually changing, yet ever remaining, characteristics of each landscape, north, south, east, west; we grew familiar with the squawk of the

mud hen, and the habits of the canvasback duck, and many other wild fowl which peopled the ponds and morasses; we marked the successive heights of vanished waters in the railway ditches, whose sides were covered with strata of alkali deposits; we followed as far as tiring feet would allow "the narrowing rails that met to pierce the distance," and watched with apprehension the gathering of distant storm clouds, or with joy the magnificent sunsets; and learned to descry with accuracy "the tattered vapors" of a far vanishing or approaching train. One unlooked-for benefit was seldom wanting. Pieces of bark and splinters of wood were constantly dropping from the wood and lumber laden freight trains, and the minister, as became one on whom was the responsibility of obtaining kindling for summer fires, seldom returned to his cabin without a few fagots which had been scattered along the track through the day, apparently for this particular use.

These excursions served well the purpose sought, in yielding health and strength; and insensibly the taste for breathing beneath the sky grew upon one, until sometimes the close little surroundings of our cabin home seemed for a time to shut in the soul, which longed to throw off every shell and expand its pinions unfettered in those glorious spaces without.

"Can you help me to find a place in Kansas?"

once wrote an eastern minister to his brother at the front. "Come on," responded the westerner; "Kansas is *all place*."

So with our new world. It was "all place," and space had new meanings to us, if not new definitions.

CHAPTER XI.

TEMPERANCE.

LARGE and unfinished as was the schoolhouse, it was the first and only place suitable for the weekly church prayer meeting, which was begun as soon as the building could be occupied. But a woman's prayer meeting was also needed. This was begun in our own little room. After the first one or two of these meetings the proposition was made and carried, that it should be once a month a missionary meeting, and once a month a temperance prayer meeting. The missionary prayer meeting soon grew into an organized woman's missionary society, studying and giving to home and foreign missions alternately, though it was a "day of small things" as to numbers and gifts. It was felt that if our benefactions to others must at present be small, we could not afford that they should be irregular, and that the reflex influence of our small endeavors would be priceless to ourselves as a church and as individuals. The same little band of women, in this same little room, soon organized a Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the first in the county. This meeting

attracted some who did not come to the other prayer meetings, and it rapidly grew in interest. The county government had been organized about two years, with a majority of its supervisors temperance men. But on the eastern boundary was a village of foreigners, and many others were immigrating whose votes might soon change the character of the no-license administration. One of our neighbors was a drinking man, who now was obliged to send beyond the bounds of the large county for his supply of stimulants. Others, young men, had mothers, sisters, wives, who came to this meeting, willing and anxious to help in any strengthening of the sentiment in favor of keeping the dreaded saloon from the village. Several of our parishioners were strong temperance workers, and altogether there was hope that this village and county might be kept, as from the first, free from the temptations of the saloon. But it was plain that this could only be done by combined and vigorous work on the part of the friends of total abstinence. A general County Temperance Society had previously been organized, and now its quarterly meeting was invited to our town. The finished lower room of the schoolhouse accommodated the two sessions, and the unfinished upper room afforded a convenient place in which to spread the tables for the noontide refreshments. The following program was carried out: —

After the opening exercises, with brief welcome and response, the first topic was presented: "The Relation of the Liquor Traffic to the Business of any Locality." Fifteen minutes was the time assigned to the gentleman who presented this subject, and three volunteer five-minute speeches followed. This was the general plan for each subject discussed.

"The Attitude of our Scandinavian Population toward Temperance Reform" was presented in two phases; two Scandinavians speaking on the subdivisions, "How they view the subject," and two on "What they propose to do." A half hour on "Prohibition Clause in State Constitution," by a leading lawyer, closed the forenoon.

The afternoon meeting was opened by an excellent poem by one of our temperance women. This was followed by a consideration of the question, "How Far Does Prohibition Prohibit?" and the remainder of the afternoon was given to a paper on "The Relation of the Common Schools to Temperance"; to a discussion of "The Relation of the Liquor Traffic to National Education"; and to a closing general discussion of "The Outlook in Our County." Good speakers were not wanting in all these discussions, a local quartet rendered some inspiring music, and it was felt that a strong impulse had been given to the right by the day's proceedings.

Our new church was enclosed and lathed, but without seats, doors, or windows. Chairs were brought in to accommodate the women of the county, who had gathered in considerable numbers on this occasion, in accordance with the invitation of the local Women's Christian Temperance Union, to consider the question of organizing a County Woman's Union. This was the first service ever held in our church, and we were glad that the prayers and songs and deliberations of Christian women should thus hallow it in advance of its public consecration. All present were in favor of forming an organization, not because they did not know well the difficulties of carrying on organized work over a great extent of sparsely settled territory in the embarrassing conditions of life in a new country, but because they solemnly felt the greatness of the issue and the need of combined strength. The constitution was adopted, its previously prepared articles having been discussed seriatim, members' signatures obtained, officers elected by ballot, and a course of effort outlined for the next two months. The year-old baby of the president *pro tem.* was cared for by a friend who was present during the meeting, and toddled about the floor during the exercises without disturbing them. This lady continued to serve the organization as a most efficient officer, doing a full share of the work

of a hard and toilsome campaign, without neglecting her housework and the care of her little one, in which she had most of the time no assistance.

The collation promised the friends abroad if they would come to this meeting was a formidable undertaking in these new conditions and with the limited range of food supplies. But it was at the end of summer, and garden vegetables on this virgin soil were excellent. Our own garden had been one of our great disappointments. The whole extent of the parish was gladly laid under contribution to "furnish forth" this feast, which was spread on long carpenter's benches covered with sheets in the unfinished upper room.

The cheer and blessing which attended this social reunion of a county large enough to form a small state cannot be described. Many who had hitherto stood aloof from the church and its aims now came, with a will, to help in this undertaking in which the church was the recognized leader. All separated before nightfall with new hope and strength for the work.

It was now two months before the fall elections, and there were indications that a close vote would be taken on the temperance issue. The members of the County Convention planned and carried out a canvass, by school districts, of the whole county. For weeks that autumn, in dark as well as in moonlight evenings,

the minister accompanied one and another of his associates in the work, who went to hold neighborhood meetings in the little schoolhouses, or in smaller private houses, wherever a few neighbors could be got together on the wide prairie, to talk over the need of temperance legislation, the hopefulness of it in this new country. Every man was urged to do his duty.

The women of the new County Christian Temperance Union addressed themselves without delay to the help of their husbands and brothers. They issued an address to the voters, which was circulated for women's signatures in every school district of the county, at untold cost of toil and pains. It obtained the signatures of a large majority of the women resident in the county. The brief appeal to which the signatures were attached read thus:—

“ A foe more terrible threatens our county than the fires which, fanned by high winds, are now sweeping over our prairies! All the years, we, mothers, wives, and sisters, have worked to make the fire breaks wide and strong about our homes.

“ VOTERS OF THIS COUNTY, will you, by voting ‘ FOR LICENSE,’ fan this horrible fire of Satan’s own building into a conflagration which, respecting no bounds, may overleap our widest breaks, or will you smother it with the might of your ‘ NO LICENSE ’ ballots to-day?”

Two letters were received by the corresponding

secretary at this time ; the first throws " side lights " on the difficulties of securing the proper printing of the signatures, and the other that of bringing about conference of the officers, either through the mails, or in attendance at the appointed meetings.

Dear Mrs. — : The printer has jumbled the order of the signatures in a most unaccountable manner, to my great annoyance, and doubtless to that of yourself and others. I carefully copied the names of all those received in time, placing the name of the particular vice-president at the end of the list which showed the result of her canvass. I hoped in this way to keep the names grouped in the order of the various localities where they belonged ; also, to give credit to the workers for what they had done ; but the printer jumbled the list from the very first, forgetting even the direction to reserve the names of officers other than vice-presidents for the very last of the list.

We do not wish to " tie up " our dear Mrs. — in any way, as she is the only one of us all who is blessed with " freedom of speech." We all become so mum in meeting, although we chatter like magpies before and after " meeting " is done.

The second correspondent wrote, under two dates a week apart : —

" I have succeeded in obtaining twenty-four signatures, and hasten to forward them. You know our neighborhood is in its infancy. But we are thoroughly awake to the importance of early and efficient action on the subject of temperance, and are ever ready to do what we can to aid the cause.

“*Later.* I prepared the foregoing hasty report, expecting to be able to send immediately to the post office (ten miles distant). But being disappointed in that, I expected to see you, of course, at the county meeting on the 1st instant. But alas for our expectations! The inevitable threshing machine appeared unannounced on the morning of that day, and men and horses were pressed into the service, while we were suddenly transformed from prospective delegates into cooks. Obligated to stay at home, and not seeing any one from our neighborhood who was going to the post office, we have been unable to send our mail.

“But expecting all our ‘men folks’ to go and vote *No License* to-morrow, I will send this, although probably too late to do any good.”

Very few women were reluctant to sign the address. The wives of drunkards, and of husbands who were surreptitiously trying to sell liquors outside the boundary lines of the county for consumption within, readily and gladly appended their signatures. Temperance columns in our village and county papers were regularly filled every week with matter, mainly original, by women of our organization, often displaying no mean order of literary ability.

One of the articles drew an outline of the logic of license to steal chickens as a parallel to the reasoning of advocates of liquor license, in the form of an imaginary monologue as follows : —

A CHARCOAL SKETCH.

“ Yes, sah ; I prides myself on my fam’ly guv’ment, I does ! I ’se raised a powerful lot o’ pickaninnies, an’ dere am no mo’ ’spectable color’d folks in dese pahnts dan me an’ my fam’ly.

“ Robbin’ chicken roosts ? Yes, sah ; yes, sah ! I mus’ ’fess some o’ dat am done by a po’tion ob my highly ’spectable fam’ly. But I *reg’lates* dat, sah ! I ’se proud ob my fam’ly guv’ment. I has mos’ ’markable success dat way. No pusson ’spises stealin’ mo’ dan I do. But, sah, I does n’t like to interfere with chillun’s pussonal liberty ! An’ believin’ in maintainin’ de dignity ob de fam’ly guv’ment, I puts on my silver-bowed specs, an’ my most joodishal mannah, an’ I solemnly says to dat ’spectable po’tion ob my pickaninnies as ingages in de puffession ob robbin’ henroosts, ‘ Chilluns, I ’spects ye to gib me four ob dem pullets ye hooked las’ night, if ye ’spects to be ’lowed to continue your puffession ob robbin’ henroosts anudder week. I ’spects an’ ’sists on yer pu’vidin’ me with fifty nice spring chickens afo’ I can gib yer my punmission to continue yer pu’suits de nex’ six months.’ . .

“ Yes, sah ; yes, sah ! It certainly do hab de effec’ to make dem chilluns mighty industrious in de business ob chicken-stealin’ ; for in addishun to dere or’nary av’rage haul puh annum, dey has to steal dat fifty

pair o' chickens which I 'sists on havin' dem fu'nish fo' my pussonal dinnah pail! . . .

“Dat am bery true, miss — eb'ry one o' dem nice fowls my da'hter raised an' had when you was heah befo' has been stole too. . . .

“Yes, miss; her heart am done broked. But laws, miss; dat Dinah am a mighty onreasonable chile! She am dat stupid an' dat fanatical, she actooaly 'spects me to 'fere wid dem same boys' pussonal liberty to steal her mis'abul, no 'count chickens! But, miss, dis am a free country! An' dem boys has a license to steal chickens! No, sah; I don' pay much 'tention to dat Dinah's fanatical howlin' 'bout her claims to puhtection from me. . . .

“Yes, sah; dose young puhsons in dat bed in de corner were 'rupted in de midst o' dere puhfessional duties by a savage dog. Dey has no mo' good clo'es to w'ar to Sunday-school; dey 's be'n laid up in bed mos' two months; de doctah charges right smart foh comin'; all dis, sah, am de consequence ob dat rude interruption by dat meddlin' dog — all dis, sah, 'sides my bein' puhsonally dis'pointed 'bout dat pahticklah chicken stew. . . .

“Yes, sah; yes, sah; lawin' do cost a heap. I 'se had to pay costs an' 'fend my chicken-stealin' chilluns afo' de Justice ob de Peace 'gainst dese fanatical neighbo's mo' times dis yeah dan I 'se got black fingers. . . .

“ Yes ; I pays board bills fo’ some o’ my chilluns too, ’casionally, at de jail.

“ No, sah ; I ’se not goin’ to hab chicken pie fo’ suppah to-night. Dem boys is mighty sharp, sah. De fac’ am, I don’ get a chance to pick an’ cook a fowl bery of’n now’days. No, sah ; not so of’n as when I used to spank dem pickaninnies right smart de minit dey meddled wi’ oder folk’s t’ings — an’ ebery time, jes’ as sure as dey ’s bawn. . .

“ Mos’ wish I had stuck to dat policy ob my cibil guv’ment, sah ! . . .

“ My wife am right smart at figgers too. She ’grees wi’ you mos’ ’zactly. She says I pay mo’ dan thirty dollahs apiece fo’ each o’ dem pullets dose little thiev-in’ black rascals fu’nish fo’ my pussonal dinner pail ! I t’ought, dough, as dem pickaninnies would steal any way, I might as well hab part. But, sah, I always has, an’ always shall, believe in maintainin’ de dignity ob de fam’ly guv’ment. An’ I ’se mighty fond o’ chicken pie, sah.”

When the day for voting approached, our school-house was made the voting place for our district. Our village Women’s Christian Temperance Union prepared a warm lunch, hot coffee, and No-License votes for free distribution. The lunch was spread on a long counter at one side of the large room and proved most welcome, as the day was stormy and many had

come a long distance. Suspended from the ceiling was the word "Welcome" in large letters, beneath which were attached the well-known initials of the union. In a corner hung the old flag, with the mottoes, "Vote to Save our Boys," and "For God and Home and Native Land." Appropriate Bible texts were written on the blackboards all around the room. From behind the counter the ladies served all day, modestly, yet cordially and affably, letting the mottoes on the wall and blackboards do most of the preaching. At a second election, the year after, although not legal voters, the women of the precinct were invited to come on the voting day and number themselves by casting informal votes, of a color and style specially prepared for them, in a box of their own, to be counted when the day was over. As before, free lunch was served by the Woman's Union and the room handsomely and suggestively decorated. Most of the women came out through the storm. One had ridden seven miles to give her vote. Another, an aged woman of foreign birth, who could speak little or no English, came as chaperon to a whole bevy of maidens, the entire company voting with a right good will. One mother carrying her tiny babe was there; but the girls under voting age had been scattered about the town as improvised nurses, in order to release mothers from the care of their children while they came to vote.

In the first election there was found to be a majority of one hundred and four legal votes in favor of *No License*, and the victory was won for that time. The temperance men of the county publicly thanked the women for their help, without which, they affirmed, the result could not have been secured.

In the second election the women's votes, counted separately by the judges of election, had, of course, none except a moral value. There were sixty-one against license, and not one for it.

One wrote of the occasion : —

“The meeting (at the polls) was attended with all the courtesy, on the part of the gentlemen, of a refined social gathering. . . . A staid Presbyterian sociable could not have been more quiet and orderly.”

On the circulation of a petition by those who desired license, the second election had been ordered unexpectedly, with very limited time intervening, in an unusually stormy winter. But the energetic combatants of the saloon wrought with intensity and adaptation equal to the emergency, and the county was saved to the cause of temperance. One of the ladies, who had been quietly efficient here, afterwards removed to another county, and with her husband and other workers was instrumental in securing a like result there.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR FIRST MEETING WITH THE INDIAN MISSION.

NOT far from this time the annual meeting of a large association of Indian churches gave opportunity for an interesting visit. At a central point some hundreds of Christianized Indians gathered, five sixths of them communicants in their various mission churches. Many resided in the neighborhood of the church where the meeting was held, which was not a long journey from our home. Many others had traveled, with their ponies and tent equipage, men, women, children, and dogs, from one hundred to four hundred miles, in order to be present on this occasion. Some were from Santee agency and some from Yankton agency; some from the Sisseton reservation; some from the region of Fort Sully, and some from Fort Berthold on the Upper Missouri. There were Poncas, Yanktons, Santee Sioux, Teeton Sioux, and others, with representatives of those more uncivilized tribes, the Gros Ventres and the Mandans.

The time of the meeting was in beautiful September weather. The hour of nine A.M. saw a company of missionaries ascending a long hill which is crowned

by a neat Indian church. Indian men, women, and children, on foot and in wagons, were coming from every direction. We entered the white church while its bell was tolling the hour for the meeting. The audience room was ceiled overhead and on the sides with narrow matched boards, which, with the remainder of the woodwork, were painted in quiet shades of brown and drab. The painted floor was clean and shining, and fresh air freely circulated through the open windows. Three chandeliers, of two globes each, hung over the central aisle, and there were a number of reflecting side lamps. Two small semi-circular platforms, carpeted and surrounded by a railing, were at the end opposite the door; one at the termination of the central aisle supported the pulpit, and the other, at its left, held the cabinet organ. Behind the main platform hung a piece of white cardboard, on which was painted a beautiful cross surrounded by callas and water lilies, with a margin of brilliant autumn leaves painted beneath the motto, in the Dakota language, "Come unto me." On one side was a blackboard framed in rustic pine, on which a topic for discussion was written in Dakota, with an English translation — "Why are there so few who attend church?"

The meeting opens with missionary John P. Williamson in the chair, the native pastor of the church

acting as secretary. A hymn is sung and prayer offered in the Dakota, which is the language used in all the exercises. The minutes of the previous meeting are read, and the roll of delegates called, to which there are many responses. The church is gradually filling up, until the extra seats are all used, and many dark faces are looking in from the vestibule. A majority of the audience are men, but there are many women, and not a few babies.

Yesterday their three days' meeting opened; to-day they are fully under way. The question under discussion enlists remarks from a number of the men. Some rise in their seats and address the president; some go forward and face the audience. All speak readily and fluently, but without that impression of extreme rapidity of utterance commonly made on the ear in listening to a language not understood. At the request of the president now and again, prayer is offered by some one in the congregation. The native pastor accompanies the first hymn on the organ; later, Mr. Alfred Riggs serves as organist. Nearly every one has a Dakota hymn book; all sing, and sing well.

A second topic is written on the board, in Dakota and in English: "The new birth—what is it?" This subject awakens much interest. A number speak earnestly; some, whose words evidently command

respect, are old men from whose features the imprint of savage life will never be erased, although they now are "clothed and in their right mind," and awake to spiritual truth. Others are fine specimens of manhood, whose quick glance, active play of feature, and pertinent gestures indicate corresponding mental agility, and doubtless tell tales of a generation or two of Christianity behind them. The faces of some of the younger men are manly and attractive. Christianity and education are already giving ocular demonstration of their power.

The elder Riggs rises to speak. Not yet a very aged man, his white hair and benevolent aspect win reverence, and his lifetime of service commands the gratitude and affection of the Indians. The audience has not been listless or inattentive hitherto, but now a pleased bustle stirs the congregation as Dr. Riggs ascends the platform, and while he speaks the audience are attent — "*arrectis auribus.*"

The accusation that the Indians are treacherous and ungrateful can never command the unqualified assent of one who looked upon the faces of that audience as the lifelong benefactor of their race rose to address them. If they could have known that this was — as it proved to be — the last annual meeting to be blessed with the gracious presence of this holy man, they could scarcely have demonstrated more clearly, though

unconsciously, their gratitude for the blessing of his life among them. •

Another hymn, and the next topic is taken up: the *Iapa Oaye* (Word Carrier), their own periodical. Their fondness for their paper is marked. A few, like eager children, are unable to restrain their curiosity to see the pages of the fresh number they hold in their hands until the close of the meeting. Rev. Alfred Riggs energetically sets forth the need of more money in the management of the paper. Some money is handed him. Holding it up he says that will enable it to go on a week or two, but they must provide more. A stalwart, well-dressed man rises in his seat, addresses a few brief words to the audience, seizes his hat and passes it for a collection. This large-framed Indian, now a converted man, and for years past the faithful, consistent pastor of a native church, is said to have been among the bloodiest warriors of the bloody Minnesota massacres of 1862. He gathers a goodly sum, in money and subscriptions, while the discussion over the paper proceeds. The assembly, which has been so grave during the earlier discussions of the day as to suggest the thought that an Indian never laughs, is now often swept by a gust of laughter at some witty sally. After the adjournment at noon a woman, plainly dressed, brings forth from her knotted handkerchief a small pile of silver dollars and half

dollars, which are duly counted out on the pulpit and given to the editor. Surely the paper is rich in the affections of its Indian constituency, if in no other respect.

The first hour of the afternoon was spent in the discussion of the topic, "Firstfruits for the Lord," in which the scriptural ground for such offerings was thoroughly treated by a native Christian. So carefully had practice accompanied preaching among these simple-minded, well-trained Indian converts, that their offerings that year aggregated about nine hundred dollars toward the work of carrying the gospel they love to the heathen Indians, and the women alone contributed in the succeeding year between four and five hundred dollars toward the same object. The one hundred and twenty members of the church entertaining this meeting had contributed the year previous more than four hundred dollars toward its support.

After the first hour of the afternoon the brethren adjourned their meeting to the schoolhouse in the village, in order to give place to a kind of Indian Woman's Board meeting in the church.

At three o'clock a cloud of dusky faces gradually filled the audience room. The woman who had served as president for the last two years took the chair, without boldness, without hesitation. She read a chapter from her Dakota Bible; then, reverently

standing, offered prayer. More than a hundred Indian Christian women were gathered here. On the faces of most of them the impress of ages of heathenism was more apparent to a casual observer than the radiance of the "new creature in Christ Jesus." There was visible from our point of view but one pretty face in the room—that of a young mother, who looked scarcely twenty. Her face was beautiful, with regular features, pleasant eyes, smooth bands of black hair drawn away from the forehead, and a transparent look to the dark skin. A touch of delicacy and fine taste had adjusted the ruffles at her neck and the folds of the scarlet shawl thrown about her shoulders. She listened with intelligent attention, meantime keeping her baby quiet by deft, motherly ways. Like nearly all the rest she wore no covering but nature's own upon her head. The few hats or bonnets in the congregation were worn only by girls or younger women, and could be numbered on one's fingers. To wear one is the last thing an Indian woman can bring herself to do. All wear the hair in one fashion, plaited in loose bands hanging straight down on either side, except occasionally an elderly woman, or one in mourning, who wears it disheveled after the old custom.

Shawls were universal, those in wide gay stripes seeming to have the preference, though bright woolen

plaids were also favorites. Some of the older women were dressed in decorous black, and one had a fine, soft shawl of black cashmere with silken fringe. The dresses were mostly of bright-colored prints in striking patterns, interspersed with a few of quiet brown woolen stuff and black alpacas. A plain bodice and a straight full skirt with flounce at the bottom was the prevailing fashion. Moccasins were seen more frequently than shoes.

A serene, benevolent face in the midst of the audience was bending affectionately over a baby. It must have been her grandchild, for she fondled it with a kiss, and spoiled it after the most approved grandmotherly fashion. About every fifth woman had a babe in her arms. It cannot be that the race is dying out! Sometimes the little ones fretted, or cried lustily, but this seemed to disturb neither mothers nor missionaries. Rarely was one taken out for the sake of quiet. A woman near the front, in a red and black plaid shawl and a showy dress, rose to make her speech. The babe in her arms had been asleep, and was rather suddenly awakened by its mother's change of posture. It nestled good-naturedly at first, when it was summarily changed to the other arm. Then it fretted a little, gaining no attention, and finally burst into a loud and steady wail; but all the while the mother talked on without a ripple of embar-

rassment, and seemingly unconscious that there was a baby in the world.

The children were a study by themselves. The unmistakable Indian features of some would not allow one, in looking at them, to forget the race question. But many were pretty little things, with bright black eyes and soft black hair, well-rounded cheeks, tiny hands, and engaging baby ways, not omitting the infantile manner of expressing displeasure by throwing the body back and stiffening the limbs, which is not confined to aboriginal babies. One thing was noticeable: however poorly the mother might be dressed, however marked the struggle which had been necessary with her to put on the garb of civilization, the little ones were all well dressed. The true mother's heart-beat was beneath the uncouth exterior — her baby should not be behind the best-dressed of her neighbors'! The little prints in baby patterns were delicate in color, the white bibs and aprons neat as need be, the tiny sunbonnets well ruffled, the little morocco shoes bright and gay. One outshone the rest in the dignity of a lace bonnet with blue ribbons, while another had a unique blanket in the form of a cradle quilt, pieced in red and green. One mother came into the meeting with her little one carried on her back in papoose fashion. All the others were carried in the mother's arms, and enfolded in her shawl.

The spirit of the meeting was earnest, although a ripple of laughter passed along sometimes when a particularly bright remark was made. In the midst of the proceedings, at the request of the missionary lady, who, as secretary of the meeting, was guiding its helm, a woman in the audience reverently offered prayer, while the whole company bowed their heads. Occasionally they sang, in excellent time and tune, with the organ accompanying, sometimes an old standard favorite, sometimes a modern "Gospel hymn." All sang, some with, and some without, a Dakota hymn book.

It was the time for the election of officers. They saw no reason for rotation in office. "Why do you throw my aunt, my cousin, away? Has she not served you well?"

"Yes," the missionary replied. "But it is better that others should have an opportunity to learn to serve also. We will now vote for a new president for the coming year." Nominations were made from various parts of the house — sometimes two or three were on their feet at once, endeavoring to get the attention of the imperturbable president. The secretary called the roll of the delegates, recording the vote of each opposite her name. None but one who had spent years among them could have held the meeting steady at this juncture, while the bewildering votes

which named the candidates as "my aunt," "my cousin," came thick and fast, leaving the indefatigable secretary to glance first at the speaker, then at the relative indicated, and then to follow her own intuitions in recording the vote.

At last it was all settled. Mrs. Renville was elected president; Mrs. Morris was reelected secretary. The new president, on taking the chair, was greeted by a hand shake from the secretary. The retiring president, who wore a fresh blue print dress, dotted with tiny stars like snowflakes, and a clean blue and green plaid shawl, vacated her chair and descended to the audience, but had scarcely taken her new seat when she rose, and advancing to the chair, greeted the new dignitary with a grave bow and a polite shake of the hand, without words, and returned to her lower seat, passing through this ordeal with Christian courtesy and self-forgetfulness. A few of the older women followed her example in greeting the new president, and then the main business of the meeting went on — that of hearing reports of delegates from the various societies represented.

The delegates spoke fluently and briefly, but when the time came near for the meeting to close, the business was not finished. "How shall we ever get through what we have to say?" they asked of the secretary. But she held out no hope that another opportunity of a hearing would be granted this year.

At last, good "Louise," of the Sisseton society, rose to speak of their year's work. Her animated face and voice told us no tales, for they were soft Dakota accents which fell on our ears. Our eyes followed the gesture of her red hand as she waved it toward the open window beside which we sat. We looked out, beyond this Indian church on the hilltop, away over the beautiful valley with its winding river and its fringe of trees; over the lovely hills stretching far, far away under the light of the westering sun, and then in the opposite direction, to where the fair harvest moon hung like a silvery apparition in the eastern sky, and mused on the past, the present, and the future of these children of the great All-Father, and of the self-denying and successful work of these missionaries, until the summons of the closing hymn and prayer cut short our meditations, and the cloud of dusky faces melted away.

In the evening the missionaries gathered by themselves in a private room, to transact the annual business of the mission. Here was a family party — the venerable Dr. Riggs, from Sisseton; his two sons, Alfred, from Santee agency, Thomas, from Fort Sully; his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, of Sisseton. Here also was John P. Williamson, of Yankton agency, faithful son of a venerated sire, giving his life, like the younger

Riggses, to the race for which the father toiled. The moderator of the meeting was Charles L. Hall, from the lonely outpost at far-away Fort Berthold. Lady missionaries from the Santee agency, on the Nebraska side of the Missouri, were here also.

The venerable head of the mission had borne a large share in reducing the Sioux language to a written form, preparing a printed alphabet, and publishing books for the use of the Indians. Long journeys eastward had he taken to superintend the printing of these books, when the region west of Lake Michigan was still a wilderness. When half a dozen log huts marked the site of the city of St. Paul, forty years before, he had been there to note them. He had made the Dakota dictionary, which, after critical examination by Professor C. C. Felton, of Harvard College, and Professor Joseph Henry, of the Smithsonian Institution, had been accepted and printed by the United States government. He had lived with his family among the Indians when the outbreak of 1862 occurred, and they had all escaped with their lives by the help of friendly Indians, but through the greatest hardships. He had subsequently acted as interpreter for the government during the trial and imprisonment of the Indians implicated in the massacres. He had baptized and received to the church many of the converted Indi-

ans, and had assisted in the organization of most of their churches. He had done the greater part of the work of translating the whole Bible into the Dakota language, and had rendered material assistance in the preparation of the Indian hymn book. The literary work of his life was represented by more than fifty books, consisting of translations and original writings in connection with Dakota history, customs, and language. He had been one of a committee of three from the general assembly of the Presbyterian church to present to Congress the need of securing to Indians the rights of white men, and was the author of the Memorial to the Senate on that occasion. He had lived on the small salary of a missionary, and had educated at college and seminary a large family of sons and daughters, five of whom were now following his example in devoting themselves to missionary work. These things were matters of public knowledge, and were recorded by the public press.

He was now looked to on account of his great experience as general executive for the whole work. As the discussion of this evening hour went forward, over Bibles, primers, grammars, dictionaries — over plans for the work of the year to come, it was pleasing to note how the gentle words of the elder man, and his mellowness of spirit, mantled the scene; how

he gave an impulse here, interposed a caution there, following always the "things that make for peace," without surrendering the convictions which time had strengthened and ripened. Ere another such occasion, his glorified spirit was to look down from the heavenly heights on the work which he had so loved. If we had known this then, we could not have wished this closing hour to be other than it was, when the little company united in a precious hymn of penitence and aspiration, and joined in a closing prayer, in which all personal interests were forgotten, as the beloved work, in its various aspects, was commended to the care of Him in whose hands are the hearts of all the children of men.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER FIELD. — OUR CHURCH HOME.

TIME had flown, not on leaden wings. Great changes and additions had come to the little community. The schoolhouse and the church were each in use — the latter a beautiful building, one of the earliest on a line of railroad several hundred miles in extent. The membership of the church was doubled, the first service in the new edifice having witnessed a communion, the baptism of the teacher of the school, and the reception of several new members. Moral sentiment was reinforced, the foundations of society seemed securely laid in intelligence, morality, and religion, and in the small but choice membership of the church were men who were, to all good enterprises, a tower of strength, known as such far beyond the bounds of their own community. A call came to the pastor to go to what had the reputation of being “the wickedest town in the territory.” Of this place a “missionary scout” had thus written of his first visit, three years before: —

“It consists of one dwelling house, one hotel, one store, and eight saloons, all built last week. Looking

down the street, a creature calling herself a woman is seen coming up like a wild Arab, sitting on her horse like a man, wearing a man's wide-rimmed, slouched hat. After saluting the newcomers, away she dashes and is quickly out of sight. Presently two men, filled with bad whiskey, come from one of the saloons, and as they too must create a little sensation, one of them pulls off his hat and holds it out at arm's length, while the other blazes away at it with his pistol and puts through it several bullet holes."

It was now a "river town," the site of a former United States fort, garrisoned with a view to "regulating" the fur trade and the hostile Indians, a prominent place of departure for the Black Hills, and a rendezvous of cow-boys, freighters, and many characters seen only on the extreme verge of civilization.

Residents of the place confirmed its reputation, as to the first year or two of its history. When a lonely hillside on the "bench," or terrace above the river, held the first fourteen graves, eleven of them were those of men who had died violent deaths. "It was no uncommon thing," said a gentleman who had gone there at an early stage of the settlement, "to hear the snapping of pistols twenty times a night."

This reputation still clung to the place, and many sought to dissuade us from going. "I do not believe you can live there," "I am sure you will not like it,"

said one and another, after the minister had deliberately announced his intention of accepting the call.

With regret, but under clear convictions of duty, we prepared to sunder the bonds which united us in labor and fellowship to this community. The minister had paid a visit or two of reconnoissance to the new field. It was such a state of society as we had never seen before. So promising was the location, and so high the expectations of the future of the place, that business men had gathered to it since the railroad had reached it, in many instances bringing their families. Notwithstanding the fact that some of the early elements of society remained, clustered along the shores of the river, sufficient to preserve its early reputation to those at a distance, it was a bustling town of fifteen hundred inhabitants, a large majority of whom were self-respecting, law-abiding citizens. The little church was hearty and united in the call, and the "open door" and the need of Christian work were very great. The church was composed of thirteen members, about half of whom lived in the town; the others were scattered on the prairie, or were "absent." A church building had been felt to be a necessity, and had been just completed by the help of outside parties here and at the east, but had been, only a few weeks before, in danger of being sold on a carpenter's lien, while the pastorless little

church seemed almost entirely discouraged. A feeling of sympathy for them, a belief in the future of the place, and a clear sense of providential indications, led the minister to listen to that call, although his visits had shown him enough of the conditions of life there to leave many perplexing questions unanswered. He would yield to the voice of duty, expecting the way to be cleared before him as he went forward. During the immediate preparations for moving the wife asked, "What about a house to live in?" The minister could only reply, "I know of none."

Our library had never been unpacked, and our other modest belongings were soon ready for the transfer. Kind friends met us at the station when we had reached our new field, and welcomed us to their own frontier home until we could decide how and where we were to live.

With the temporary lifting of the mortgage on the church and the coming of a minister, they took heart, and hope painted a brighter future. A reception was given to the new pastor and his wife in the church, at which a large and hearty welcome to the town was offered. But the question of where he was to live found as yet no answer. At the frontier hotels of the place board could be obtained for the minister and his wife at about twenty dollars per week, with a cold room, about eight by ten feet in dimensions, for a

sleeping apartment, and no place for a study except the public reception room. This of course was not to be considered from any point of view. Private boarding places were out of the question, and equally so was the possibility of renting a house. Five hundred miles from a base of lumber supply, with many families moving in and needing at once to construct their own shelter, and nowhere a room to spare, the case seemed hopeless as to any home at present. "There is but one alternative," said the minister to his wife, after a few days had passed — "either we must separate for the winter, you going east to your friends and I boarding at the hotel, or we must set up housekeeping in the end of the church."

The first seemed a pity, for if ever *two* were needed for parish work they seemed to be here. The church edifice was in a form common in a new country, with a few feet at one end of the audience room cut off by folding doors into what is dignified by the name of a "lecture room" — a part of the church on Sundays, but heated and used by itself for prayer meetings and other small gatherings.

The thoughts and questionings of previous days in a moment crystallized into an answer: We *could* live in the lecture room. The people were willing that we *should*, therefore we *would*.

Some advantages there were over the frail tenement

that had previously been our home. There was a good stone foundation to the building, which was comparatively substantially built with brick chimneys and plastered walls — luxuries unknown before. But the reverse side of the picture showed a longer catalogue of discomforts, as the experiment proved.

It was Thanksgiving week, warm, bright, and without snow, when our goods arrived and we entered on the task of constructing a home out of this “lecture room,” twelve feet by twenty-four, which yet should not interfere with its legitimate uses for Sunday audience room, infant class room, and prayer meeting room. The walls were sixteen feet high, with one window twelve feet long on the southwest, and three of similar dimensions on the northwest, over which a great octagonal one of many lights rose into the gable. There was an anteroom six feet by twelve, on the northwest angle of the church, serving as entrance to both the church and lecture room, and in its ceiling containing a small opening to the attic and belfry which could only be reached by a temporary ladder. There was, of course, neither cellar, pantry, nor bedroom.

The first thing to be thought of was the creation of a semblance of privacy. A partition of planed and matched boards, half the height of the room, was thrown across the end of the apartment, with a door

in the middle. This on the further side gave us a space eight feet by twelve, which we called our bedroom. On the inside of the partition, either side the door, a shelf was put up, affording convenience for stowing away things in baskets and pasteboard boxes against the two feet of partition above it; while below, plenty of hooks for clothing, and a curtain hanging from each shelf over them, made our closets. With a comfortable carpet on the floor, a plain bedstead, bureau, washstand, and rocker, and neat and simple draperies, we felt quite rich as to a sleeping apartment.

On the living and prayer meeting side of the partition a series of graduated shelves was put up, which proved just sufficient for the pastor's library; and when the books were unpacked and arranged where we could see their backs, the room, though bare and cold, looked already furnished.

We well knew that the mud on that hillside without a sidewalk would sometimes be very deep, and that only a carpet of the strongest and most durable make would last through the winter before us, with the multiplied uses for the lecture room. A rag carpet made in strips by loving hands in a former parish to save wear of a better one when ladies' prayer meetings were daily held in the pastor's sitting room, now found its best use. It was laid on the floor of the room and proved large enough to cover it neatly. Our little

cook-stove was set up and made ornamental as possible, shining and cozy, with a wood fire. A round table was wheeled into place, and the bed-lounge, supporting the wolf-skin robe, a Boston rocking-chair, our eastern "sleepy-hollow" chair, and a few wooden chairs from the main audience room of the church completed our furnishing. A box of pictures, which we could not unpack, was placed in the vestibule and neatly draped for a table. Up the ladder to the attic went all superfluous household appurtenances, carpets, bedding, and so forth. One carpet, however, was retained, and tacked upon the cold, bare pulpit platform, which had a movable pulpit, recently obtained, but no other furniture except a common wooden chair. Shades had been placed at the church windows before we came, and so our little lecture room had a homelike look which was already attractive.

If only we had not needed food! Not a place for dishes, kettles, and pans; not a nook which would preserve vegetables and cooked food from freezing; not a drop of water on the premises, hard or soft. This last was, however, the common condition of the town. A quarter of a mile distant, at the foot of the bluffs, was the "Big Muddy," flowing in majesty, a mile wide. On its sandy bank was a well which received river water filtered through the sand, and from this, carts, fitted with tanks and hose, brought

water for sale to every door. This necessitated a barrel in every house. We had a neat board receptacle with cover, fitted into one corner of the church entry. Inside of this was placed a large, strong iron-hooped barrel, the interspaces filled with rags and cotton, to protect the water, as far as possible, from freezing. Little flags, composed of small pieces of red flannel tacked to a stick, were displayed when water was required, which made the town, especially on Monday mornings, suggest scores of simultaneous auctions. One of these flags floated from a corner of the church whenever the water in the barrel got low, and could be seen from its eminence, far and near. While we could pay for it, water, that prime necessity, would not be lacking. Though not very soft, it was not very hard, and had but little trace of the alkali soil, and that was a great comfort.

It was soon decided in our family councils, that, as everything was sure to freeze solid when the winter was fairly upon us, we would not, even if we had room, attempt to store food supplies, but would take our dinners at the hotel, preparing our simple morning and evening meals in our room, with tea or coffee, bread and butter, and quickly cooked cereals. But even a few dishes and these small supplies must have a place, and so must a few iron and tin utensils. A small cupboard was placed in the corner behind the

door, and amply draped with white mull. A shoe box was procured, draped with chintz, and a pretty brown enameled cloth tacked over the cover. Within this box, in the corner by the stove, were kept kettle and stewpan, and on it stood the water pail. On the other side was a papered wood-box, twin to one prepared also for the main audience room, and against the closed folding doors leading into the church stood the pastor's study table, which must be removed and all its contents packed away as often as these doors were thrown open. How all this found room in a space twelve feet by sixteen seems now a problem; but it did, and chairs were often brought in to seat twelve or fifteen persons besides.

CHAPTER XIV.

THANKSGIVING. — A YOUNG VISITOR. — OUR NEW SURROUNDINGS.

IT was the hard work of a week to make this home, and the Thanksgiving service was interjected into the midst of it. No church bell called the people, but they were in a far-off land, and the very thought of a Thanksgiving service brought memories, to some, of dear old homes in the east; and others were glad of any variety in their hard, monotonous, toiling lives. Not a large, but a cheerful and well-dressed congregation, gathered in the church and seemed to enjoy the privilege. We were invited to the hospitable roof which had first sheltered us, for our Thanksgiving dinner, and discussed our comfortable fare with cheery conversation. The pastor announced his intention of having a prayer meeting in his lecture room home the next week, but the host replied, "You cannot keep up a prayer meeting in *this* town." "We will have a prayer meeting every Wednesday evening," rejoined the pastor, "even though no one but my wife and myself are present." From that time the prayer meeting was a fixed fact, and gathered, sometimes three, some-

times five or six, and sometimes a dozen or more to its sessions.

This Thanksgiving day was so warm, that when after dinner we went farther up the bluffs for a walk and a prospect, we were fain to carry our wraps, and wished for a sun umbrella to screen us from the rays of the unclouded sun. This beautiful weather continued into early December.

The nearest ministerial neighbor of our order was a missionary to the Indians, not many miles distant. He was always a welcome visitor, whether accompanied by one of the other missionaries at his station, by his little son, or by his dark-skinned protégés. One afternoon, about this time, he appeared at our door in his wagon, with a little Indian girl and two Indian youths. They were part of a company he was gathering to take to a training school, about two hundred miles distant, where they could have better advantages than his station afforded. He would like, he said, to leave the little girl with the pastor's wife, while he attended with the boys to gathering others in the immediate region. They would lodge at the hotel, and be ready for an early start in the morning. With an invitation to the missionary to return to the church for supper and breakfast, which was cordially accepted, the pastor's wife turned to the little girl. She was almost a wild Indian girl, but her friends

had made her a fine outfit for school. She wore a red plaid dress, a little red shawl, hood and mittens, and good shoes and stockings. She carried a little bundle of clothes, and some moccasins were sticking out of one corner. When her friend the missionary had driven away, she felt forlorn, and laid her head down on the arm of the easy-chair where she was seated, and quietly wept for a long time. Kind words and tones and gestures made no impression on her — all she wanted was to go back to her home, or, failing in that, to be left alone. When it was supper time she would not come to her place at table, but remained speechless, and with her face buried in her hands. Some doughnuts were placed on a plate in her lap, but she paid no heed. After a while one of the cakes disappeared when no one was looking, but her face was still hidden; her forlorn and dejected little figure crouching down, just as it had been, in the big chair by the fire. While she remained with us she never spoke. When it was bedtime she rolled herself up in the wolf-skin robe, after taking off her shoes, and lay down on the carpet with her feet to the fire. In the morning she would not come to the breakfast table, but when all the rest were seated, and the blessing had been asked, she quietly left the room. We feared she had run away, but she soon resealed herself by the fire and covered her eyes as before. She

ate some breakfast which was placed on a plate before her, and an apple, although we did not know when. All this time she was silent, making no more response to kind attempts at acquaintanceship than a child carved from marble. We began to think she was not susceptible to kindness, but when an extra shawl was given her for the cold ride before her, with a large pin for fastening it, and she was asked if she would not come again, a kindly gleam passed over her dusky face, and she nodded assent as she was leaving the house.

The sun was shining that morning as the missionary drove from our door, with his half dozen or more Indian pupils. The weather up to this time had been fine as Indian summer. Now light clouds were scudding across the sky, which began to assume a dim and frosty look. By mid-forenoon a blizzard was upon us. No rain had fallen for months and the sand-and-dust storm scratched the windowpanes till they seemed to have been furrowed by a thousand diamond points. Not alone on the outside was the discomfort of the fearful storm. The dust sifted through the five enormous windows to windward, and the great double doors, until every article of furniture, every book and paper, felt "gritty" to the touch; and every crevice gave inlet to the rapidly increasing cold. Our stove was kept filled to its utmost capacity, but made small impression on the freezing atmosphere. All

day the wife was obliged to sit with her feet at the oven's mouth, except as she removed them occasionally to unbend her stiffened fingers in the one warm place. The minister gave himself to replenishing fuel and fire almost constantly, and the mid-day meal consisted of a smoking cup of tea, and whatever available food we could find among our scanty stores. The church shook and trembled in the blast, but the agonizing apprehensions of our first blizzard in the frail cabin were not repeated. Partial and temporary damage to our shelter, not immediate annihilation, was the extent of our fear. This was of short duration. The worst of the storm was over in about six hours, though the thermometer was low, and the fine snow was still flurrying through the air. The snow ceased, the wind abated to a light gale, but the cold continued to increase. The night proved almost as great a trial as the day, for the cold air blew over our heads, and it was hard to keep warm in bed, although the wolf-skin robe, with its warm linings, lay heavily over the other coverings.

In that brief blizzard we had learned one lesson: that no cook-stove could keep our room warmed unless every crack was sealed. With a milder day came the carpenter at our summons to stop the space between the wall and the great round window sash, half the dimensions of which were below our ceiling and half

above. This saved a heavy upward loss of heat. By the aid of a step ladder, a dish of paste, and some strips of manilla paper, four of our five lofty windows were sealed all round the edges and across the middle division of the sash, and then boarded up, except a space equal to one ordinary window. Then the folding doors into the main audience room, occupying nearly an entire side of our living room, were fitted with list — top, bottom, and sides — and the inner and outer entry doors were similarly treated. Now we had done all we could to prepare for winter, and turned our attention to parish work.

No place we had seen since leaving Chicago had brought with it such a sense of intense energy and the bounding pulse of life as we instinctively felt here. The little congregation had of course a great variety in its composition, but its constant nucleus was a small company of ladies and gentlemen who would not have seemed out of place in any city audience. But they were largely unacquainted with each other and with the minister, each family bringing predilections for the order of things it had left, and no two with the same ideals. The actual present membership of the church was very small, and with some unusual disabilities as to harmony and growth, while society, even the best in the place, — that which was slowly peopling the hillsides with cozy, comfortably furnished frontier

homes, — was like so many grains of sand. The element of cohesiveness was yet to be introduced.

Besides this better aspect of life there was another, which gathered in saloons and gambling dens along the main street, and lurked in evil houses along the majestic cottonwood-shaded avenue on the river bank, and which still manifested itself in flashes of disgrace when the law attempted its own vindication, and violent deeds occasionally defied all punishment. Even now one could scarcely pass along the business streets any day without meeting vagrant Indians of that worst type which characterizes the early contact of savage with so-called civilized life—in all the glory of blanket, paint, and feathers. A common spectacle was the cowboy, with broad sombrero, small arms, and yellow oilskin coat, booted and spurred, riding his pony in that long gallop of the plains, which seemed the natural gait of almost every horse in the country. Every second day, in sight from our hilltop, the “Deadwood coach” started out in the early morning, after a long process of loading, to cross the wide Missouri, by ferry in summer, and on the ice in winter and in late autumn and early spring. The trembling passengers were often drenched in the freezing water by breaking through the ice, and had to pause for change of habiliments before proceeding over the gumbo hills and along the valley of Bad River, on the

two-hundred-mile journey, which knew only briefest halt day or night until it was completed, in from forty to forty-eight hours. Once a week the bullion coach brought in from the same region its thousands of dollars' worth of gold and silver "bricks," the coach guarded within and without by messengers and guard armed to the teeth. From the nearest United States fort, in another direction, lumbered the long ambulances drawn by four or six "government mules," which were the pleasure carriages, in the time of peace, of officers and soldiers, whose blue uniforms and epaulettes, tinsel, or stripes jostled against the barbaric blankets and feathers and strings of wampum of the Indians on the streets and in the stores. In a third direction, almost every day, dimly descried by the naked eye, but plainly discerned with the aid of a glass, wound a long procession of cattle, driven to their fate by freighters and cowboys over the hills, brown in winter, green in summer.

Hundreds of young men had come hither to seek their fortune, and "grow up with the place." They slept in stores, offices, lofts, taking their meals at hotel, restaurant, or lunch counter, utterly homeless and friendless, all with energy, some with ability and character, most in that stage of life where a virtuous and friendly hand might help to save them from the ways of death, into which many were likely otherwise

to drift. As in all new countries, men were largely in the majority. A dance held at an abandoned fort near, not long previous to our arrival, had been attended by thirty-eight men and ten women. On all social occasions a young man who could secure the company of a young woman was looked upon as fortunate. Often the disparity of the sexes as to numbers was as high as ten to one.

In such a state of society the highest and deepest need was the gospel.

“Come out here,” wrote the pastor to a brother minister at the east, of “liberal” tendencies, “and you will soon believe in a real devil.”

The absolute necessity of a real gospel of salvation from sin was never felt more forcibly.

The Sunday morning and evening services at the little church attracted many, and constantly grew in interest. A small Methodist chapel in the “lower town” had a fair audience, and was much needed there. Other service as yet there was none. Our Sunday-school had forty members, with a banker for superintendent, and was growing. The little prayer meeting, before the first month had passed, was a real power for good. A meeting in the same place on Saturday evenings gathered the superintendent and teachers of the Sunday-school at the round table of the pastor, for study of the lesson, which was a

felt necessity on the part of all. Thus three evenings of every week, including Sunday evening, when the lecture room was often transformed into a part of the audience room, were devoted to the religious uses of the church.

But it was early felt that this was not enough. What could be done to reach those whom the religious services did not attract, and to whom no reasonable and elevating recreation was possible on this frontier, far beyond the range of concerts, singers, and lecturers? This was a problem which the daily sight of hundreds of men, and scores of women and children, whom as yet we could not win, emphasized continually, and which confronted us in sleeping as well as in waking hours.

CHAPTER XV.

FOREFATHERS' DAY.

FOREFATHERS' day was approaching, and it was determined to see what could be done for profitable entertainment on that occasion. A simple celebration was planned, and the invitation to attend was given from the pulpit on the preceding Sunday. The evening saw a goodly audience in the church, and all seemed to listen with interest to the exercises. Patriotic music and prayer were followed by an extempore address by the pastor, which in turn was followed by an essay on "Our Obligations to the Pilgrims," by one who was familiar with the historic scenes of Provincetown and Plymouth. It embodied a copy of the immortal compact in the cabin of the Mayflower, and, in closing, the audience was carried on a brief imaginary trip from under the canopy over Plymouth Rock, which guards the dust of those who there "sleep well," around Cole's Hill, up Leyden Street to Burial Hill, thence to the New Monument, and back by Pilgrim Hall, pausing there before the great pictures of the "Embarkation" and the "Landing"; sitting in the seats of Brewster and of Carver,

and inspecting the household relics of the old heroes and heroines — spinning wheels, spectacles, wedding shoes, pewter platters, samplers, swords, letters, deeds, Psalm books, Bibles, clocks, cradles, and all. To make the object lesson complete, a map of Massachusetts Bay had been drawn on a sheet of printing paper, with Provincetown harbor, Barnstable and Plymouth bays, marked with a camel's hair brush and common ink. Also a genuine fragment of Plymouth Rock was passed from hand to hand in the audience, as the essayist read: — "On the coast, crowning a hill which overlooks Plymouth Bay, a statue has been reared in honor of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers on these shores, or rather, of the ideas which their mission enshrined. Upon its lofty base stands the graceful figure of Faith, in womanly draperies, a finger pointing toward the stars, and her left hand holding an open Bible. At either corner of the massive pedestal on which she stands are the statues of her handmaidens, — helpers in laying the foundations of a great civilization, — the figures of Education and Morality. Like the ancient Egyptian statue, which was fabled to sing whenever it was saluted by the rising sun, this towering marble, looking down on Plymouth town and the graves of the fathers, gleaming on the eye of the sailor far beyond the harbor, chants to the children from sea to sea, and in the ear

of all the human brotherhood, the story of our nation's birth.

“The time for foundation-laying is not ended yet. We have our share to do. Is it as important and far-reaching as that of the fathers? Verily, who can tell?”

The wild aborigines were scarcely nearer to the Pilgrims in the earliest days than they were to the little handful sitting on this winter night in a frontier church to live over again those days, and the story had almost the interest of a present reality, albeit the unique scene was more than two centuries and a half later in time, and the march of events had led from the wild shore of the Atlantic across two thousand miles of territory, as the frontier line had slowly followed the beckoning “star of empire” to the banks of the Missouri.

“The stars heard” that night, if not “the sea,” as all sang, in closing, “The Pilgrim Hymn,” and we were commended in a closing prayer to the God of nations and of migrations.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR LITERARY SOCIETY.

THE patriotic occasion so much enjoyed encouraged us in a scheme which was still undeveloped. The counsel of three or four members of the church was sought as a kind of committee of ways and means on the social need. A gentleman who knew the place well responded enthusiastically to the suggestion of a literary society, and named two or three young men of education and intelligence who had expressed a wish for one. This was felt, by the pastor and his wife, to be the most desirable form of help in the circumstances, but a very difficult thing to attempt with the hope of making it strictly an adjunct to church work, and yet so attractive as to win the class who most needed it.

Encouraged by some previous success in this line, and stimulated by the great need, we prepared for the attempt. Prayer for divine help and guidance was easy where a sense of human wisdom and help was so weak. A constitution was written out, guarded at every point as to the control of the undertaking, and yet with this fact not offensively promi-

ment, and with its machinery as simple as possible. About a dozen persons, of both sexes, were invited to a preliminary conference in the lecture room home, a majority being members of the church. The need of a literary society for mutual help and entertainment was conceded by all, and most of those present hoped it would be possible to organize and maintain one. In the midst of the full hearing of divergent views, the cover of the box by the stove broke under the combined weight of the water pail and a heavy young man seated on it, the former sending its contents over the latter, as well as into the kettles beneath, and deluging the floor. An embarrassment fatal to a meeting anywhere but on a frontier was the occasion of good-natured laughter, while all was made tidy and comfortable again, and then the meeting seemed ready for immediate action.

The pastor now brought forth his constitution and read it. Some demur was made that the responsibility devolving on the executive committee (to prepare the program for every meeting, and assign the parts) was such that no one would be willing to serve on it; others feared that it would not be possible to enroll a membership with the condition that each member should take a part in turn. But it was finally agreed to organize; the constitution was adopted as an experiment, and officers elected.

In view of the approach of the holidays, it was decided to defer beginning the work of the society until the first week in January.

We had come to the week before Christmas, and the Sunday-school children must have a tree. This occasion elicited the hearty interest of the community, including saloonkeepers and others who never came to church, except on the occasion of a Sunday-school concert. The prophecy that "a little child shall lead them" found here its fulfillment.

The pastor's daughter, left behind in school, had partially broken down in health, and it was deemed best that she should try the virtues of this dry climate. About this time she, a delicate girl of sixteen, made her advent to this new world in which her parents lived. By day she lived in the church with her father and mother. A kind neighbor, who happened just then to have a spare chamber, generously offered it for her use by night. Her literary taste was now of much value when she could be persuaded to use it.

The first meeting of the new society was held in one of the few parlors in the place, a dozen or more members being present. This first meeting was a curiosity. Each member to whom a part had been assigned — about six — had previously accepted the assignment, and all were now present. But when the

time came for fulfillment, outside the pastor and his family, the courage of every heart failed — except in the case of those who had agreed to furnish the music. That was very good, several pieces being well rendered, showing that the town had considerable musical talent.

The pastor, his wife, and daughter had each taken a part, finding it necessary for this critical first occasion, in order to encourage the others. The pastor, a far “down-easter” by birth, gave a description of a certain “clambake” as his contribution to the occasion, the wife contributed a brief essay, and the daughter recited Longfellow’s

“I stood on the bridge at midnight.”

Despite the signal and unanticipated failures of the other literary members on the program, the evening seemed to be enjoyed. The question was raised as to whether we should attempt another meeting, but in the glow of cheer and social enjoyment it was said, “Please do not give it up; we never did anything of the sort before; we are not used to this kind of thing, you see; but try us again next week; we *will* do our parts.” So the executive committee met in a corner, parts were assigned and accepted, and, with cheerful good-nights, the company broke up about ten o’clock.

The general plan was to take up the study of

prominent American poets, and of American history of the Revolutionary period, the society being organized in two corresponding sections. Most of the members of the society had "seen something of the world," and an exercise which should develop the talent for extemporaneous description or narration was devised, and added to the plan, under the name of a "conversation," for want of a better. The program of each occasion was further to be enlivened by a "humorous selection," and by the best music obtainable. Whittier was the first poet selected for study. A sketch of his life was assigned to one member for preparation, and a brief poem and a special selection were assigned to others, to be read or recited as preferred. The historical part was to consist of one or two brief essays on themes assigned for each meeting. The pastor, as president of the society, was *ex officio* a member of the executive committee of five, on whom devolved all the work of making the plans, which, in order to work successfully, could only be made after minute study of the literature and of the human nature to be brought together. This executive committee, consisting of three gentlemen and two ladies, worked hard to make the undertaking a success, and a special blessing seemed to attend their labors. The term of office was for three months, and more than once during

that time did the committee gather round the tea table in the lecture room with the pastor and his family to discuss plans for work, and to adjust the parts of the members so that each should have a share which he could perform, and yet that every meeting should possess as high a degree of interest as possible. The second week, at another private house, a company of twenty was assembled, and the program was carried through without a break. The third week a still larger company came together, with accessions of new members as before, and it was now plain that no private house could accommodate the prospering society. It was voted to hold the next meeting in the audience room of the church. An initiation fee of twenty-five cents, fixed at the first, proved sufficient to pay for necessary records, and for lighting and warming the house. The attendance was still strictly confined to members, and from the beginning special pains had been taken to keep our new venture from the notoriety generally accorded a new scheme by newspapers in a new country.

The pastor now saw that the society was strong enough to survive a little more publicity, and thus to enlarge its usefulness in the community. He appealed to the benevolent feeling and public spirit of the members for the sake of those who could not or would not come into the society as working members.

“ We have now had four meetings,” he said, “ and have successfully demonstrated our ability to have a meeting which shall be a means of pleasure and profit to ourselves. Another meeting falls in this long month. Shall we not throw open our doors to everybody next week, inviting them to come in and share our treat with us, making up a program of selections from the work of the past month?”

It was voted to do this, and also henceforth to make the last meeting of each month a public one. On the next occasion the church was full, and the people went away delighted. Its very novelty gave it an advantage in a community where, the winter previous, there had been a dance every night in the week. Dancing is the one recreation of people on the remote frontiers in the earliest years, but even that grows monotonous sometimes.

An editor came to this public entertainment, and of course a glowing report was printed in the paper, with genuine pride in the literary ability evinced by the townspeople, but doubtless also with a prudent eye to the interests of real estate in the young city, where real estate was the dominant interest, and where sometimes we had seen from thirty to sixty men leave their dinners cooling on their plates at the hotel table, while they rushed to a corner or an unoccupied table to gather round and discuss a plan of

addition to the city plat, or a map of the town or county. After the first public entertainment, as two editors and reporters had become members of the club, two local journals gave the program of every meeting, private as well as public. Almost every social and denominational grade in the community soon had representatives in the membership; staid heads of families, of middle age, with their boys and girls, lawyers, merchants, editors, real estate dealers, seamstresses, workingmen, clerks, Protestants of half a dozen varieties, and Roman Catholics—all met on a common basis, sixty working members taking the parts assigned them without demur, each one in turn making a real contribution to the enjoyment of the successive occasions, though of course in a variety of ways.

Though the regular weekly meetings were still nominally private, so great had been their success, and so genuine the interest felt by outsiders in the undertaking, that no one who presented himself at the door of the church on these occasions was ever turned away.

The train which left Chicago in the morning for this part of the world arrived here at nightfall of the second day. It now constantly brought gentlemen from the east who had come to look over the country, often with a view to investments. Real estate dealers were always on the lookout for these new arrivals, and

whenever they came on a "literary" evening, brought the visitors to these meetings as soon as they had partaken of supper and brushed the dust of travel from their garments. Often have we noted the presence of from six to ten or twelve of these strangers modestly seated in the back seats on a single evening.

Opportunity for making acquaintance was always given by a recess of fifteen or twenty minutes between the first and second parts of the program, when introductions were made, and older residents chatted with the strangers, or gathered in friendly groups of two, three, or four, for interchange of greetings, news, and conversation; the miscellaneous membership mingling freely and without embarrassment, and finding its own affinities and social stratifications no hindrance to genuine enjoyment on a common basis. After some months of experiment this was said by prominent members of the society to be the most valuable feature of the winter's work, replete as it had been with other benefits.

The papers continued to do their full share of making known this work, as time went on. Long afterwards, the county superintendent of schools, who, with his wife, was a helper in every good work, said to us, in the church, "Do you know what decided me to move to this place? It was the account of that literary society in a paper mailed from here to New York, where I then lived."

Many of the regular attendants were young men, who seldom or never attended the religious meetings. So popular did the enterprise become that we feared it might grow unwieldy; but it was never marred by the slightest lack of harmony. The onerous duties of the executive committee—consisting of two young gentlemen and a lady, besides the pastor and his wife—were lightened by the generosity and trust which never questioned its decisions, and were always loyal to the selections of individuals for the public performances. This last was a duty, of course, fulfilled with great care by the committee, with a view to impartiality, and the affording of each member a share in the opportunity and profit to be reaped and enjoyed. As the number of members increased, it became necessary to increase the number of exercises on each program, in order to give all in turn a share of the work, and the time devoted to the meetings was extended a half hour—on special occasions even another hour; but as a rule, no meetings were held beyond ten o'clock. The average time allotted to each exercise was about ten minutes. Essays might have fifteen minutes if the writer desired; poems and miscellaneous exercises often did not exceed five.

The original plan was to have seven exercises each evening—three with the poets, two in history or

biography, one miscellaneous or humorous selection, and one oral, which we called a "conversation."

Whittier was the subject of study for the first month, Longfellow for the second, Bryant, Holmes, and Lowell for the third.

The subjects assigned for essays in the historical section were: The Causes of the Revolutionary War; The Early Life of Washington; Washington as a General; Campaigns in the North; Burgoyne's Invasion; Arnold and the Expedition to Quebec; Lafayette; Greene and Campaigns in the South; Cornwallis and Yorktown; Benjamin Franklin.

Maps and plans of campaigns were outlined on paper or portable blackboard. These topics, selected and assigned by the lady member of the executive committee who had charge of the historical section, were all prepared and presented, except one, six of them by busy men, who would have said in advance that both ability and time for such studies were wanting. Twenty-four poems were read or recited during the meetings of the first quarter, fifteen by ladies and nine by gentlemen. The miscellaneous selections and the "conversations" were entirely at the option, as to subject, of those to whom these parts were assigned, and contributed their full share to the enjoyment of the meetings. To many a great attraction was the music, which was in a variety of

styles, both vocal and instrumental, but always good and high-toned.

The library of the pastor found in this busy winter a justification for the heavy expense of bringing it to this remote frontier land. It contained Irving's Washington and a half dozen authors on United States history, several being school histories. The standard American poets were of course to be found in it, and some good helps toward the miscellaneous and humorous parts. These books were freely loaned to the constituency of the society, and were in constant requisition. A lending list was kept, in case of possible need, but no book was ever lost, or more than slightly soiled, even in conditions where the contrary had been expected. Bancroft's History and some other books, especially of poetry, were the property of other members; but, as a rule, books were not abundant. Of course, as the lists and programs show, no exhaustive work of minute scholarship and scholarly criticism was attempted. This would not have been desirable, even if it had been possible. General, rather than particular, aspects were sought, in the historical studies, as likely to be best, both for present interest and for abiding in the memory; but this of course involved considerable preliminary scanning of particulars. The same was true in regard to the study of the work of the

poets. But it was felt that a real and substantial benefit was derived from marking out a particular portion of history for the writer's work, and in taking up the study of a few specified poets.

Washington's birthday, it was duly decided in the councils of the society, should be celebrated by a special program, and an admission fee should contribute to the funds of the church. Rather against the fears of the executive committee, the popular vote expressed a preference to have the literary exercises supplemented by historical tableaux, and a New England supper served by ladies dressed in the costume of the olden time. So much of an undertaking needed two evenings for its fulfillment, but, like all the other enterprises of the society, it evoked its full share of *éclat*.

With limited means for such an undertaking, ingenuity came to help, and the whole community offered freely its very best skill and material for the producing of desired effects in the tableaux. In the colored lights shed on the various scenes by an expert — a physician with chemicals and taste — the sombre scenes of Revolutionary history made a vivid impression on the beholders — one not easily forgotten by the children and young people nor by the “children of a larger growth.”

The second winter less concentrated work was tried,

the responsibility of selections left largely with the individual members, and the general management thrown rather on "committee of the whole." With the educating power and momentum of a season of successful work behind it, the society held on its way, although the circumstances of the community were considerably changed. A central point was the presentation of a series of essays on "Epochs in Ancient and Mediæval History," around which clustered the other and miscellaneous features of each program. Perhaps as entertaining as the first season, on the whole, it was felt to be less profitable, owing to the miscellaneous character of most of the work.

CHAPTER XVII.

DIFFICULTIES.

ALL this time the religious work of the church was uppermost. The Sunday congregations were increasing. Dozens of new chairs were added to the seating capacity of the church, and most were filled when the weather was not too severe. New families were continually added to the parish, whose acquaintance must be made. Every variety and condition of life were found. Failing health had brought some to this dry climate, and invalids were constantly to be cheered in the trying conditions incident to a new country. To other families, well and hearty on their arrival, the frontier houses afforded so inhospitable accommodations that parents and children fell ill through exposure. Others, especially women, accustomed to eastern society, suffered intensely from homesickness—in some cases to the extent of shutting themselves up in their houses and spending much of their time in tears. To such of these as came occasionally to church, and to all his hearers, the pastor preached the luxury of doing good, of keeping “hearts at leisure from themselves” by attempting

to minister to those less favorably situated; and told the people truly, that the happiest persons there were those who thought least about their own hardships and most about their needier neighbors.

The time wore on, with constant promise and realization of good, and yet with such strands of difficulty braided into its work, that a constant sense of the need of wisdom from above pervaded every day and every task. To mold or guide the evolution of society in these hitherto untried circumstances, with the dissimilar, and sometimes threateningly inharmonious, elements at hand, and amid the materialism which encased the minds and hearts of men, was a task impossible to merely human strength.

But we went onward in our pilgrim way, endeavoring to "thank God for all that is past," and "trust him for all that's to come."

The physical inconveniences of living as we did were many. At every church social or other entertainment coffee, oysters, etc., must be cooked on the minister's stove, his study table beside it having been remanded to parts unknown; the ham must be carved, and the sandwiches spread there, often with dire results to the much-enduring carpet, which bore the tramp of the large infant class in the Sunday-school, of the feet of that portion of the congregation which overflowed into the lecture room on

Sunday evenings, and of friends whose meeting place it was on the week evenings devoted to prayer meetings, teachers' meetings, and literary societies. Under the added burdens of the omnipresent dust of this dusty and wind-blown climate, and the lack of a plentiful supply of water, body, heart, and brain grew weary.

The cold was sometimes intense, although snow was not often deep enough and lasting enough to afford much sleighing. One winter morning, with an atmosphere still and beautiful as October and clear as June, we had found our bread, as usual at that season, frozen solid, and every article of metal clinging to our hands with a tenacity that threatened to take off the skin. As we hung our mercurial thermometer outside the church door, it rapidly descended to the bulb, and our means of registering degrees of cold could no further go. By spirit thermometers elsewhere we learned that 43° below zero were registered. We did not feel chilled and penetrated by this cold as we should have done with the thermometer five degrees below zero on the Atlantic coast. But woe to any who ventured forth in this magnificent morning unfortified by a warm breakfast, and without being well wrapped! Quickly freezing faces, ears, hands, and feet would have paid the penalty.

Our daughter had the luxury of a separate sleeping room under the hospitable roof of a kind neighbor, and few rooms in the place were better. But without the smell of fire, and exposed as it was on the north and west, in spite of all we could do, the delicate girl suffered during those severe nights. When she was a little late in appearing at the breakfast table in the church, the mother sometimes found it hard to banish the apprehension that she had frozen in her bed, until her bright face came wreathed with its sunshiny good-morning smile, to speak for itself. The nights in the extemporized bedroom in the end of the lecture room were, for the most part, endurable, although by the time the stove, always filled at bedtime, had parted with its heat—usually about two o'clock in the morning—the cave of Æolus seemed to be located in our region, with its orifice over the head of the bed, or in the space over our gable window. Turn as one would, under the almost unbearable weight of the coverings, it was hard to keep from growing stiff, and almost through the whole winter it seemed as if one's head *would* freeze, although it was carefully shrouded from the cold, with only an opening for breath.

One terrific night we dared not attempt to occupy the "bedroom," but opened the double lounge beside the stove and spread the bed upon it, with the wolf-

skin robe above the numerous coverings. The husband plied the fire at short intervals all night, and much of the time the stove was red-hot. But in the morning a cup of water at the head of the bed, about eight feet from the stove, was frozen solid.

Sometimes a temporary illness, arising from the nervous strain of living so much in public, would alight upon the "weaker partner." Once there was compensation and help to recovery unlooked for. The literary society had met in the church as usual, the wife and mother being carefully shut away from sight in her bedroom corner, unable to rise from her couch, and suffering constant pain. The partition screen which made the "bedroom" was many feet lower than the ceiling of the lecture room, and it was not possible to shut the long line of folding doors so closely as to bar out the voices and sounds in the adjoining audience room. The time had come for the humorous selection, which always formed one number on the program. It was witty and wise at once, but not more so, perhaps, than on several previous occasions. But at this time an indefinable sympathy with the ludicrous side of life and thought seemed to give a thrill to "that electric chain where-with we all are darkly bound." These always well-behaved people, led by a dignified banker in the reader's chair, suddenly became oblivious to the

sense of homelessness and loss, the anxieties and the hardships of this wild frontier life, and gave way, as one man, to uncontrollable laughter, not rude and uproarious, but pervasive and irresistible to the last degree. The invalid upon her bed heard not the words which had occasioned this startling development, but, for the minutes during which the genius of mirth held every soul captive, laughed alone, amid her pain, for sympathy, until the tears of mirth rolled down her cheeks, and from that hour began to recover.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PARSONAGE.

IN these months of living in a church we had felt that we must make an effort to build a parsonage, but where the means was to come from was not yet evident, even to the eye of faith. In the little lecture room home we kneeled and asked God for help, daily, for weeks, before any word was spoken to a fellow-creature. Then, for the first time in our lives, we appealed for help toward an object with which our own welfare was connected. It was the work for this church which God had laid on our hearts in answer to our prayers. Tremblingly letters were sent out, to wealthy personal friends and acquaintances, chiefly in New England and New York, stating the need from various points of view, and intimating that contributions of any amount, large or small, would be welcome toward the building of a parsonage. It was proposed that contributions thus received should be held as a loan from the church and parsonage building society, to be repaid as rent in quarterly instalments, and to be used again and again as a fund to be loaned in the same way to other needy churches, going forth thus on a never-ending mission of mercy.

These letters were written, with prayer over every one. The general statement to be embodied was first read to a small meeting of the church, and received its endorsement. The promise of the enterprise, the need of the church and its pastor, and the impossibility of doing more, even with the hope of help from abroad, than to raise on the spot three hundred dollars with which to buy a parsonage site, was stated; with some economic considerations affecting the Home Missionary Society, which kept the pastor in the field, and growing out of the conditions of life in this place.

Money was in great demand among a people, many of whom had used their little all in removing to this new country and entering the quarter-sections of land, or buying the town lots whereon they hoped to make their homes. It was the exception if a man did not need to borrow money for building or improvement, team, seed, or tools. We once asked the rate of interest, in the first months of residence. The answer, by a young teacher who had brought a little money for investment, was, "One cannot get more than twenty-two per cent on good security. Chattel mortgages pay as high as thirty-two to forty per cent, but one has to look too closely after the chattels!"

Early in our engagement to occupy the field we were now in we had once hoped to secure a tiny

house of four small rooms, at a rental of two hundred dollars per year. In this hope we were disappointed. After we had learned more about the few rented houses in the place we found that it was frequently the case that from one third to one half the original cost of a house was expected for one year's rent, the business rule being one third. One small cabin, not far from the church, had cost three hundred dollars, and one hundred and fifty dollars yearly rent was paid for it. Some time afterwards, when these extreme conditions had been somewhat modified, an appeal was published in one of the papers for the formation of a building and loan association, in which the following illustration was used:—

“The shares are two hundred dollars each and the dues are fifty cents a week on each share. A man wants to borrow and build a house costing, say, eight hundred dollars. To get the eight hundred dollars he must take five shares (one thousand dollars); estimating the premium paid to get the money at twenty per cent, which is a fair average (sometimes it is more and sometimes it is less), it will cost two dollars and a half a week and the interest on eight hundred dollars.”

The article then goes on to show that by borrowing one thousand dollars where he wants to use eight hundred, and paying for the use of it, in weekly dues,

thirteen per cent per annum on one thousand dollars, in addition to twenty per cent per annum for the use of the eight hundred included in the one thousand, he will in five years pay fourteen hundred and fifty dollars for a house costing eight hundred dollars, and will by this means, at the moderate estimate of fifteen dollars for the monthly rent of the same house, which he would otherwise have been obliged to pay, have *saved* two hundred and fifty dollars!

Two considerations in the article, as printed in the paper, would mislead the investor in the proposed building and loan association. One was that money would be likely to command over twenty per cent interest in such an association more frequently than it would fall below it. The other was an error in figures not quoted, which by dropping, in multiplying, the fractional part of a dollar in the weekly dues, made a difference in favor of the association during its proposed lifetime — five years — of two hundred and eighty dollars. But we have given the *corrected* figures, and letting the rate of interest stand as stated, there would be an actual gain of two hundred and fifty dollars accruing to the one who should build on this plan, over one who should pay the estimated rent for five years.

In our letters to our good friends at the east we did not go into many statistics and figures, but made gen-

eral statements which would cover them all. Encouraging and helpful responses came in almost every instance. Checks of ten, twenty-five, and fifty dollars were received, with kind words of interest and encouragement. The little church went bravely to work to raise the three hundred dollars to pay for a valuable lot adjacent to the church, which was estimated by real estate dealers to be worth much more than the low price asked for it, in consideration of the use to which it was to be devoted. But we well knew that the cash must be paid for building as well as lot, and the aggregate of the small sums we hoarded so carefully would scarcely lay the foundation. We had the promise of the secretary of the Congregational Union of three hundred dollars, "to pay last bills with"; but where was the money coming from to pay for the walls of the parsonage, even though the foundations, the roof, and the chimney were, so to speak, in sight? None will ever know — for it cannot be told — the joy which came to our burdened hearts one dismal March day in the lecture room, when we opened a letter which told us that a good sister in a New England state, blessed with a competence, had offered to give, for this parsonage, through the Union, the sum of five hundred dollars! Tears of gratitude "could ne'er repay" a debt so great. We knelt together and poured out our thanks to the Giver of all good, who

had heard our petition and had moved his servants to come in this generous measure to our full relief. Then we addressed ourselves to the glad task of writing our thanks to this lady, to the secretary of the Union, and to sending the good news of certain success to each of the kind friends who had made smaller contributions toward our parsonage *that was to be*.

As the spring came on, it was plain that release must be had for a time from these present conditions of life, or health, never very robust, would be hopelessly broken. So the wife and mother, scarcely able to sit up, was taken to the train and bidden God-speed for the long journey eastward, leaving minister and daughter to keep together home and parish.

CHAPTER XIX.

IMMIGRATION. — A JOURNEY IN THE OPPOSITE
DIRECTION. — FRONTIER LIFE.

THOUGH the previous season had witnessed a large immigration, it was merely a prelude to that which was to come. A railroad official in the late summer had spoken with the minister about the evident indications as to a great coming inflow of population. "People will come here next year," he said, "as ducks to the pond" — a figure far more impressive to us than before we had lived in sight of the numberless multitudes of wild fowl in prairie sloughs. There was room enough and to spare. "You can put a plow in there," said another railroad man, pointing from the car window to the unbroken prairie, "and plow a furrow straight north for two hundred miles without meeting a stick or stone, or any other obstacle."

Fifteen hundred miles of railroad were built in a single year, and, with the way opened, the providential time for settling this vast region had come. "Part of the time," it was said by one who knew the field well, the immigrants numbered "from three

thousand to five thousand per day. They came from New England and Old England, from Norway, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Bohemia, France, Ireland, Italy, Russia, China, Wales, and Scotland." The land entries grew to "more than fifty million acres. At a single land office two hundred and eighty-five thousand acres were entered in a single day." Thirty million bushels of wheat were raised in one year in the territory. The public schools came to number two thousand. A thousand post offices, and two hundred newspapers, many of them springing up as if by magic, were numbered when the year was over.

The journey of the missionary's wife was undertaken in late March of the season which saw the climax of this influx. The weather was cold, and snow filled all the interstices of the long, matted dry grass which covered the prairies, while, under a gray sky, the ever-blowing wind was sharp and uncomfortable. The migrations of Goth and Vandal and Hun, which descended on southern Europe and precipitated the fall of ancient Rome, were, separately, feeble in comparison with the great wave of immigration which had already begun to sweep over this region of the west. It was impossible to convey lumber to this timberless region in quantity equal to the need. The great trunk lines of railway stretching a thousand miles westward of Chicago were now literally block-

aded by the cattle and household goods of families moving westward, and all effort to supply them with lumber was for the time abandoned. It was pitiful to see families with little children set down beside the railroad stations, in a raw, cold wind, amid the snow, on the vast, featureless prairies, absolutely unable to procure shelter of any kind except that which they could improvise. One of these temporary shelters was composed, on the windward side, of bales of prairie hay. A wagon box and some packing boxes were disposed on the other sides, one gap being filled by the headboard of a bedstead. Over the whole was spread a rag carpet, forming a low flapping roof, with a hole in one corner sufficient to admit the funnel of a cook-stove which was set up underneath. Exposed to cold and to the horrors of fire in the high winds and amid this mass of inflammable material which any chance spark might kindle, this was the best of these extemporized shelters to be seen in a hundred miles of travel. A few had been able to procure lumber in the preceding winter or fall, and new shanties of buff-colored pine made up the general aspect of the towns at most of the stations, which were generally about fifteen or twenty miles apart.

At the western end of the journey no sleeping car was to be had, but the crowds were going westward,

not eastward, and so there was plenty of room in the day coaches. To the invalid — the only woman in the coach — the conductor was most kind, offering every facility for comfort in his power, and arranging two seats, — there were many unoccupied, — by a transformation of backs and cushions, so as to make a comfortable lounge by day or night. The precaution of bringing a lunch basket was well taken, as the timetables of the railroads were in confusion, and it was not easy to obtain palatable food at the few stations where time was allowed for refreshments. Delays, even for hours, were constantly occurring. Frequently the train would be switched on to a side track at some lonely place where the sky and the vast stretches of earth were most monotonous, or with a few forlorn cabins in sight, which made the desolation more oppressive, and remain there from one to six hours, while the train dispatchers made desperate efforts to get the stalled west-bound trains dislodged and send them on their ponderous way. The train was twenty-five hours late in Chicago, and the last few hours of the long journey brought an exhaustion which was beginning to conquer the greatest will power possible to the lonely traveler. But loving attentions awaited her in the great city, where comfort, luxury, and elegance supplied her every want. Days and weeks of rest, with quiet compan-

ionship and gentle recreation, as it could be borne, rapidly restored the normal pulse, and gave the longing to be again at work.

Meantime the intense life of the frontier parish was stimulated by the fresh currents of the great incoming multitude, and, as the spring wore on, the contrasts were deepened and heightened. Hope, always high, now sent its bounding pulsations to the very fingers' ends of dealers in real estate and town "boomers." To breathe the atmosphere of the place was to partake in some measure of the excitement. "The inhabitants of the country live an intense, exaggerated sort of existence," writes one who spent years among them, "and nothing tame attracts them." To lead men to think of eternal verities as the real things, as opposed to the transient and the seeming, which so bore them on its resistless current, was the task imposed upon the church of God. The providences and Spirit of God alone could make abiding impression. For a time the flood of worldliness seemed to bear all before it. But many a pathetic story, and more than one confession, came to the ears and heart of him who ministered in holy things, and opportunity for extending sympathy and cheer was never greater.

But a stone's throw from the church was the jail. Now it was the duty of the hour to pray beside the

cot of the dying prisoner who sought God's mercy, and again, to hold, within these same prison walls, funeral services over the remains of a would-be murderer, shot dead in the streets in daylight by a city official in self-defense.

CHAPTER XX.

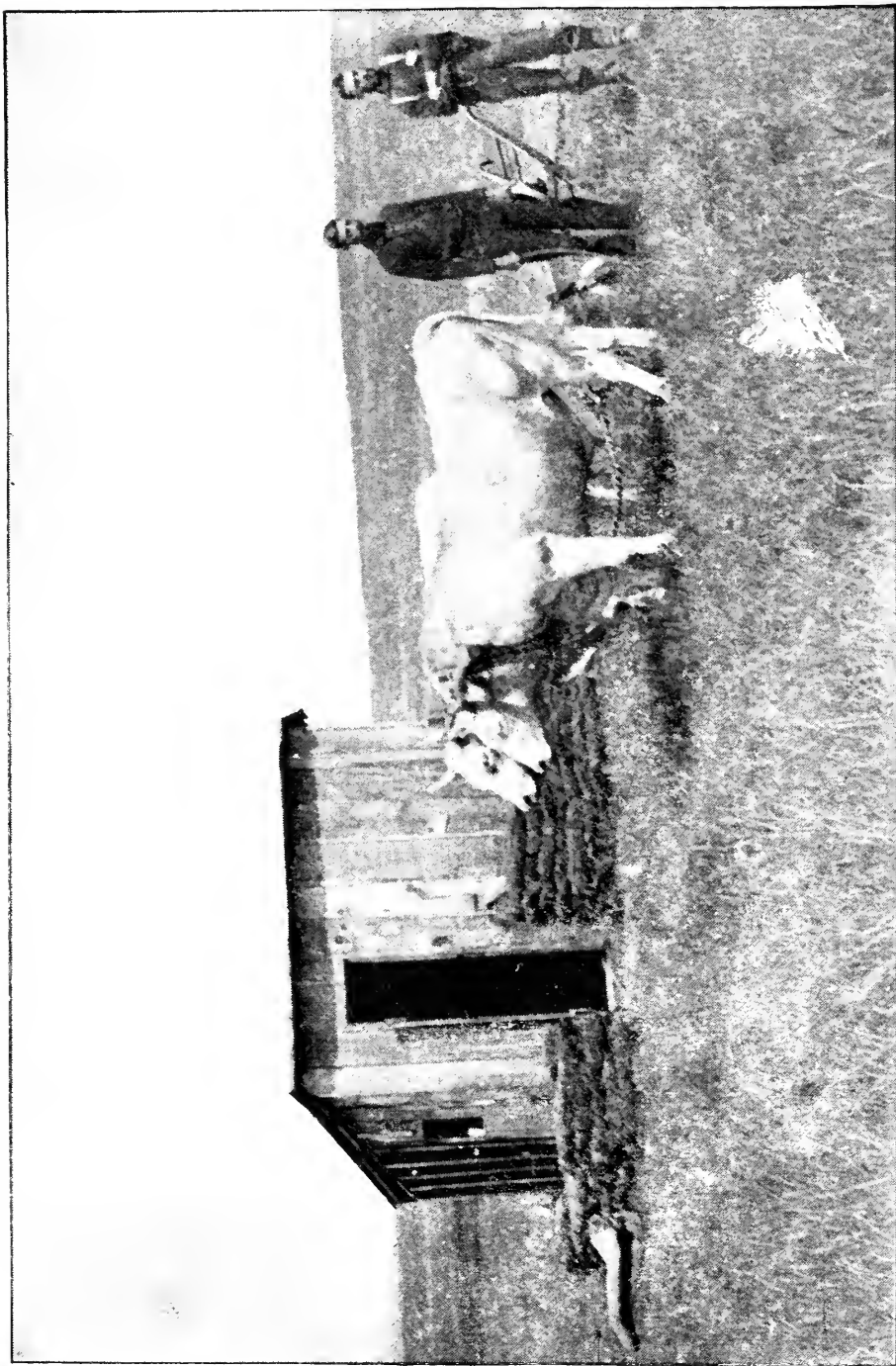
A FRONTIER CITY.

OUR little church was set for the work of the largest Christian charity. So we were glad to have it used by those of other religious persuasions, so far as they had need. A Baptist missionary was to look after the sheep of his fold in our "city" on a given Sunday, and we were glad to offer them the use of our edifice, the pastor seizing the opportunity to preach "a free gospel" in a new town thirty miles away.

This incipient town had started out with vigorous life. Anticipating the occasion, the minister had made a visit two weeks in advance, and engaged the dining room of the first hotel, now in process of construction, for the expected service, making a public announcement of time and place. The night before the appointed Sunday he is off on the train, several hours late, for the place of destination, where he arrives between nine and ten o'clock. The cold northeast wind is blowing, and the night is dark and damp. The hotel was expected to be in readiness for comfortable occupancy by this time, but it is still unfinished, with neither windows nor doors. Inquiring in

the cold and darkness for lodgings, the minister is told there are none except in the attic of this unfinished building. To it he goes, and is led up the ladder to the loft by a boy with swinging lantern in hand, who welcomes him to the only hospitality the new town can afford. The attic is barely enclosed with damp, half-seasoned lumber. The cold wind is sweeping in through the open window spaces and doorways below, and through the openings above. On the floor of the attic are six or eight coarse mattresses, most of which have already received rest-seeking strangers. One had been reserved for the minister. Over it are spread two damp coverlids; but neither sheet nor pillow appears. In anticipation of the "newness" which surrounds one on the frontier like an atmosphere, thoughtful love at home had suggested the taking of the wolf-skin robe and a small lounge pillow, and these are now quickly unstrapped with the feeling that they are indeed for such a time as this. Rolling himself up in the well-lined robe, and placing the little pillow under his head, the preacher is soon at rest between the quilts. But the dampness of the room and of the wind is fearful, and sleep is difficult. When the morning dawns the involuntary first thanksgiving is that pneumonia has not fastened itself upon him.

Early meditations were on the subject of a place for



THE LITTLE BOARD SHANTY ON THE CLAIM.



service. The dining room which had been engaged was open to the blasts, and a spring snowstorm was driving the snow through the open window and door spaces, until it lay here and there in growing drifts on the new-laid floor. Not long after breakfast a friend brought a courteous note from a young man, cordially offering the use of his real estate office for a preaching service in the afternoon. This offer was gladly accepted, for it was the best opportunity possible in the circumstances. The place was a small one-story building of rough lumber, its main room about twelve by fourteen feet in dimensions. It was furnished with a small coal-stove, an office desk, and one or two chairs. The meeting was announced for two o'clock, with the request that each one should pass on the notice to as many as possible.

The hotel not being ready, a physician, whom we had formerly known, having located here, undertook to feed the hungry until they could be otherwise supplied, as he would doubtless have attended to his patients, if there had been any. He had extemporized a rough building about twelve by thirty feet on the ground and divided it into three rooms, a kitchen and dining room at one end, a sleeping room for himself at the other, and a general waiting room and reception room in the middle. This middle room, about twelve by fourteen feet, in the exigency for shelter that stormy Sunday

forenoon, besides its furniture of a double bed, had a lounge, a table, a stove, a bureau, and some chairs. It furnished accommodations for about twelve or fifteen men, all spending the time as frontier life and morality dictate or permit. The preacher was among them, endeavoring to compose his thoughts for the preaching service which all were awaiting in the afternoon — the first ever held in the place. These men were daily fed by the great effort of the doctor's wife, who, thus endeavoring to supply a public need, was working beyond her strength, while they were looking up "claims" and "city lots."

To the hospitality of this family the preacher had been welcomed, and he was grateful for it. But how to manifest the practical wisdom and the Christian manliness demanded by the place, the time, and his profession; to satisfy his own conscience and yet not to repel prematurely those whom he sought to win to the message of the gospel, — seemed at first a difficult problem. But the forenoon wore away, on the whole not unpleasantly.

When the hour for service in the little real estate office arrived, the room was packed with apparently earnest hearers, mostly young men. The preacher was sandwiched into a corner beside the desk, without room to move his feet. With Bible in one hand, and Gospel Hymn Book in the other,

he began the services. Two or three Gospel songs were sung. How these young men sung! In the reading of the Word which followed, and in prayer, before the announcement of the text, there was a felt earnestness and intensity of devotion which was surest promise of "free course" for the gospel message. To preach there and then was a privilege to which a lifetime affords few parallels. Every eye was fixed on the preacher, and every heart seemed hungry for the message. There was no cold formality in the request to "come again," made by those who pressed toward the preacher with their thanks at the close of the service.

About forty-five persons were present at this meeting. Inquiry revealed their origin as follows: one came from Nova Scotia, one from Massachusetts, four from New York, several from Indiana, from Illinois, and from Iowa, two from Missouri, two from Minnesota, one from Wisconsin, one from Kansas, and one from Wyoming Territory.

In another respect, this was a characteristic frontier audience. There were present two women, four children, and thirty-eight men.

A few weeks afterward, after preaching in his own pulpit, superintending a Sunday-school, and leading a Bible class, the preacher filled a second appointment at this place, being driven twenty-five miles over the

intervening prairie by a friend, in time for a service held, as before, on Sunday afternoon. The place for the service on this occasion was a larger house, raised and enclosed since the previous visit. Within, the partitions between the several rooms were indicated only by the studding. A larger audience gathered here, eager and earnest as before. There were not seats enough to accommodate the people who packed the house, many standing in rooms adjoining that in which the preacher stood, and peering around the studding which intercepted their view.

The first service in this town was held in March; the second, in the middle of the spring. Before the next August was passed it was the minister's privilege to preach in the same place, in an "opera house" which was to seat a thousand people. Such is the growth of a frontier city.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DAUGHTER. — SITTING BULL. — PREACHING AT
THE FORT.

THE minister's daughter, now restored to health, and being needed here, sought for the present to continue her studies, and at the same time to remain on the ground. A lady neighbor wished for her own pleasure to review her Latin, — so it was generously stated, — and the young student, with this accomplished teacher, read Cicero, and much in English also, giving the remainder of her time to such home-making in the church for her father as was possible in the circumstances, teaching the large infant class of the Sunday-school, and going to the sick or needy as opportunity offered, feeling that, though out of school for the most of the year, the time was not wasted. Recreation came with the church festivals, given at intervals through the spring and summer for the purchase of a bell, and in walks over the bluffs, although these were not very safe. Seven rattlesnakes had been killed the year before, within a stone's throw of the church, and mothers had feared to allow their little children to run about

freely. But this summer no rattlesnakes were heard of, though all were still watchful, and the young girl usually had the companionship of children in her walks.

One bright morning word came that a certain steamer had landed about a mile above the town. It was conveying Sitting Bull and his companions, who were being transferred by order of the government from a point up the river. The chief had held him a prisoner since his capture after the campaign in which General Custer lost his life. The minister and his daughter set out for a walk towards the upper landing, over the road which wound between the river and the bluffs, clothed in fresh green and sprinkled with wild flowers. As they approached the landing, the chieftain, with his Indian escort, was coming toward the town, followed by a small crowd of white men and boys. The aspect of this famous Indian was not attractive. His form and movement indicated endurance, while his small eyes and wrinkled, leathern face gave no indication of thoughts which, perhaps even now crafty and resentful, were passing through his savage brain. His body-guard — if such his unarmed followers might be called — were fine specimens of young Indian manhood. They strode along with the dignity of Roman senators. Averaging six feet or more in their moccasins, there was a play of feature, a freedom of

gesture, a grace of movement, a wild fearlessness of demeanor, which no captivity could quell, and which remains in memory as the greatest manifestation we have witnessed of the innate nobility of bearing which belongs to the true Indian prince. The boat was loaded with Indians who were accompanying the chieftain. Some of these were refreshing themselves on the shore, the men lying apart on the grass, smoking, while the women were cooking the breakfast over little fires here and there. On the boat, filthy, littered, and disagreeable, other women were nursing and caring for the children who swarmed over its decks. The scene was disheartening and sickening enough, with its hopelessness for the future and its unwelcome recollections.

Returning to the town, Sitting Bull was found, with his followers, holding a reception at the post office, whither many citizens had come, on hearing that the chief was there. He gravely shook hands with each one who was presented, uttering the sullen and guttural "How!" which is the invariable Indian salutation in English, and writing his rude autograph (at fifty cents apiece) for such as desired to possess it.

The minister had some acquaintance with the chaplain of the nearest garrison, who had proposed the courtesy of an exchange of pulpits. Now in the pleasant early summer this exchange was to be made.

This involved a considerable journey over the prairie. Saturday morning, with horse and buggy, and accompanied by his daughter, the minister started out. The first half of the way was familiar, and was made with success and comfort, in time for midday rest and dinner with our good friends at the Indian Mission. The remainder of the journey proved more uncertain. It was across an uninhabited prairie, its roads mere tracks in the wild grass, and crossing each other at every possible angle, and with neither sentinel, tree, nor guideboard to point the way. We had anticipated no difficulty when we left the mission, but ere we had gone many miles uncertainties grew formidable. The wrong turn at an acute angle of the tracks soon took us far astray. The bewildered feeling of one driving hither and thither to find the way on a boundless, treeless expanse is like that of a mariner in mid-ocean without chart or compass. And the bewilderment is the more complete when, as then, the sun is hidden from sight. The only thing that could be done was to keep going, following best instincts and judgments, which in this instance proved not very helpful.

After long wanderings, we knew not where, our track disappeared upon an abrupt gumbo bluff running back from the river. How far we had come out of our way we could not tell, and the sun was getting

low. The approach of night compelled a retreat to the cheering hospitality of the mission. After a good night's rest, a good breakfast, and the greater cheer of the morning family worship, a young lady missionary mounted her Indian pony and accompanied the party, on the beautiful Sunday morning, three or four miles, until they were on a distinct trail in the right direction, and their perplexities were over. On they went, over the prairie, around the bluffs, through the ravines, along the bottom lands, up the bluff sides, along the terraced table-lands, until they reached the plateau on the edge of which stood the fort. They were at the chaplain's hospitable door just in time for morning service. This was their first visit to a well-appointed United States fort, and there were many things to be seen, heard, and observed.

The day passed pleasantly. The morning audience was small ; that in the evening much larger. Attendance at divine service was at the option of the soldiers, and many chose to remain away. The red-tape of routine military life was manifest in many ways. The gentlemanly bearing of the officers was marked and pleasing. The Sunday morning and evening parade seemed needless, but such was the law.

A call was much enjoyed in the afternoon from the surgeon of the post, a large-hearted and devoted Christian man.

At night it was rather agreeable than otherwise to hear the cry of the sentinel, as his voice rang out the number of every hour and the cry of "All is well!" Monday morning, after witnessing the morning parade, father and daughter were soon on their way home, which they reached, without further mishap, at evening.

CHAPTER XXII.

ASPECTS OF NATURE. — EXTREMES. — A TORNADO.

MAJESTY is the attribute of many a landscape on the banks of the Missouri. The volume and width of the stream; the great cottonwood trees fringing its shores; the stretch of the river bottom; the terraced rise of the bluffs which hem the valley, which is often miles in width; the vast expanse of upland, all overarched by the highest and fairest of skies, — combine to elevate and enlarge the soul's horizon. Every aspect of nature seems to be a part of the same grand diapason, a chord which includes all tones.

The breaking up of the ice in the spring had been a time of great excitement. Once, in the short history of the place, the river had loosened itself from the icy clasp of winter, far up at the mouth of the Yellowstone, while still frozen over below, and the mighty current rolled death and destruction “for many a league onward,” piling the shivered ice into gorges where some bend in the channel formed an obstruction to the current, as here, until the flood rose to the level of the “second bench,” or terrace, filling the houses

and forcing the people to escape in boats to higher ground. Each spring brought recurring anxiety, and day and night we watched the softening ice, until, with a great, crackling roar, it broke. Some masses were piled high and then disappeared in the angry current; some were thrown with terrific force out on the banks, and great floes filled the channel for days, during which no communication could be held with the opposite shore.

The winter blizzards were not the only storms. Those of the summer sometimes surpassed them in sublimity. A gentleman who resided here, and who had traveled extensively in both hemispheres, told us that he had never found a place, except portions of Switzerland, where the thunder and lightning equaled what he had known in storms here. Amusing stories were told of the refuge sought in caves and cellars by business men in the early history of this place, and, in a state of society where daylight was an indispensable ingredient of personal safety, of their fear of one another when hiding thus in the darkness and sublimity of a midnight storm.

Some impressions of similar storms in our experience are ineffaceable. One day in early summer the long hours wore on monotonously. Toward evening the heavens grew gray with clouds which curdled in their upper strata. Had we known more of these

atmospheric phenomena, our anxieties would have been awakened. It was not long before the realities were quite as much as we could bear. The minister and his daughter were alone in the church home. The night grew pitchy dark. The lightnings flashed and the thunders rattled like the discharges of artillery and musketry combined. The winds blew and the floods descended. Gradually all these elements of sublimity were intensified until the tempest became frightful. The little church shook until the inmates felt as though in the clutches of some powerful demon. In fear of a crash they barred the church doors. Then they knelt in prayer, and afterwards trustfully watched out the midnight with the storm, whose awfulness can never be forgotten.

Extremes of temperature during the year were wide apart. In the winter we had hung our thermometer on the knob of the northwest church door to see the mercury descend into the bulb, stopping short of the "forty-three degrees below" marked by spirit thermometers elsewhere. In a succeeding winter the minister preached at a place where the thermometers marked fifty degrees below zero, and was told that the week before it had been at fifty-six below.

Then there were the "Chinook winds," always hot in summer and in winter. We heard of sun heat at the Indian Mission station in a previous year which

had liquefied chocolate in cakes, sending the dark-brown fluid in sluggish streams down from a high pantry shelf, to the astonishment of the lady missionaries.

On this first Sabbath of July the thermometer at the church stood for hours from one hundred and four degrees to one hundred and eight degrees Fahrenheit. In the coolest place in the church, on a doorpost between audience room and lecture room, it marked one hundred and four degrees for several hours of the afternoon. The air was dry and hot, like the breath of a furnace. Breathing was not easy, nor did it bring much relief. In the following summer we had the privilege of a near yet safe view of a tornado.

The heat of the day seemed unendurable, with a strange oppressiveness in the air. Panting for breath, the minister was driven out of his study in hope of some relief. Hardly beyond the doorstep, his attention was attracted by a peculiar noise. The heavens were nearly clear, but with a sultry dullness of the atmosphere, and one small cloud in the north, not far away. From that cloud hung a tubular column reminding one of the trunk of an elephant. It had a quivering, oscillating motion. Ever and anon it lengthened towards the earth, at times forming a juncture with a black cloud of dust and *débris* which rose up from the ground to meet it. Then it would

contract like a stretched cord of india rubber, when the extending pressure is relaxed. These two parts, the cloud of dust from the earth and the hanging tube-like cloud from above, moved on together. Whenever they united we could hear a roaring, crackling sound, as from a conflict of angry demons. At first the cloud seemed coming directly toward the town, but soon veered and passed around it. About a mile away, it struck the cow barn of a dairyman, and then the crackle and the roar were terrible. The barn was rent and shivered, and nothing, it was said, but splinters from it could ever be found afterwards. The tornado then moved on eastward, and when some two miles away it struck a small, frail house in which was a mother and her young child. The house was whirled into the air, and the mother and child landed in a cornfield not far away, neither killed, though the mother was somewhat injured.

With a curiously fascinated gaze we watched the course of this strange phenomenon for about two hours. As it moved on, the cloud grew in size until, when miles away, we could see two, then three, of those angry-looking trunks hanging toward the earth. Twenty miles away a man with a two-horse team was taken up by it and dashed to destruction.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUR FOURTH OF JULY ON THE INDIAN RESERVATION.

OUR Fourth of July was celebrated on the Indian reservation. Two young lawyers of the town chartered a steamboat and gave out an invitation to a sail on the river, with a celebration of the day near an Indian village on the Indian reservation three or four miles above on the opposite side. The minister and his friends were courteously invited to be a part of the company. Incited partly by the promise of novelty, they decided to go.

When we steamed up the river there were four or five hundred people on board—a mixed company, such as might be expected of such a place, on such an occasion. It was “good, bad, and indifferent,” but all was orderly. The military band which accompanied us stirred our patriotism and gave good cheer by their martial music.

Soon the boat “tied up” close to a small grove of wild trees which here lined the river’s bank, and extended back fifteen or twenty rods to the edge of “the bottom,” or *intervale*. on the opposite side of which, nestling close under the bluffs, was the Indian

village, composed of tepees — lodges formed by setting up poles in the form of a hollow cone, and covering them with cloth, varied occasionally with a much-patched buffalo skin.

Our patriotic celebration was held, immediately after landing, in the grove on the bank. The program was not long: —

Music.

Prayer by the Chaplain of the Day.

Reading of the Declaration.

More music.

And yet it had a real interest, as the colors of a picture are brightened by a sombre background.

These exercises over, we gave attention to the picnic dinner. The scene was picturesque enough, amidst the scraggy trees and the low underbrush on the banks of the “Big Muddy.” The lands were those of the red men, whose representatives were near at hand, some of them, indeed, even now in our midst. Men, women, and children with fairer skin we gathered in little family and friendly groups, to partake of our luncheon, and to chat and laugh to our hearts’ content.

Dinner over, we marched out upon the open interval, to meet the Indians who had come out from their tepees to extend friendly greetings. The scene was worthy of a painter’s brush. Of our own race

were all conditions of sex, age, character, learning, and estate. Of the other, there were the old and the haggard, bearing the distinctive marks of heathenism; young men and maidens in all the glory of paint, feathers, and blankets, beads and tinsel; and little children of all ages, from tiny and helpless infancy to stalwart youth. Between the white skin and the red skin lay the fifteen Christian centuries, from Constantine to Victoria, which have evolved the civilization of the Anglo-Saxon from the barbarism of our pagan ancestors. Across this gulf we reached out to one another friendly hands, without distrust. If the Indians seemed willing to learn of us, we were not unwilling to learn of them. Artlessness and not suspicion marked the intercourse of that long cloudless afternoon. Each seemed desirous of making the day pleasant to the other. The sports of the occasion were entered into by both races alike.

In the later afternoon the Indians got out their ponies for a wild race over the prairie, to the delight of us all, as they had, with the same apparent enjoyment, witnessed the earlier foot races and other sports gotten up by the whites.

Still later the Indians gave an exhibition of a war dance, around which the whites gathered and clapped and cheered quite lustily. Of one of their

diversions, however, we caught only a glimpse. As we had passed from the grove to the open plain at noon, we noticed an Indian leading a good-sized, well-favored dog. Some one remarked, "That is the dog they are going to roast"; but no special attention was paid to the remark, and it was soon forgotten.

Later in the day, along the borders of an upland which broke abruptly into a ravine, a large number of Indian women and children were gathered. The brightness and playfulness of these little ones had excited our interest. Gingersnaps offered for sale near by quickly filled our hands and pockets as we started on a pilgrimage among the children. No child was passed without its share. With simple pleasure we bestowed what they were delighted to receive. How their eyes brightened and sparkled, as they took the cakes in their little copper-colored hands! The mothers were not unmindful of the attentions paid their children. They smiled and nodded the thanks they could not speak. As for ourselves, the only regret was to find our supply running low; but each child received at least one gingersnap before we reached the outskirts of the group.

At this point, our attention was drawn to smoke rising from a fire near by, which had, till now, been partially concealed by a group of squaws. We looked again. Over the fire they were roasting the dog we

had seen led by the Indian when we first approached the encampment. A fire of sticks had been laid and kindled, and there was the dog, which lay upon the fire, hair on, and feet upwards, "natural as life." Several of the women were attending to the roasting. The friend who had accompanied us, a delicate lady of English antecedents, drew our attention to the scene, and our exclamations were "not loud, but deep," as we turned away. We had heard of such things before, but never thought to witness them. As we rejoined our white friends, it was too rare a bit of experience to keep. The secret "leaked out," to our regret, and soon the crowd which set that way was so great that the poor, embarrassed Indian women suspended operations. The dog was taken off the fire and reposed in hiding until the white people had left the grounds. The dog feast, a special luxury, was doubtless held before sunset, but at a later hour than had been intended.

We left the reservation with interchange of civilities and mutual good wishes. No accident or mishap had marred the day, and the homeward sail on the broad river, over which stretched the long shadows of bluffs and trees from the western bank as the sun descended, was a time filled with quiet reflection suggested by the strange experience attendant upon our Fourth of July on an Indian reservation. In more

than one heart, we were sure, kindly sympathies had been not shriveled, but deepened and broadened by the day's close contact with savage life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OUTSIDE MISSIONARY WORK.

THINGS were growing and enlarging on every hand, and so there were multiplied occasions for help in Christian work. A little town, which is to grow into the county seat, was planted in an adjoining county. The minister was invited to come and help institute a religious service there, and as soon as he could find an opportunity, he was glad to go.

The journey was over an almost unbroken prairie, lengthened by apprehensions of a gathering storm. A few settlers living in their first huts and shanties were scattered along the way. In one of these we took refuge when the fierce tempest had overtaken us, glad indeed of any shelter. And yet how like an egg-shell the frail tenement seemed while the fury of the storm was upon us! When it had passed we were glad to find ourselves yet upon the earth.

How welcome the hospitality which awaits a missionary going out on such a service! We were "at home" the moment we alighted from our vehicle. The first question in such circumstances is, Where are we to hold service? Neither church, school-

house, nor hall was here. We did not feel altogether free from anxiety when told it was to be held in the unfinished office of the small hotel where we were domiciled, since there was neither chair, bench, nor seat of any description in the room. And as we had come over an almost uninhabited prairie to the town, which consisted of the small hotel, a store, a printing office, and a blacksmith's shop, we wondered if there would be any one to occupy seats if we had them, when the hour of service should arrive. But the time from Saturday night to Sunday morning was not long, and time would show. Breakfast over, the host made ready the rude room for the approaching service. Lumber was not plenty. Bits of blocks sawed off the ends of the timbers of the house frame, a few small boxes, and some nail kegs were brought into requisition, as the supports of a few short boards left over from the house. When all was arranged the rude little room had quite a comfortable look. Even a cabinet organ had appeared to grace the scene.

In preparation for such a meeting there is danger that the preacher will underestimate the size or the quality of his expected audience. Perhaps rather, in the vagueness of that expectancy, in circumstances where no precedents have been established, vacancy is ready to settle down on heart and brain, paralyzing

effort to arrange thought and press home motive. But nowhere less than on a frontier must one come before an audience without a message to the souls and hearts of men. The message was given this morning in answer to prayer. How surprised was the preacher, as he stepped into that office room at the hour appointed, to find it packed full, with as bright and cheery a company in appearance as he had ever found! The people were mostly young and middle-aged. When the first hymn was announced the lady organist took her place and touched the keys — and what a burst of praise! A chorus of good voices, in fine accord with each other and with the instrument, lifted up our spirits. Already the divine Presence was manifest. The best the preacher had to give was none too good for the audience assembled in this uncomely place. The people were from the towns and cities of the east. They had been trained in the schools and churches of the older states. They were earnest and enterprising, or they would not have been here to invite and to greet the Christian minister on the unbroken soil of a frontier settlement. The contrasts between the dull prospects of that Saturday's journey and the delights of the Sabbath service were greater than those between the storm and the sunshine which fell athwart that prairie trail.

A few weeks later the minister was there again, to complete the organization of a church, which, as we trust, is to yield the fruits of righteousness through coming ages.

In this missionary life one soon learns to take things as he finds them. He is often helpless before the difficulties which surround him. To grow discouraged is not Christlike. To become impatient is to fritter away what little power he has. To keep cheery is best and most becoming for all concerned.

There are many unlooked-for tests of patience and trials of faith. A fact or two may be suggestive.

His work calls him to a new and growing town on the railroad thirty miles away. He is to return by the evening train, which he finds is late. The best thing he can do is to wait where he is until the train comes. But the depot is simply an old freight car standing on a side track. One end of this car is used as a telegraph office; the other end serves the double purpose of baggage car and waiting room. In this end, beside some pieces of baggage, there are already ten or fifteen men. Several are smoking, and two are "half seas over" and using obscene and profane language. At first the minister prefers to remain outside, but soon the night is dark and cold, and, for health's sake, he must enter the car. There amid the tobacco smoke and the bad language he

waits until between one and two o'clock in the morning, getting some new insight into human depravity and the needs of human nature.

Again, he is sixty miles from home. He reaches the depot on time for the train homeward, due at six o'clock in the evening. The train is reported two hours late, and there is nothing better than remaining where he is. It is soon dark, with a brisk, cold north wind. The depot is the "section house," one little room, where about a dozen men are huddled. There is not a chair in the room. Some are smoking. Here, in one corner, three men are sleeping on the dirty floor. In another, two men are stretched out on a wooden bench. Behind the stove is a boy curled up on the floor, alternately sleeping or waking, according to the degree of heat. It was an iron egg-shaped stove for soft coal. The tending of the fire was left to those in waiting for the train. One would fill the stove with coal and shut the door. Soon the little room, heated like a furnace, would become intolerable. Then some one would arouse himself and open the outer door of the room, as well as the door of the stove. With the ingress of wave after wave of cold air all were soon shivering. Then another would refill the stove and close the door, and soon they would be sweltering again. And so they alternated between melting heat and freezing

cold for *seven* long hours instead of two. At one o'clock in the morning, at least one was thankful to escape by the coming of the train, endeavoring in thought to gain patience by regarding such trials as simply a part of the price of that Christian service by which the gospel of our Lord is given to the needy.

CHAPTER XXV.

RATION DAY AT AND NEAR THE AGENCY.

TWICE a month the government gave out rations to more than three thousand Indians at "the agency," thirty-five miles up the river. A party of six had planned a visit on one of these occasions, and on a beautiful midsummer morning we left our home as a part of this company. The skies were clear, the air cool and bracing. Three miles out of town we found ourselves at the summit of the bluffs, where the eye takes in the whole circuit of the heavens. Westward is the valley of the Missouri, with the Indian reservation stretching beyond two hundred miles to the Black Hills. On the north, an "ocean of land," a vast, gently undulating expanse of prairie reaching two hundred miles to the Northern Pacific Railroad. A like treeless expanse stretches to the Mississippi five hundred miles eastward. On the south is the "Big Muddy," sweeping majestically between the bluffs on either side, a thousand miles of its course lying within the territory which we call our home.

Yonder, on the bottom lands, is the Indian village,

its huts and tepees in full sight in this air which lifts up and magnifies every object.

The landscape, with all beyond which it suggests, forms a picture for the imagination to keep. But we cannot tarry long. Descending the bluffs by a road sometimes good, sometimes precipitous, we come to the home of our friends, who, as "foreign" missionaries, have labored more than ten years among the Indians at this point. Here we are received with the cordiality characteristic of this household. We spend two delightful hours visiting the garden (was ever such luxuriant growth of vegetables and melons seen before?), meeting with the Indians for worship in their chapel, enjoying the Dakota hymns sung by one of the lady missionaries to her own accompaniment, and examining the Dakota Bible and dictionary.

But even here we must not tarry long, and soon with farewells and a fervent "God bless you!" for these friends fitted by nature and culture for the highest station, and finding it with joy among these lowly Sioux, we are again on our way.

We reach the fort, fifteen miles farther, about six o'clock. Pausing only for a friendly greeting with the chaplain and his family, we push onward eight or nine miles up the river, which we cross in a skiff, leaving our team and carrying our luggage on the other side, over the two-mile walk which intervenes between the landing and the agency.

The "Indian agent" receives us kindly at his door, which we reach late in the evening, and we are hospitably entertained for the night. Early next morning all are astir, for it is "ration day." Indian men, women, children, and dogs of all sorts and sizes, are "here and there and everywhere." Many tepees and covered wagons are arranged in villages on the open plateaus beyond and above us. Here one may see an Indian sleeping on the ground, with nothing between him and the earth beneath or the sky above; there, an Indian woman, nursing her child, sitting on the cold, damp ground.

A group of painted savages is gathered about the door of the agency, waiting for the door to open, and scanning whatever in sight attracts their attention. A quarter of a mile away is the slaughterhouse, where one hundred and fifty fat cattle are slaughtered in a single day to furnish meat for the rations. About this place the scenes are too degraded and degrading for description. The poor dogs look on with quiet and modest mien, in comparison with the savage men and women, whose greed would seem more befitting to the dogs.

We turn away to the office, where the corn, the coffee, the sugar, are given out. Each one of the motley crowd is watching for his turn to enter and receive his allotted portion. There are old and wrinkled

faces, and faces of bright and beautiful children. There are young women, sitting in the dirt as unconcernedly as their white sisters would sit on sofas and easy-chairs in the drawing room. All that one has read in books or seen in pictures has here its original in the untamed Indian life before us. We ask ourselves involuntarily, "Is this a dream, or is it a terrible reality?"

We are here to learn. In the group about the door of the agency, composed mostly of men under middle age, there seems to be all the activity of a political caucus. There are speakers and there are listeners. We look on in involuntary admiration. These young Sioux, six feet in stature, straight as an arrow, clad in their peculiar costume, with heads bare and movements unimpeded, are engaged in animated conversation. Their free gesticulation is worthy of a French orator; their dignity and grace would become a royal prince. Their expressive countenances, so human, so manly, so different from what one might expect amid these environments, evoked the instinctive questions, "Where did they come from?" "Who can tell us of the unknown histories back of them?"

Earlier in the day we had passed a small group of men evidently in earnest discussion over some incident. One of them seemed, by his violent gesticulation, to be under great excitement. At the office of

the agency we now learned its cause. This man had gone into the office for an interview with the agent, when he was rudely driven forth and disarmed. For what reason? Because he was painted! The agent, disliking the custom, had declared he would not do business with a painted Indian. And so, true to his prejudice, he had cast out the young brave from his presence because he was following this custom of his forefathers. White men might dye their whiskers and color their hair, but an Indian might not paint his brow and cheeks. The insulted Indian was, of course, offended. Our sympathies were with him. We could not believe it was any part of the duty of an official of our free government to refuse to do business with those to whom he had been sent, in trust, simply because their toilet was not to his taste. The case seemed suggestive. This was neither the first nor the last instance where the white man was the aggressor.

A happy contrast with the depressing scenes at the agency was waiting for us a few miles distant. A Christian mission school for girls is three or four miles up the river, and we are glad to join our friends for a brief visit there. The refined lady in charge extended to us a most cordial welcome. We were shown over the mission house and were delighted at the sight of many convenient adjuncts to a civi-

lized and cultivated life. It was the time of the summer vacation, and the girls of the school were at home with their own families. But, in anticipation of company from the agency on this ration day, the lady principal had invited five of her pupils from homes near by to meet any strangers who might chance to visit them. They were now gathered in the large room used in term time for the teaching of needlework and other domestic arts. They were between twelve and twenty years of age. The quality of their dress was inexpensive, but it was neatness and comeliness itself. In winsome and lady-like appearance these Indian girls were fully the equals of the average schoolgirl of their years. Indeed, but for the color of their skin, they might easily have been taken for girls from the better homes of the American people. They replied to our questions modestly, and in good English. They entertained us with music, both vocal and instrumental. They gave us some fine recitations of poetry — extracts from Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, and Christmas carols. The evidence of careful training worthily bestowed would have been a credit to any school. And these girls were of the same race as those we had left an hour before amid the wild scenes at the agency! It was hard to believe it. And yet, such are the results of Christian homes and schools for the Indians.

“Christian missions do pay; *they do pay*,” was our inmost thought, as we turned homeward.

It was twelve o'clock at night when we reached our home. Never shall we forget the object lessons set before us in this visit to Indians on their own territory.

CHAPTER XXVI.

VISITORS AND A VISIT.

ALTHOUGH our frontier life was isolated as regards the pleasant associations of other times and places, our present situation, a strategic point on the picket line of missions, brought occasional Christian greetings which were highly prized, and they have left pleasant pictures in the memory. Among our visitors in one summer were a professor from Beloit College, a student from Yale Theological Seminary, two young evangelists from Chicago, the editor of *The New York Independent*, a well-known pastor of a church in Boston, the western editor of *The Congregationalist*, a prominent pastor from Michigan, with a business man from his church, and others, including on one occasion ten or fifteen converted Indians. It was a sincere pleasure to welcome each and all of these to our humble home in the little church.

In the young student from New Haven we found a rare geniality and genuineness of character, combined with such power of adaptation to special emergencies and unlooked-for conditions, as formed both

a pleasing example and a promise of greater things to come. He had come out at the close of his first year's study of theology to spend his summer vacation in missionary work. Such an experience is always a test of character. Our Christian sympathies went out to meet him before we knew that he had reached his appointed post of duty.

He arrived in the town of his labors on the Saturday evening train, to take up work which we had inaugurated by services already described. His first services were held in the dining room of that new first hotel, and here he remained over the Sabbath. His first meeting of these strange conditions was brave, and the services had in them much promise.

Anticipating his needs, we had wondered how he would succeed in finding a suitable room for study. One can always find food in these frontier places, if he have money with which to pay for it. But a room in which a minister can make a sermon is indeed hard to find. As we were his nearest ministerial neighbors, only thirty miles away, he called and took counsel with us a few days after his arrival. Although he was a stranger, it was a real pleasure to meet him, both because of the personal interest he at once awakened and on account of the special interest we felt in the work he had undertaken.

His need of a room, with no prospect of a supply, so far as we could see, was haunting us. Only a few words of greeting went before our propounding the question, "What are you going to do for a room?" Hope dawned upon us at once with his prompt reply, "I am going to build a shack." With western dialect the young preacher had evidently already made acquaintance. Its application in this instance held out large promise. Such a structure the young student saw at once could be built for a small outlay, and be utilized for a parsonage while he should remain. In a few days he had put up his unique structure near the railway track on a site loaned him for the purpose, near the edge of the town. There he slept and wrote his sermons, and there he received his friends. More than once it was our pleasure to call on him that summer. And if we were there with the hope of giving pleasant cheer, we were sure to receive more than we gave. As time and acquaintance progressed, we came to feel assured that the young student, who showed such power of adaptation to new and trying circumstances, would find open doors of welcome and of usefulness whether his lot should be cast "far out upon the prairie" or in an elegant city church.

He accomplished a good work during that vacation. It was my privilege to assist him in the organization

of one church in his field, and he would have had another, but for the unworthy arts of sectarianism. The summer over, he prepared to return to his studies at New Haven, sincerely loved and regretted by the people whom he was compelled to leave.

When all was ready for his departure we recalled the anxiety we had felt for him before his arrival, and our doubts about his ability to obtain shelter.

“ Mr. R——,” we said, “ what did your shack cost you? ”

“ Twenty-seven dollars,” was the prompt reply.

“ For how much have you sold it? ”

“ Seventeen dollars.”

And so, by wise management, he had obtained a shelter, comfortable for the time and place, for his whole four months' vacation, at a cost of ten dollars.

Our young friends, the evangelists from the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association, left also most pleasant recollections with their host. Soon after their arrival I united with them in a street service on the principal business street of our town at evening. They also held services in our little church, with good results. One of the young men was a lay preacher; the other, a solo singer. The latter was a German, converted in boyhood at Mr. Moody's Sunday-school, and was, in his first work, giving promise of abundant usefulness. His Christian testimonies were given

with great modesty and humility. His music had in it a wonderful vocal power and pathos. The captain of a steamboat on the Missouri, a rough, worldly man, carried him without charge on a two-hundred-mile trip, and afterward spoke of him as "a fine young fellow" whom he would be glad to have on his boat at any time for the good he would do. Often, since then, we are delighted to recall his sweet spirit, as we sing his own tune to the hymn, —

“ Oh, wonderful words of the gospel!
Oh, wonderful message they bring,
Proclaiming a blessed redemption,
Through Jesus our Saviour and King!

Believe, oh, believe in his mercy
That flows like a fountain, so free,
Believe, and receive the redemption
He offers to you and to me.”

The visits of the older brethren were much enjoyed — how much, none can know who has not experienced the peculiar loneliness of spirit which frontier work involves.

The occasion of the visit of our Michigan brethren, as of some of the others, was a particular desire to see something of the missionary work among the Indians. The Michigan pastor had chosen to devote his summer vacation to this object. With his friend, he called on us at the church, and expressed a desire

that we should accompany him to a neighboring station. This invitation we gladly accepted, and promptly made the necessary arrangements for the journey. The good team from the livery seemed quite a surprise to the brethren, who felt that they were on the utmost verge of civilization and could not expect its conveniences and comforts. Everything seemed so foreign to them that they scarcely looked for *anything* to which they had been accustomed.

The heavens were smiling a glad welcome; the earth was fragrant with flowers. Onward we went, over the bluffs, across the prairie, down the slopes of the gumbo hills, along the bottom lands of the river, until we reached the station. We knew that there a welcome awaited us, with care for our faithful horses also.

These friends saw with delight the evidences of Christian labor within and without. Over the mound of the sacred enclosure close outside the study window, and in the pictures on the wall within, linger the fragrance and the halo of a beautiful and sainted life here devoted to the lifting up of the lowest—an alabaster box of the costliest perfume here broken in love at the Saviour's feet. "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Besides the beautiful home in this house of logs, with its flowers and its garden, and the chapel, with its memorial pulpit and communion table, and the many objects of interest connected with the missionary toil of years, there are the homes of those whom this toil has lifted up to heavenly places in Christ Jesus. On the right is the home of Yellow Hawk — a few years before a wild Indian chief, but now the pastor of this native church, revered and beloved. In the light of the change in his heart and in his home, we can read his appeal, translated as it was delivered, about this time, at a meeting of the Indian churches and their white friends at which we were present: —

“We are glad to meet you, our friends, because you are our relatives. The word of ours we would have you deliver is that the Teeton branch of our nation is great, yet worshiping other gods; and as we are unable to do the teaching, we look to you for assistance. When you go to your meeting tell them that we look to them for help and strength. Tell them that we desire to have our people know of the way of life through the death of the Son of God. Just as you desire this life for them, so tell our friends it is the desire of us — as many of us as believe. I have spoken.”

Yonder is the home of Deacon Spotted Bear, and

yonder he is, harvesting his oats. His history and Christian experience cheer our hearts. On each of these brethren we call, to receive a greeting worthy of the apostolic age.

The social pleasures of the evening in the missionary household, the comfort of the night, the cheer of the morning meal and worship past, we prepare to return. The team is at the door, and having said our adieus, we stand without awaiting the coming forth of our visiting brethren.

Spotted Bear comes up to give us a morning greeting, and then, hearing the sound of music in the house, turns and enters. Soon we too are drawn by the harmony, so unexpected at this time. We reënter the sitting room, to find it indeed "a heavenly place." At the piano sits a lady missionary, touching the keys with the skill of an artist. On either side of her stands an Indian woman, both singing from Gospel song books in the Dakota language. Surrounded by a group of Indian women and children sit our Michigan brethren in the middle of the room, and here at my right is Spotted Bear. All are absorbed in the hymn and the music. What a scene was that to our astonished vision! As we came within its hallowed power the instinctive utterance of the heart was, "Out of every tongue and kindred and people!" At the close of that hymn we were

all ready for something more. A lady missionary present said, "Shall we not have prayer?" "Yes," was the instant response of the guests; "and Brother — will lead us." Three brief prayers were offered, two in English, one in the Dakota. Then our lay brother went about the room, leaving his thanks in a substantial form with each of the Indian children and their friends.

Finally on our way, the unexpected is explained. A company of Christian Indian women, with their children, had been seen passing the house at the moment of the first farewells of the guests. They were called in and this precious scene followed.

"That was like Peter's vision on the housetop!" said one of our friends. "That was nearer heaven than we ever were before!" said the other.

And the third gave thanks for this transfiguration of the Lord in the persons of his lowly brethren and sisters.

It was not far from this time that a number of Christianized Indians reached our place, on their way to the annual meeting of the native churches. They had come a long distance, and night overtook them with the last twelve or fifteen miles of their journey unaccomplished. The minister at once invited them to share for the night his shelter in the church, and they modestly accepted it. They had robes and

blankets with them, and cared for no bed better than the floor. The pulpit platform was carpeted, and the chair and pulpit were soon removed to make way for these dusky Christians. There were about a dozen or fifteen men, and all found room on the platform, sleeping there, side by side, the "sleep of the just"; while the minister, who happened to be without his family, slept well also, in his corner of the lecture room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MEETING OF GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

ONLY those who know what it is to live in the small, rude, and uncomfortable quarters which form the early homes in a new country can appreciate the courage and self-denial of the housekeepers in a community which invites to its hospitality the members of an association of ministers and churches.

To those who attend, also, there is always a sacrifice of time and money — often one of physical comfort, and sometimes of more than all these combined. I had, on one occasion, attended the meeting of a district, or local, association, which involved a journey of three hundred miles to reach it, and no less in returning. At another, the fifteen dollars expended in a shorter journey to the General Association could ill be afforded from the salary adjusted to meet the most pressing needs, without any thought of allowance for expense of this kind. And yet I could not feel justified in remaining away from such meetings. They were an important part of the work we were here to do. If ever the fellowship of ministers and churches has a reason to be, surely it is in the condi-

tions which surround both in frontier work. The time at length came when the minister and his wife were for the first time to enjoy together the privilege of attending a meeting of Territorial Association.

A storm of wind and sand was our first greeting, filling eyes and ears, and making locomotion sometimes unsafe as well as uncomfortable. But its violence abated somewhat at sunset, and a hopeful, cheerful company came together in the evening for the opening service in the new church.

Its pastor gave a hearty welcome. "Brethren and sisters," he said, "we are glad to see you. We can entertain you all, and would be glad to welcome twice as many." Then in a playful "aside" to the members of his own congregation, he added, "Brethren and sisters, I wish if there are any more places where friends can be entertained, you will be so kind as to let me know at once. The gathering from abroad is larger than I anticipated, and, in fact, we are a little short of places already."

Additional hospitality was forthcoming, although that already proffered must have meant, in most cases, a surrender of the beds and pillows of the hosts, and the preparing and serving of meals in the most crowded and embarrassing circumstances. Some families preferred to send their guests to the hotels. A good hotel, in the early years of settlement, is very

rare, and the hotel guests at these meetings usually have and deserve the sympathy of the more fortunate ones received by the families.

But we are all disposed of by this unwearied pastor and his generous people. A member of the editorial staff of a Boston paper gives thanks for the excellence of his accommodations (over a livery stable), and a missionary wife is grateful for a private room, though she hears the click of billiards and the voices of card players in the billiard room beneath her own from nightfall till daylight of Sunday morning. The young wife of a member of the "Yale Band" is domiciled, with her husband and child, in hotel quarters which do not invite description.

It is a cheerful company which gathers at the first session. The sermon is followed by stirring speeches, until, in the joy of companionship and the sense of the boundless opportunity for service into which God is permitting us to enter, we forget everything less worthy of our thought.

At nine o'clock the meeting closes, and we turn from our seats to greet a company of twelve, who have just arrived by the southern stage. A journey about equal in length to the distance between Boston and Albany has been accomplished by them in two days and an intervening sleepless night, with six changes of trains and two long stage rides. The one

lady of this party is nearly exhausted, but in wind and darkness she must still walk nearly a mile to her place of entertainment.

Reports from the churches next morning are no mere formality. Every one is eager to hear of his brother's joys or sorrows, his church prosperity or adversity. There is remarkable diversity in the theories of the pastors in regard to the quantity of secular cares and menial duties which may be made to minister to their growth in grace — remarkable unanimity in their declarations that in these new fields the only way is for the minister *to do everything*.

The best hour of the day is given to devotion, and a tender, helpful, uplifting hour it is. There are testimonies and tears; there is strong crying to God for a spiritual outpouring on all this moral wilderness. There is a communion season at the close of the Sunday morning service precious indeed, and not less so because of the sense of companionship in work and sympathy which comes like balm to the hearts of the missionaries who have toiled through the year, each in far-off isolation from his brother.

“A home missionary experience meeting” is extemporized for Sunday afternoon. By the suggestion of the good secretary who presides the best time is given to the older brethren, whose lives have been spent in home missionary service here and in

the younger states. It is not of achievement they speak ; they mourn imperfection, rather. It is not in themselves that their thoughts center, so much as in the good hand of God which has led them till they are here enabled to set up their Ebenezer.

“ I thank God for the friendship of Missionary Secretary ——,” said one. “ These thirty years, and more, he has stood by me like a brother. How glad I shall be to meet him in heaven ! When my wife was dying of consumption, and I had to give up my little frontier parish, and remove her where she could have medical advice, I wrote to the secretary and told him so. ‘ When I arrive in the city of C——,’ I wrote him, ‘ I shall be without a dollar.’ The returning mail brought his sympathy and timely relief. I was thankful to be able to work. I hired out to drive team, at three dollars and a half a day ; for I could do this, and watch with my sick wife every night. I got an average of three hours’ sleep in the twenty-four. So little, they said, killed Horace Greeley. It did n’t hurt me a bit. The church near us proposed to make me a donation. I said, ‘ I beg of you, don’t do it. I am able to work with these hands, and I am thankful to be able to earn everything we need.’ I have been called in the providence of God to bury all my family but one. I have little to speak of as the result of my life work. I rejoice

that God made my dear daughter, whom he took in her youth, the means of multiplied good. She called her young companions around her dying bed, and gave them her last messages. When they had gone, she said, 'Father, I believe my death will be the means of more good than my continued life would be.' A few months after, in a revival, fifteen of those young people were converted, who ascribed the change to the death of my daughter. One of these is now a missionary in Japan, and I bless God that, through the life and death of my child, he is now sending the gospel message to multitudes in that land."

Another brother reminded us that the disciples of old were sent out without two coats. "Thanks to the good sisters at the east," he said, "we have a better supply.

"Years ago, when I was pastor of a missionary church of twenty-seven members, I had a box sent me containing five hundred old Sunday-school question books, on which I had five dollars' freight to pay. The times are better than they used to be. I had a missionary box last year in which, besides comforts for my family, was all the clothing which I have on — *that is presentable.*" (Laughter.)

The superintendent arose and said: "We don't know anything about missionary trials in these days.

The work is comfortable now, compared with what it used to be. The eastern churches understand 'the needs better, communication is more easy and rapid, and the distinctive trials of home missionary life are largely in the past."

The last year passed in swift review before the mental vision of a silent listener. There were places where the way had seemed almost too thorny and difficult to pass; there were scars where the iron had entered the soul. The thought was, "Well, I don't know. What comes to us now is seemingly *all we can bear*. 'Ye shall not be tempted above that ye are able' is blessedly verified to us now; but the measure is often *full*. We cannot bear, it seems sometimes, a hair's breadth more. But relief always comes in at just that line. Was it less than this in the former times?"

A missionary rose on the opposite side of the room. The first home missionary in what is now a great and prosperous state, his life has been spent in the service which, more than age, has blanched his locks and bent his form, and planted a quiver in voice and hand. The sweetness of a benediction fell on the meeting with the sound of his voice.

He said: "I have ever found the service a joy and the compensations abundant. And those missionary boxes have *always* come laden with blessings.

What we should have done without them I cannot think. I do not mourn that more has not been done for me. I have much occasion to fear that if the friends at the east only knew how poor my work has been, and how imperfection and sin have marred it all, they would feel dissatisfied with it and me."

The quick tears sprang, and a hush of tenderness came over us all. There was a little space when words were not wanted.

A cold rain storm had prevailed during the three days of the meeting. Seldom was a storm ever less thought of. The line of the old hymn, —

"December's as pleasant as May,"—

came nearer to verification than some of us ever knew before. The altar fires of this missionary gathering were brightly burning, and they grew more radiant and warmth-giving to the last. Sunday evening came the farewell words — light good-bys and hearty anticipations for the work to which we were about to return, girded anew by the privileges here enjoyed.

A member of the "Yale Band" had driven to this meeting, a hundred miles or more, in his own conveyance, accompanied by his wife and little daughter, their only child, sixteen months of age. In health when they left home, and with delightful weather, the long journey had been a pleasant one. But in

the narrow chamber at the hotel the little one sickened. In the stormy Saturday afternoon the mother took her, at the invitation of a neighboring pastor and former classmate, to his home, where, though many miles distant, the little one could be better cared for. She brightened, and played at evening with the children of the family. But in the night symptoms of fatal disease alarmed the mother and her friends. A telegram, "*Baby is worse,*" reached the father as he sat with his brethren in the Sunday morning meeting in the church. No train could take him to his child until Monday morning. Monday noon, when the train bringing the anxious father was in sight, the little one closed her eyes on earthly things; and the missionary father and mother met, childless, in the parsonage of their kind friends, with all others about them strangers.

Ere the day was past, others from the meeting came thither on their homeward way. Here we had to spend the night before we could resume our journey. Expecting to find our way to a hotel, we were met at the station by the good pastor and some of his people, intent on hospitality. "Three gentlemen and a lady *en route* from the meeting," they were looking for, they said.

Here was the venerable friend whose words had so touched our hearts in the "missionary experience

meeting." Here was a young English brother, come within the year from the mother country, to share the trials and the joys of a frontier pastorate. Here was Yellow Hawk, dumb in English, but eloquent in the language of Canaan, the faithful and beloved pastor of a native church which belonged to this association. The three were found, and assigned to the care of Christian friends. A carriage was in waiting for the missionary wife, whose escort to the meeting had been called by privilege and duty to take an opposite direction at its close. Her husband had requested her to take Yellow Hawk in charge for the long homeward journey, as the Christianized chieftain spoke no English. Rather timidly she had consented to this responsibility, only to find that the courtesy and good sense of her charge relieved her from all anxiety on his account, and that she was actually traveling as the one to be cared for by this chivalrous, dark-complexioned gentleman of the aboriginal name.

The pastor, in waiting at the train, explained that the carriage would take the privileged guest, not to his own house, as he had expected, — that was the abode of sorrow now, — but to the care of a lady who, with her husband, would gladly welcome the wayfarer. Gratitude for such Christian kindness spoke from eyes rather than lips. An introduction,

a glance at the transparent young countenance which welcomed us for Christ's sake, we knew, — although it was not said, — and we were at once at home.

After a few moments, being left alone for a little, we bestowed a look on our surroundings. Books indicating intelligence, refinement, scholarship, on the part of their owners, were on the shelves. Here on the table was a portfolio of photographs — copies of famous pictures in the Dresden gallery. The Good Samaritan had ministered unto us in this far land, not in an inn, but in a cultured Christian home. In an hour hostess and guest were as old friends. Many acquaintances they had in common, and a sudden turn in the conversation disclosed the fact that their sisters had married cousins in an eastern city. But we must not linger on the unexpected friendship thus formed with this young wife and her husband, both college graduates, who, after a frontier training by a few years' residence in Montana, had been providentially brought here, to be a comfort and a help to this pastor and his church, a bulwark of strength to all good enterprises.

Not for a moment had we forgotten that across the street our brother and sister mourned their dead. The train was to leave at nine o'clock in the morning, the pastor told us, and before this there would be a service of prayer at the parsonage, to which we were invited.

In the little parlor, around the small coffin box, a missionary company we stood, while the chastened words of prayer from the lips of Father E—— upbore our spirits, and the sympathy of our Elder Brother distilled upon aching hearts. Then the little missionary procession, in four carriages, wended its way to the station, and busy villagers paused to inquire what it all meant.

What a brave journey homeward was that which these bereaved parents were taking! Serenely they talked of the little one and her last hours; and then, though sudden tears would sometimes mount to the mother's eyes, they talked of the work they loved, on the altar of which, with no touch of conscious heroism, they were making a costly sacrifice.

“Here,” said the father, as we journeyed, “is the place where I spent the night alone on the open prairie. I was ‘prospecting’ missionary work while still a student in Yale Seminary. It was in summer vacation, three years ago. I came to this part of the country, got a pony, and set out to find the best places for missionary work. I left N—— after tea, on a hot summer day, thinking to ride northward along the river and to spend the night at a railway construction camp I expected to find not far above. But after hours of riding no camp appeared, and I diverged from the trail, not daring, however, to

wander far. Failing to find any trace of humanity, I concluded I must spend the night alone. I tied my pony" —

“ To what? ”

“ A knot of bunch grass, took my saddle for a pillow, and lay down on the bare ground, with my little saddlecloth for a covering and the stars for a canopy. I journeyed over the country that summer, took back to New Haven a good report, and the next spring seven of us formed the ‘ Yale Band, ’ to enter in and help possess the land. ”

Leaving the stricken parents to each other for a time, we turn to Father E——, to inquire about his family, his work, and the new college, of which he is a trustee. He is hopeful for his parish and for the college. We ask about the school privileges of his children. They are attending school, but *reciting to him*, he says, as their opportunities at school are not what their advancement demands. He wished to send two of them to the new college, — not far, for this country, from the place where he resides, — but had been disappointed. The expense was more than he could meet. The boy might, perhaps, find a place where he could defray, by work, the chief expense, — that of board, — but a girl at work never knows when her time is her own. His daughter was not able to meet a double demand on her time and strength, and so they were both at home.

This question of the education of their children — how many a home missionary family is still pondering it with, as yet, no solution!

At N—— we parted company, the bereaved father and mother to lay their baby's form in their own doorway, in the shadow of the church on which the father had worked with his own hands all summer, and which will be dedicated in a few weeks, with added memories now, and sighings for

“The tender grace of a day that is dead,”

when little feet tottered to meet him; and the mother's heart must echo many a longing for the touch of a baby's “vanished hand” and the sound of a prattling “voice that is still.”

On, now, with Yellow Hawk alone, over scores and scores of miles, toward the setting sun and the majestic stream, beside which is our own dear church spire and the parsonage, toward the genesis and completion of which the frontier work of almost two years has constantly beckoned.

Pilgrims and strangers, as all our fathers were! Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Meantime, what comforts in the midst of trial, what hoverings of cloudy, fiery pillar, what

“Blessings undeserved
Mark all our erring track”!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GETTING INTO THE PARSONAGE.

IT was September when the minister's wife alone — for her husband had been called away by the voice of his brethren at the association — prepared to move into the comely parsonage beside the church. It represented something dearer than even a home after long homelessness; it was an embodied answer to prayer and a loving mark of tender regard, fresh from the hand of Him who said to Nathanael, “When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” The wife already knew that to her and hers it could be no more than a temporary home, for a greater need had appeared written on the horizon, which was to lead the minister, ere many months had passed, to give his whole time to the shepherding of the sheep scattered over these wide plains, and in the almost numberless new villages which had sprung up in consequence of the unprecedented immigration of the year.

Still it was a joy to know that the church owned a parsonage, and that it would be ready for the next pastor. Meantime, for some months it must

be occupied by the present incumbent. The house was a good one for the far west. It had been bought complete for much less than the cost of construction, and removed to the parsonage lot from another lot which the rapid enlargement of the town made more valuable for business purposes than for residence. It stood, without foundations as yet, on the pleasant hillside, supported by a skeleton of timbers at a considerable distance from the ground, awaiting time for their enclosure into a cellar, and for the fitting up within needed to repair the damage of moving. A maid-of-all-work was secured for a few weeks, and just then an invalid acquaintance from the east, handy with tools, sought shelter at the parsonage, in return for which he made himself abundantly and generally useful, in fitting up the pastor's study with library shelves and making cupboards, closets, and steps. There were six rooms, besides a little pantry, a summer kitchen, and an unfinished attic. How like a palace it seemed, in modest white paint and green blinds and with its bay window! There was an arch between parlor and sitting room which adapted it well to the afternoon prayer meetings, Bible class teas, and various little companies which imagination already pictured there. When curtains had been hung at the windows, simple carpets laid on the floors, books put up on the neatly stained

shelves lining two sides of the little study, pictures disposed on the walls, and our scanty furniture arranged to the best advantage, we experienced the deepest gratitude in noting the outcome of the trying contest with untoward circumstances which had been waged while we lived in the church, and felt that the unarticulated prayer of months for "three rooms to ourselves" had been abundantly answered, "above all that we had asked or thought."

Our family washing, hitherto sent by stage up the river to be done by the Christian Indian women at the mission, in default of an adequate supply of washerwomen in the town, could now be done at home. Our table could now be spread in a quiet room adapted to its use and served three times a day from pantry, kitchen, and cellar. Our family worship, retired from view, need not be subject to casual interruptions by the many calls of strangers. The little study was the gem of the house, and two bedrooms gave the unspeakable relief of privacy so much needed in illness or extreme weariness, and of having the luxury of a room to offer to chance guests for the night. No elegance in the city homes of eastern friends, not even the pleasures of dear homes of our own in other days, had ever blessed our eyes like the vista which opened on them on the evening when we took our first meal in the new parsonage.

On that evening the wife stood underneath the arch between parlor and sitting room, waiting to welcome the return of the husband after long absence; she looked on one side through parlor and open door into the adjoining study, where an easy-chair stood beside the window and study table; and on the other, through the open door of the sitting room to the table, where snowy linen and a few pieces of family china and silver were spread with shining welcome. That sight was a beatitude.

It was only at intervals that there was a complete family life under the parsonage roof. The pressure of the outlying work was heavy beyond measure, and this exigency in the religious supply of new towns which had sprung up by the hundred, like fungi, almost literally in a night, with its accompanying opportunity for work which might tell on coming generations, would never come again. "My kingdom for an inch of time!" cried England's greatest queen upon her deathbed. And *time* here and now was the golden hinge of the gates of opportunity.

In the parish the work must still go on, with the help at hand and such supply of the pulpit as could be obtained, while the perishing fields beyond must not be neglected. So in two channels the family life and work must flow on, occasionally reuniting, until the Master should send more laborers into the harvest.

Painful incidents are more frequent in new settlements than in the older sections. Though these are not wanting in the oldest and best portions of any country, the more rigid stratification of society prevents their being felt to such an extent as in the more loose and chaotic conditions of beginnings. Sudden death where life was expected; ruin of character where all seemed fair; scenes of violence; travesties of justice; unblushing vice stalking unclothed in public, — all oppress the spirit at times with a weight which is hard to bear.

A murderer had been confined in the jail not far from the church for months. When the time came for trial, he, with a dozen other criminals, whites and Indians, chained together and guarded by armed men, went and came daily past our door to the place of trial. One afternoon we knew that the evidence was all in, demonstrating the guilt of this prisoner without a doubt, and that the jury had retired. Very early the next morning, the minister, preparing firewood beside the church, saw a soldier in a fresh uniform, with his gun on his shoulder, striding by at liberty, with head erect. It was the murderer, whom the jury had set free!

One night, while moving into the parsonage, the minister's wife, sleeping on an extemporized cot in an unfurnished room, was awakened by sounds more

terrible than those of approaching wild beasts. In the midnight the heart's blood seemed literally curdled as she listened to the groans and shrieks of a woman, the voice coming nearer, and pausing, as it happened, close to the house. Those anguished cries rent the air until listening suspense became agony. One arose within the parsonage and cautiously opened a door. Straining eyes discerned in the darkness the figure of a girl robed in white, in custody of officers of the law, who were taking her towards the jail. Beside the vehicle in which she was forcibly carried walked another female figure, also in night robes. To her the girl was piteously appealing in terror, "Oh, mother, save me, save me from that dark place!" The terrible procession passed on, and the shrieks continued, growing fainter in the distance, until shut off from hearing by the closing doors of the prison house.

An elderly widow came during this year to reside in our place. She had left friends and acquaintances of other days in the state where she had buried her husband and her memories of a good home, bringing with her to the pastor letters of commendation, showing the high respect in which she was held. She was one of the most spiritual-minded of the little flock, always, when health allowed, present at the prayer meetings, and always ready to contribute of her little

store toward the support of the gospel. She had come, with her only daughter, who had left a good husband at the east in business, won by that *ignis fatuus* which allured so many women to this new farming region, where each one who is, or can successfully represent herself to be, the head of a family, as well as every single woman who has reached her majority, may file a claim on unoccupied land, build a "shack" on it, and, remaining there a few nights at intervals in the pleasant season of the year, establish at the end of six months a preëmption title. With her affectionate and devoted daughter, the good mother feared no evil. It only troubled her that the daughter, a church member at the east, now did not come to church. A social call from leading ladies of the church, with an invitation to do so, was received politely by the middle-aged, ladylike woman; but still she did not come. Time went on. One day, months afterwards, the mother called at the parsonage. Others were present, but the unconscious pathos of her face and attitude went to the heart of her hostess. Soon she came again, and asked to see the minister's wife alone. There, in agony, wringing her hands, and with the tears coursing down her wrinkled face, this gray-haired mother made known her fears that the daughter was fast nearing, if she had not already entered upon, a life of sin. Her

mother's remonstrances had been unavailing. At first ridiculed, now she was treated with contempt and abuse, where always before filial affection and respect had smoothed her pathway. Infatuation had seized upon this loved and cherished daughter, the only comfort of the mother's declining years. Doubtless the restraints of home and friends left far behind were loosened and temptation completed the outward ruin, begun long before in the heart. What could be said to comfort a mother in such agony? The pangs of life, the terrors of death, were naught in comparison with it. Together we kneeled at the bedside in our inmost room, and there poured out our souls in strong crying unto God for help. Again and again did this call for sympathy come, and sometimes the poor mother staggered under the weight of her sorrow, as she left the door of the parsonage. Outward help never came in those years, nor, to our knowledge, since. But "God is faithful," and gave in time the help needed by this sorrowing soul to bear that living crucifixion.

At first alone, and then for a time with only an inexperienced girl for companion, the first weeks in the parsonage brought physical and mental strain, sometimes in ways at which we smile in the review, but which at the time were real trials of endurance and faith. The parsonage stood "on stilts," waiting

for workmen to put in the foundation when they could be had. A porch ran along the front side, its floor elevated about a foot above the ground, while the descending hillside left a clear elevation of six or eight feet in the rear.

One night slumber was broken by strange, loud noises — heavy stamping as in our very ears, and trembling of the house. Bewilderment gave way to amusement when we were sufficiently awakened to collect our thoughts and reason out the situation. A small drove of horses, turned out to shift for themselves, had been wandering in the vicinity for days. The night was cold, with a keen autumn wind sweeping over the bluffs. The horses had sought the protection of the unfenced parsonage, and taken possession of the porch!

An occasional howl of the coyote did not disturb us, especially if the discharge of a neighbor's gun of an evening told us that the wolf was seen and pursued. The animal was neither strong enough nor bold enough alone to do much damage within the precincts of our "city." It was evil in human shape that had most power to inspire fear.

One night the wife lay down on her cot in the unfinished parsonage. With the husband absent, and the house strange, there was yet no thought of fear; but thankfulness filled the heart for the roof over her

head, and the prospect of a real sleeping room ere-long. Suddenly, in the deepest hour of the night, noises were heard, as of stealthy human footsteps and crafty movements, in the open spaces beneath the house. Like a wild beast descending on its prey, the fear which always crouches in ambush in a new country fastened its fangs on the heart. A moment's paralysis was followed by tumultuous throbs and a choking of the throat. Then a calm fell on the spirit — not the calm which knew no danger, nor which imagined it had passed away; but the calm which believed that God was her keeper, and that his hand would protect her, alike when menace was separated from her only by a thin floor, and when, without fear, the peaceful night enveloped her in quiet slumber. Absolutely superior to fear of every kind was that deliverance of the spirit; the heart throbs were instantly stilled, and peaceful sleep followed at once, although ordinarily hours of wakefulness would have followed such alarm. The fact that danger was there was not doubted; the greater fact of being instantly sheltered, in the midst of tumultuous fear, under the safe shadow of the divine Presence, will ever be gratefully remembered.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A VISIT. — MISSIONARY BOXES.

ON account of preoccupation, and separation by long distances, the privilege of a visit between the families of home missionaries is of rare occurrence. The first such opportunity occurred to us on the way to a meeting of an association and a church dedication. We planned for an extra day in going, in order to stop over at the village of T——, to make the coveted visit and confer about a missionary organization. In the missionary meeting at the church zeal was all aglow when the host called for us. It was at sunset of a cold November day, and he drove us to his home across a mile or more of bleak moorland, behind frisky Indian ponies. This home had been won from virgin prairie within the past three years. We had heard of the hardships of this pastor and his family, and were hardly prepared to find a comfortable looking house on our arrival. We were glad to find a glowing coal-stove on our entrance to the family room. We were introduced to the grandmother, a lady stately under the weight of more than eighty-five years, and

bearing indications of a character which might fitly stand as a representative of the best which Massachusetts birth and Puritan training can show. A gentle face and voice are accompanied by a manner which might grace far different scenes, and by a thoughtfulness for others which is nature's highest patent of nobility. Her heart is not left behind in her native Berkshire hills, or in the well-known college town where she spent the years of her strength. She "likes the west well," and rejoices in the fact that she "cannot go anywhere that she does not seem to find friends." Dear heart! as we look at that face, and listen to that voice, and catch the youthful enthusiasm which mingles with the mellowness of these utterances, we do not wonder that the friendships multiply faster than the years are added or the life scenes changed.

The thermometer is sinking, and the wind is rising. Only the host and his brother missionary venture out over the mile of prairie to the evening meeting. The hostess and her remaining guest are glad to sit beside the fire. One by one, other members of the family retire, and we are left alone. What a sense of luxury comes over the tired traveler, in her rocking chair in the warm corner! There is a rag carpet on the floor, which, in the lamplight, has a soft look of many hues in one. It was all *knit*, not woven,

by these slender, patient fingers, before looms and carpet weavers had arrived in this new land. On a stand in the corner, strewn with writing materials, is a tiny portable writing desk, in drab enamel, with a blue lining. It is the one thing fresh and new in the room, and bears a sense of comfort to the observer because it speaks of the possibility of one little investment beyond the barest necessities and most pressing wants of everyday life. Then we remember that its possessor has the gift which speaks sometimes in sweet rhyme and rhythm, and that she is corresponding secretary of a woman's temperance organization which has helped to save a county larger than a small state, as fair and fertile as the best in any land, from the curse of licensed rum.

We talk at first of plans for the missionary organization which the evening's cold and darkness had surprised unfinished. Then we go to the window and watch the lines of fire and the lurid smoke clouds from the burning prairie a mile or two away. In darkness and cold, a line of fire speeding along on the wings of the wind has a fearful look. "We are in no danger," says the hostess. "Our fire breaks are all plowed around the house and barn, except one knoll that was too stony, and the wind is not in the direction to sweep the fire through that." How slight seems the protection of a few furrows of plowed land,

and the constancy of the inconstant wind! But we know that a practised eye scans the horizon, and an accustomed ear listens to the direction of the wind, and we possess our souls in peace.

“ You have sometimes been in great danger from prairie fires ? ”

“ Oh, yes! Once Mr. C—— set a fire to burn over a little space around the house, and thus protect us from great fires by consuming the dried grass which might feed the flames, if left standing near the house. The wind was slight, and in a direction to take the little fire and smoke away from us. About my household duties, I suddenly heard him cry out, and I knew there was trouble. The wind had changed, as in an instant, and was blowing strongly from the opposite direction. Then we had to struggle—for life perhaps, certainly for our shelter and all we had that could burn. Quicker than I can tell the tale, the roaring flames were sweeping toward the house. I carried water to him, as he fought the fire, until, even in the excitement, I felt my strength failing. He fought it three quarters of a mile, I carrying water to him all the while. Once I found him bent over, his consciousness seemingly gone, until I roused him. M——, a girl of fifteen, fought it with a mop, wet at first, but after the water was gone, and the heat had made it dry, she used it as a weapon, and very effective it

was. When the mop was worn out she substituted her dress skirt, and fought with that until it also was worn and burned to shreds ; but the fire was conquered, and our home was saved.”

This pastor and his family were in their rudimentary house that memorable winter of unusual severity, when the first blizzard came in October, followed at frequent intervals by others, until the whole country was imprisoned in snowdrifts and in chains of extreme cold. Scant supplies of food or fuel had been laid in, and the whole winter through many a family had kept one person constantly grinding wheat in the coffee mill in order to supply the “graham” meal, which was their only provision against starvation ; another had to be constantly at work procuring hay for fuel, which another had to twist and crowd without intermission into the stove. When the supply of hay grew short, because of the fearful storms and deep snows, then the shelter of the cattle had to be demolished and the scanty boards torn from floors and enclosures of houses to feed the hearth fires.

We had heard of the sufferings of this family in that dreadful winter, but now learned some additional details. In answer to a question, the hostess said : “ In that long winter we took refuge in books, when the intense cold permitted us to remain out of bed. Often we spent whole days in bed, for the sake of the

greater warmth. When about the house we suffered from the cold, although wearing coats, caps, hoods, cloaks, mittens, and arctic overshoes.

“One night I was reading aloud to my husband from Jean Ingelow. It was the story of the poor woman who listened to the sleet as it drove through the crevices of her uncomfortable dwelling, and fell upon the fire. I paused in the reading, and there was the same sound — the snow driven through the sides of our house, and falling with a hiss upon the stove.”

Reminiscences such as these were now suggested by the cold wind blowing more and more fiercely as the evening wore on; but how changed this scene from that our hostess was describing! The house was now a comfortable one of several rooms, not plastered, it was true, but finished inside with sheets of stout manilla paper. This was not uncomely, although it gave the mice a better opportunity than they were entitled to. Here were many comforts of life, though not its elegancies. In the guest chamber was a comfortable bed, a bright new hemp carpet, an extemporized washstand, a chair, and a square table in scarlet drapery, on which we set our lamp, and congratulated ourselves on such good quarters. The feeling which gave rise to this expression was rather one of gladness that these much-enduring missionaries had so comfortable a room to offer to their guests.

The ingenuity of construction in the scarlet table came in for second thought. It was a barrel draped with drugget, with an open box about a yard square and a foot in depth turned, bottom upward, over the barrel, and covered with red flannel and black fringe.

No smell of fire came near that part of the house, and we were in the north chamber. The house trembled in the gusts which were still rising, and the room was so cold that we thought shiveringly of the bed. But blessings on the kind hands that had provided the blankets we found there! They were warm and soft, and assured us the sleep that would have been impossible without them. In the morning a little drinking water which we had placed at the head of the bed, fortunately in a tin cup, was frozen solid, and ablutions in the temperature of the room were impossible.

Though the cold was so severe, we gladly set our faces toward the further journey that day, for the church dedication was a privilege not to be neglected, even though the wind and the thermometer conspired against us. It was the dear church which was our first love, the foundations of which had been laid by the help of the minister's own hands. As we made ready, donning one layer of wraps after another, the hostess offered a long gray circular cloak, with a hood and pretty clasps. We had noted the graceful and becoming effect when she had worn it the day before.

Giving expression to our admiration of the warm and handsome garment, so suited to her figure, we learned that it had recently come to her in a missionary box from the east, and again we blessed the good women who, with strong faith and skillful hands, had been a means of such blessings to this household.

A similar box had been sent to our own church home the year before. It had contained bed and table linen, which was to prove a perennial blessing, with clothing which was indeed welcome, including a new dress of soft gray serge, and a lovely shawl which will be a lifelong treasure, besides a suit for the minister and a multitude of little things which only a housekeeper can appreciate. Another present of books for the minister, from a city Sunday-school class, will be ever a memorial of gratitude to the young givers and of thankfulness to God.

One barrel surprised us, alike by its arrival and its contents. There were two or three "shocking bad hats," rather worse, probably, in appearance when they arrived than when removed from attic or woodshed to the missionary package; two cast-off bonnets just as they had been worn a long time before, and a quantity of secondhand clothing, which the minister gathered up in his arms and took, after dark, to the nearest washerwoman, a widow with a large family of children. We were grateful for any

kind intention of the donors, sorry that the money paid for freight had not been put to better use, and glad that we could find any one to whom we were not afraid to offer them. Good secondhand clothing can always be utilized in a missionary family, but that which merely lumbers an attic is better disposed of in some other way. The box which had come to the household we were visiting would have been ever remembered with thanksgiving if it had contained only those blessed blankets and that pretty cloak, but there were other things, smaller in cost, which equally filled vacant niches in the family economy; and the box was like an oasis in a desert, to be remembered while life lasts as a precious relief in the pilgrim journey.

CHAPTER XXX.

THANKSGIVING. — CHRISTMAS. — IMPROVEMENTS.

IT was cheering to note manifestations of the Christian spirit in the new circumstances which surrounded many a family.

In one country neighborhood lived a family who had brought Christian character with them into the hardships of a life in strange contrast to the refinements and privileges of the suburban church they had left and the society in which they had moved. They were the leaders in Christian enterprise among their country neighbors.

There were many homes in sight from their door where no Thanksgiving dinner would be prepared, and no voice of thankfulness arise. Thanksgiving services were appointed in the schoolhouse near their door, and all these neighbors invited to unite in Thanksgiving festivities in this Christian home. Larger than most pioneer homes, because of the large family domiciled there, it was still a "first" dwelling, not elegant, to say the least, in proportions or adornment. But its large-hearted, open-handed Christian hospitality became proverbial. The neighbors gathered to the

Thanksgiving dinner, some of them won to the preceding service by this invitation; others rejoiced to bear their part in Christian ministries with these beloved friends. Contributions to the feast came with every fresh arrival, but the table service, the general arrangements, the tea and coffee, and many another addition, were the joyful care of the mother and hostess, and a few volunteer helpers. The voice of petition and of song sanctified the feast, and another Christian milepost was set up in this new land.

Seventy-five miles, "as the crow flies," from this scene — only a neighborly distance in a territory larger "than the combined areas of Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Vermont, Rhode Island, New York, Maryland, two Massachusetts, three Delawares, three Connecticuts, and a half dozen Districts of Columbia, all united in one" — there was another Thanksgiving scene, in which the actors were also our friends and acquaintances. A husband, with his wife and family, had removed from a great city to their new abode, capacious beyond most, on lands over which buffaloes had but lately roamed by thousands. They became members and helpers in a village church but a few miles from their residence. Their hearts went out to the dwellers on the prairie around them, who did not go to church, and had no place for school

or worship within attracting distance. All summer their residence had been the gathering place of a Sunday-school, which had often numbered sixty members present. But they could not rest in this. With the coming of the winter, something more must be done. In their region crops had failed through drought. But as an inducement to the farmers to provide some place for a school and for Sabbath worship, a daughter of the family offered her services as teacher for three months without compensation. The young men of the neighborhood rallied and built the walls of a sod schoolhouse, large enough to accommodate both school and meeting for the winter. That was the easy part of the undertaking. The hard part was to find money to buy nails and boards for floor and roof. But they drew up a subscription paper, and out of deep poverty raised sixty dollars for the purpose. So the building was completed with great joy, and the fair young schoolmistress duly installed. The school was overflowing. The parents hoped to make arrangements for occasional or regular preaching services on Sunday. When Thanksgiving arrived these had not been secured. Their hospitable home was consequently the only meeting place on Thanksgiving day. Of their village friends only the pastor and his wife were invited, but the country neighbors were all at the feast, wholly provided by

host and hostess. Homesickness and the trials of a new country were forgotten in the cheer of that social board, where sixty were served. Religious and literary exercises, impressive and interesting to all, took the place of the wished-for service in the house of God. The young people had their own special social in the evening, under the watchful, genial auspices which had made this Christian home a beacon toward which they had turned many a time before.

In our own parish there was to be the usual church prayer meeting on Thursday evening. In a new country family reunions, in the nature of the case, must be few. There is nothing, in most cases, to interfere with the profit of a devotional service on the evening of Thanksgiving day. There are some reasons why a conference meeting is likely to be better attended and more interesting than usual.

We gathered in the lecture room of the church, a little company of some twenty believers, bound together as by family ties. Some could number two or three Thanksgiving days spent in this country; those who had been here longest could number four. Instinctively, thanksgiving for mercies past was the theme of prayer and remark. The leader thanked God for health to work in this vineyard, for opportunity, and for abounding joy in the service. A lady spoke of the great blessing her Sunday-school class

had been to her during the past year, and of the help to her own spirit which had been brought in the effort to lead these girls aright. Another, who had recently come, a stranger in a strange land, gave thanks for the providence which had cast her lot within the influence of this Christian church, and for the fellowship in work and sympathy she here had found. Another, a seamstress, expressed her gratitude for plenty of work and health to do it. To some of us this modest expression was touching, as we remembered the lovely spirit in which this dear friend had made profession of her faith since the year began, and taken the vows of God upon her, in the ordinances of his house. A young man, who had lived for several years on the frontier beyond the reach of Sabbath ministrations, and, as he testified, had lost his desire to go to church, was thankful for the mercies of a year which had seen him renew his Christian vows and, in company with his young wife, unite with the church, in which he was now an active and trusted member. A teacher in the public school gave expression to her gladness in the Christian friendships she here had formed, and in many other providential blessings. A member of another Christian fellowship expressed a sense of comfort in the knowledge of the work of this church, and of these Christian people, and in prayer gave utterance to the desires of a Christian heart in word

and thought singularly earnest, felicitous, and comprehensive. Another rendered thanks for happy home relations and continued health. One year before, this man, past middle age, from his youth a frontiersman, and in doubt as to his fitness for church membership, had made profession of his faith and been received into the church. Imperfect apprehension of theoretical truth had cleared and crystallized into conviction before a humble self-estimate, and resolute and continuous doing of duty, until his growth in spiritual things was apparent to the most casual observer. He did not thank God for this, but we did in silence while he spoke. A missionary wife gave thanks for the privilege of Christian service: "Who am I, that such blessing and joy should be vouchsafed me? It is all of grace."

It was the turn of one to speak who had been identified with this church enterprise from the beginning, when, amid gamblers and prostitutes and frontier recklessness of every kind, this gentle Christian man, who did not swear, and kept the Sabbath, to whom the money and valuables were brought in times of exigency and excitement for safe-keeping by the worst of men, who heard and kept the confidences which came to him, was the one among seventy who could be trusted, and against whom no slander or distrust ever lifted its voice. He had been reading

lately of the early Christians and martyrs, of worship in catacombs and caves and hidden nooks, and his heart was full of thanksgiving for the privilege of Christian worship, with none to molest or make afraid. Some present remembered how this man had been the forlorn hope of a church enterprise in this place; how, on a Sabbath morning in the early days here, he would himself lug the chairs (and pulpit box, when there was any) from one new building to another, in search of a room where he might be allowed to arrange them and call the people together for the public worship of God. He had made the fires, lighted the lamps, kept the supplies of fuel and oil from failing, moved from one place to another, until fourteen buildings, many of them intended for saloons when they were completed, were successively occupied in advance for divine service. Year in and year out his fidelity was like a light in a dark place, and without him this church, which now is established and strengthened, would not have been. Only the patience of mother love parallels his faithfulness; only the self-abnegation of mother love can illustrate his self-forgetfulness. In this comely sanctuary he forgets the toils and discouragements of the past; in this improved and improving community, with its Christian churches, "as a city set on a hill," he gives thanks for its mercies, and seems to remember no more the vice and heathenism it is displacing.

Multitudes go down to death amid the besetting temptations of frontier life. But how potent are good influences here set in motion, and how rich and strong the Christian life may grow which enters into its opportunities for service in "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ"!

It is hard to close the meeting within the hour. As Christian joy overflows, metes and bounds are less defined than usual, and when we rise for the last song and benediction it is much past the usual time for closing. With a glow and cheer unknown for many a day, we separate. This meeting was only remarkable because the blessing of God was with it. Its incidents might be paralleled on many a frontier field. Doubtless many a story might be told of thanksgivings more notable and incidents more stirring.

Thanksgiving over, we began to look forward with the Sunday-school to Christmas. With the training which the literary society had given old and young, it was much easier than before to prepare a brief and excellent program for the Christmas exercises. We wished this year to beautify the interior of the church, whose bare white walls constantly invited decoration, and began in good season. Evening after evening a committee of young people met in the parsonage to prepare mottoes on a plan there made. Distant city friends had sent, at our request, alphabet patterns for

letters in beautiful "old English" text, and a quantity of crimson velvet paper. Thoroughly well made were the letters for the Scripture texts, appropriate for the walls of our sanctuary, cut by aching fingers with the patterns laid on pasteboard, and then carefully covered by pasting on this foundation the crimson letters cut by the same patterns. When all were finished and tacked on the wall, with pins shortened by pincers in a way not to mar the plastering, the effect was beautiful, one said, "as any frescoing in a city church." Wreaths of evergreen for the windows, trimming for cornices and pillars, and a handsome tree, procured by a special excursion organized for the purpose, completed our arrangements. A Christmas box had been sent to our Sunday-school by the children of a suburban school far eastward, who had contributed playthings, books, skates, and the unnumbered things which children like. These were carefully assorted by a committee of ladies at the parsonage, and some of them laid aside for poor children of the town who, as yet, had not been won to Sunday-school. Enough were left to hang something on the tree for every child who belonged to the school.

The occasion was one of less hilarious gladness than the first Christmas tree, but one of far higher real enjoyment.

Whenever anything was planned to interest the children, every soul in the parish, old and young, was interested. Men who never came to church on other occasions were always in the crowd which filled to overflowing audience room, lecture room, and vestibule, at the Sunday-school concerts, which were given usually once in two or three months, not as an "exhibition" of the children, but with Scripture exercises and music in which all the members of the school had part. The Easter concert had been specially impressive and attractive. All these exercises of the year had prepared the way for the accumulated interest of the Christmastide. When all was over our church decorations in Scripture on the walls were permanent adornments, grateful to sight for a whole year afterward.

This improvement of the sanctuary was not the only one. By various efforts put forth throughout the preceding year, a fine-toned church bell, wholly paid for by the society, had been hung in the belfry, which had previously echoed only to the winds. Now its cheerful summons was sent out for every service, far and wide, up and down that river valley, and across those plains. It was the first, and for a time the only, church bell in a great region, except one at the Indian Mission.

One improvement which the year had seen was

wholly unexpected. A kind lady in an eastern city, having friends in this church, had felt her sympathy roused when she heard that the edifice was without a carpet. A lack we had never mourned was soon supplied by this generous lady and her friends, in the gift of a roll of carpet in warm crimson, sufficient to cover pulpit platform, audience room, and lecture room. This was a genuine surprise. When it was made and in its place none would have believed that the atmosphere of the whole house would seem to have been so changed. We seemed no longer on a rude frontier, but in a comely house of God. A permanent cover for the carpet was made to protect it during the rainy season; but what a change in the requisitions made at the door for mat and scraper by the incoming congregations! Now the slowly accumulating funds of the "Aid Society" of the women were seen to have been well destined for pulpit chairs and a communion table, which, ere the year closed, completed the beautiful transformation.

The parsonage witnessed some pleasant scenes. One church social must be held there, of course, as soon as it was in order, as a kind of dedication. Then there were gatherings of the young people, by Sunday-school classes, that no one might be overlooked, with light refreshments, chat, music, pictures, and simple games. The teachers' meetings were

transferred to the pleasant parlor, while the circle was not too large to gather round the table and the study lamp. And the women's prayer meetings found here, in the short winter afternoons, new interest and cheer.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A FUNERAL ON THE INDIAN RESERVATION.

ANSWERING the call of the parsonage door-bell one morning, we found a man inquiring for the preacher. A little child had died, four miles out on "the reservation," and the funeral was to be held in the afternoon. The request for the services of the minister was of course met by a promise to be there. It was necessary to cross the river, partly on the ice, partly in a rowboat, and a guide was to meet us on the other side. At the appointed time minister and guide met on the farther shore — the guide a civil young man, an uncle of the deceased child. He was at the river landing for the double purpose of procuring the little coffin and meeting the minister. Seated in the wagon, we were soon off. Our way was up over the bluffs of the Missouri to the tableland, and then down another series of bluffs to a point in the valley of a tributary which rejoiced in the name of Bad River. To one but little accustomed to travel in the Indian country it would not have been difficult to believe that the distance was

double that which had been named. Yet the very wildness and strangeness of the scenes lent them a peculiar interest, and the way was shortened even while it lengthened.

Erelong we reached the plateau from whence we could see down to the river bottom where we were going. Two rude log houses near each other were pointed out by the guide as the place of destination. There were neither cultivated fields nor gardens to be seen. Only the wild buffalo grass, a few small trees along the river's edge, and the barren gumbo bluffs beyond completed the dreary landscape, in the monotonous light of a dull winter day. Arriving at the house of mourning, the minister was kindly met by sorrowing friends, father, mother, maternal grandfather and grandmother, uncles, aunts, and one little brother of the child who had been taken from them. An aunt, a bright and promising young lady, was a member of our little church, and we had often met her in our social and religious meetings. Through this acquaintanceship came the call to attend the funeral. The grandfather was an American, the grandmother a half-breed Sioux.

Following the lead of the grandfather, we entered the rude home into which death had entered before us. There was no carpet on the floor, nor was there a chair in the house. In one end of the only room

it contained was an old cooking stove; in the other was a bed on which the sick mother was lying. The bedstead had never seen a cabinet shop; it was made of a few pieces of rough board nailed together.

But the minister had already learned not to be embarrassed by such surroundings. The absence of chairs was taken as a matter of course. Seizing the nearest thing at hand, an empty soap box, he seated himself by the stove to warm.

The arrival had evidently quickened preparation both within and around the house. Soon the little form was neatly robed and laid in the casket. A few boards were brought in and laid on other boxes to furnish seats for the friends who were to be present. There was a thoughtful propriety in these preparations that won our respect and excited our sympathy. The hushed voices, the quiet footsteps, the reverent passing out and in, were worthy of more cultivated surroundings.

Twelve or fifteen persons were present at the service. One was an Indian, a fine-looking, well-behaved young man in citizen's clothes. Several others had Indian blood in their veins. When all was in readiness the minister left his seat behind the stove, to make known with a sympathizing heart the offered gifts of the gospel, so suited to the needs of these anxious, aching human hearts. There was none to help in the singing, but gladly he sang, —

“There’s a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar,”

and read the precious words : —

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. . . . The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. . . .

“Let not your heart be troubled. . . . In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

The reading was followed by a message God gave for this occasion. Then it was easier to pray than not to pray. As the blessing of our Lord on these sorrowing hearts was asked there were audible sighs and suppressed sobs from the little company.

When the prayer was ended there were no dry eyes in the room. Heaven seemed near. Rarely had a funeral service ever seemed more blessed and uplifting. Never had the privileges of this missionary “at the front” seemed more unspeakable. Never had he felt more truly how adapted to the wants of suffering humanity in every condition is the “glorious gospel of the blessed God.” As thus fitted to the wants of these suffering hearts, it was demonstrably God’s message of eternal love for all mankind.

Taking the sick and sobbing mother by the hand, the minister spoke a few words of Jesus and of the

heavenly world to which the little one had gone. Her heart was ready for the message. She heard with gladness ; her tears were stayed, and her nervous agitation quieted.

Soon we were walking with the friends, through the prairie grass and the withered stalks of summer flowers, to the little open grave on the hillside.

“All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.”

But no monument was here in this wide, unbroken wilderness, save the dried, wild, waving grass of winter.

The little procession turned away from the lonely grave in silence, which was broken by the convulsive cry of the little two-year-old boy, who could not know why his little brother should be left in the cold ground. He was borne homeward in the arms of an aunt, who vainly tried to comfort him as he stretched out his little hands toward the silent grave with the pathetic wail, “Baby ! baby !”

The ride homeward was one not soon to be forgotten. Three or four wild, rollicking boys, thoughtless, but not malicious or unsympathetic, shared the management of the reins, which were supposed to guide the two half-broken Indian ponies before the small lumber

wagon. The "load" was composed of the preacher and a young Indian.

The way was over bluffs and through ravines, a partial track here and there, alternating with no road at all. The feeling was as though out at sea where "sailing was now dangerous," and the words of Paul came to mind, "This voyage will be with hurt and much damage." Now dashing down precipitous bluffs, with the half-tamed ponies at a dead run, the boys laughing and shouting, on we darted through the ravines, to find a little lull, for breath, as we ascended the steep of the next bluff. Up again, the minister quieting his nerves as best he could, then clenching with both hands the hard seat on which he was trying to sit, as the team dashed downward again into the rough tumble of the next ravine. One might have supposed those boys fresh from a "Wild West show" or a war dance, instead of a funeral. And yet they meant no ill. It was simply that their wild, untamed life must have vent.

But three or four miles of such journeying was enough. The young Sioux who had acted as guide was a pilot for the somewhat dangerous crossing of the "Big Muddy." He faithfully found the safe trail over the crumbling ice, rowed across the turbulent mid-stream, and would not leave to return when he struck the ice on the farther side of the river. It was

now dark, and he must see that the minister took the right direction over the ice, and landed at the foot of the right street to lead directly to his home on the opposite side of the town. If the ride had given one vivid object lesson, the faithful Indian guide had given another on the *brotherhood of man*.

CHAPTER XXXII.

INCIDENTS OF THE WINTER. — A REVERY.

THE Christmas morning was one of cheer. The Sunday-school celebration of the evening before had been highly successful, and though tired, the workers were in glad mood. A number of friends and neighbors, one after another, called at the parsonage that morning to exchange congratulations, to talk over the occasion, and to “see the presents” which had been generously bestowed on the minister and his family. So it happened that the wife’s preparations for the Christmas dinner with which she had planned to cheer her husband were somewhat delayed. When the last caller had departed she hurriedly went to the kitchen, to make up for lost time. A closet in which stores were kept had also a trapdoor leading to the coal cellar. For the first and last time in the family history that trapdoor was left open, the confusion and excitement of the morning having caused it for a moment to be forgotten. At that moment the wife in her haste rushed into the closet, and in another instant was dashed to the foot of the cellar

stairs. Fortunately no bones were broken, but pale and bruised, and almost fainting from nervous shock, she was assisted to her bed, where she lay for days in enforced rest. One limb was so injured that a year elapsed before entire recovery, and for the first two months there was much suffering, although not entire inability to use it.

Early in the new year a correspondence with a friend at the east, a successful evangelist, had resulted in his promise to spend a few months in this territory, and now we began to look forward to his coming. In the absence of the minister during the autumn the pulpit had been variously supplied. Once Friday night had come, and no one knew how the next Sunday morning service was to be provided for. It chanced that a visiting minister arrived on the train that evening, *en route* for the Black Hills. An immediate call in the interests of the vacant pulpit revealed the fact that by a day's previous delay he was prevented from having sufficient time to reach his destination by Saturday night. Unwilling to travel on the Sabbath, he cheerfully accepted the invitation to minister in this church, and preached with great acceptance to the large congregation. In the evening a Sunday-school concert which had been previously arranged for derived enhanced interest from his presence and coöperation, and he went forward on his

long journey on Monday morning with the thanks of the needy church.

Another Sabbath, by invitation of the pastor, two lady missionaries from the nearest Indian mission supplied the service. They told the large gathering the truth about the Indians — how cruel were the prejudices against them, how hard their lot, and how great the promise of Christian work among these, their neighbors. At the close of the meeting many, business men and others, went to the platform to thank the missionaries for what they had said, to offer help, and to promise a better feeling toward the Indians in the future.

Another Sabbath was the occasion of the dedication of the second church edifice in the place, and by invitation our people united with the Methodist brethren in the joyful service. One blessing in these new communities is the public spirit which recognizes every advance as a public blessing, and which rejoices in a common interest in the progress of all good things on the part of the better elements in the community. The spirit of sectarianism, sometimes so harmful and divisive, had not as yet made inroads on the peace of this community. It needed all the churches it had, and all rejoiced in signs of prosperity.

At one time, before the holiday season, the missionary wife seized an opportunity to make a long-promised visit to stations up the river.

The quiet converse of days with the one lady at the Indian Mission, left, for the time being, in charge alone, on account of exigencies in the work elsewhere, was indeed a refreshment to the spirit.

The private room of the two single ladies connected with the mission was set apart for the privileged guest. How beautiful it seemed! The large, warm log house on the river bottom was attractive from without. Well made of hewed logs, with plastered interstices and inner walls, good chimneys, a flower garden in front, a fine, large vegetable garden in the rear, rejoicing in that rare protection, a good fence; cultivated fields stretching around and beyond the farm buildings, and the neat Indian church adjoining, with its spire and bell, — all told of a civilization which was the outgrowth of years of toil and hardship, by the side of which the self-denials of home missionaries seemed light. The surrounding homes of converted Indians were a cheering sight, even though troops of dogs and children, and occasional tepees, were reminders of the state from which the people were emerging.

This room of the guest was a happy place, not for the beauty and comfort of the embroidered sofa pillow, or the attractive little bookcase on the wall filled with choice books of poetry and literature, which might rest the weary toilers sometimes more effect-

ually than lounge or medicine; or the many little devices which here, like the fair Una, made "a sunshine in the shady place," a home in the midst of a material and moral wilderness; but for the fact that these were tokens of the love and sympathy of eastern friends. The spirit of Christian love, which made this self-immolation on the altar of devotion a joy instead of a sacrifice, this self-exile from the companionship of human friendship to find the divine Presence a perennial inspiration, and in the lifting up of the lowly a sure riveting of the bonds of human brotherhood in Christ, — this was the blessing of that visit. In the light of this blessing, the flowers in the bay windows, the books, the music, the cheer of the family table, the morning and evening worship, the vista across the intervale and the wide-flowing river, the converse on missionary experience, the meeting here of a gentleman fresh from three years of study in German universities, the prayer meeting of Indian women, and the acquaintance with a certain Indian child, — all fell into place, like the bits of colored glass in a kaleidoscope, to form a mosaic of light and color and beauty to be remembered with delight while memory retains its treasures.

A letter beseeching return to the field of duty cut short this visit, and, with a hurried visit to friends at the distant fort, we turned our faces homeward.

With a crack of the whip our four government mules set off at a canter down the long hill from the commandant's headquarters. A day and two nights we had enjoyed the genial hospitality of an officer and his family at the post, and now by the same thoughtful courtesy we were sent on our way. Riding in an ambulance, under the escort of an army officer and soldiers in blue, with the best seat, surrounded by the warmest wraps, is not very different from other rides; but the ideal differs, and the situation is novel. The most respectful and thoughtful care surrounds the lone woman in the lumbering but comfortable vehicle; responses to occasional remarks are ready, and information, when sought, is freely given. Conversation between the soldiers is free from rudeness and profanity, and is suggestive, in its unconscious revelations, of those strata in human nature which are in all conditions alike. An honest, incorruptible man receives unequivocal indorsement, though mayhap from tongues and hearts not unpracticed in deceit. A kind and thoughtful officer is "a regular mother to a company," though perchance open to criticism in other respects. Intercourse between superior and inferior in rank is without stiffness on the one side, while on the other, never forgetting a respectful manner. On both sides the feelings and instincts of a common manhood are tacitly recognized as the ground of interchange and fellowship.

After the first few miles of the long drive, the conversation drifts and eddies into channels which the listener does not care to follow, and she abandons herself to the luxury of reverie.

The situation suggests the variety of conditions which a few years of frontier life supply. The first, the second, and the third homes passed in view. First, there was the tiny cabin, smaller than the least of the bedchambers left behind in the large and pleasant New England house. Without paint, plaster, or chimney, the low attic allowing the low bedstead only beneath the highest pitch of the roof; the tar paper covering, visible and odorous between the rafters, and at once saluting sense of sight and smell and touch. Then came the advanced stage, of a year's residence in a church lecture room, with brick chimney, painted woodwork, plastered wall, and solid foundation, albeit with inlets for cold wind and ever-present dust that could not be stopped, and with lack of conveniences that sometimes sorely tempted to the conclusion that life has some situations which cannot be conquered. Then came the large relief of a pleasant parsonage, prayed and wrought into being before our eyes.

Not alone as to places of abode did this variety marshal itself into remembered procession. In food supplies, there was the almost entire lack of fresh meat during the first season; no fruit either; ice a

luxury not to be thought of during the long, hot season; water from the hardest of wells and bitter with alkali, water dipped up for washing from a railway ditch, river water bought by the barrel best of all; but never yet enough of any kind. Then there were the precious tea and sago and gelatine brought with us, no more to be replaced when the privilege of preparing delicacies for a sick neighbor had used the last; the variety of forms in which milk and eggs had been prepared, when these, almost alone, could be had, until the minister declared he was sure he had eaten a large pail full of custard in one summer. Later there was an abundance of ducks and wild geese, with an occasional prairie chicken. Buffalo meat, venison, and antelope were our daily food for weeks of the first winter, and as rare luxuries we had tasted jelly made from the "buffalo berry," the wild plum, and the wild grape of the banks of the Missouri.

Traveling was not all by rail. Now in a wagon, plunging through the sloughs, with terror, lest each one should prove bottomless; now lost on the trackless prairie; now on a flatboat on the muddy Missouri, with travelers, horses, and wagon in one enclosure and no seat; now trembling in a frail skiff, laden to the water's edge, clinging to the seat which a stolid Indian woman with her bag of corn had just vacated, but forgetting one's fears in the glory of the daydawn

stealing over landscape and majestic river ; now in the vehicle which has been the faithful companion of one of the Riggses and his co-laborers for half a score of years, which has had its experience of complete somersaults, with all its occupants, down the sides of precipices, and into gullies and treacherous streams, and which is the battered but still trusted survivor of many other "hair-breadth 'scapes"; behind horses now faithful, now noted for their eccentricities ; sometimes with treacherous Indian and Texan ponies ; sometimes as now, behind the most homely of mules.

Escorts have been varied too. Now with the honor of the "brave boys in blue" for a safe conduct, and the sight of epaulettes and swords for reassurance ; now a long journey under the care of an Indian chieftain, made gentle and human by Christianity ; now with a "foreign" missionary, who knew literally every mile of thousands on this frontier as though it were his hearthstone ; now with an army chaplain whom long years of experience had made cautious, but never afraid ; now with the reins in the hands of a converted Indian boy who knew, with the keen observation of his race, every rock and pitfall and steep incline of the road ; now with a stage driver who "cared for none of these things," but was wisely wary of sloughs and bridgeless streams : often without escort, in the company of men, alone, but, in all

the experience of the years, with no instance of the slightest offered disrespect.

We are fully embarked on the stream of reminiscence. A strange chorus of sounds comes reverberating through the memory, which bring vividly to mind, as sounds will, the phases of life with which they are connected. The wild shriek of that first blizzard, coming down upon us in our earliest home before food or dish were there; the fiendish soprano and thundering bass of the gusts, which for thirty-six hours rocked our dwelling and held us prisoners; the liquid note of the meadow lark, which was the sole bird song of one summer; the roar of distant storms in the night season; the low sobs of a mother at the deathbed of her child; the plaintive soaring of Christian hymns beside open graves; the shrill, despairing cry of a lost girl, hurried past our door to jail at midnight; the tramp of armed men, guarding past our dwelling, to and fro, day after day, a man on trial for murder; sounds of drunken revelry, the rattle of dice, and the click of billiards, all the night long; the whistles of the river steamer and the railroad train, unspeakably welcome sounds, linking one, in the first year, with civilization left behind — a medley inharmonious, but not without its strains of melody. The last refrain was the voice of a pack of hungry wolves which, on this very journey, had

assailed our ears in the twilight and caused our heart to beat with apprehension as we rode over the weird hills, in gathering darkness, for miles without leaving the almost human cry behind.

The review went onward. There were funerals and weddings, baptisms, ordinations, and dedications; sick beds and scenes of cheer; the first words of prayer from hearts which had come to themselves and the Father's house in want; there were expressions of Christian gladness and peace and joy. There had been comfort and triumph all along the way from the Source whence help and strength never fail, and which, almost in audible tones, and with never-to-be-forgotten tenderness, had said at the first, —

“Whispering softly, ‘Wanderer, come!
Follow me, I'll guide thee home!’”

A question from the officer on the seat beside us recalled our wandering thoughts. The ambulance driver draws his reins, and we are at the end of our reverie and our journey.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MISSIONARY RAIDS.

THE calls for missionary work in the new towns are many. Some distance up the river a place has been lately founded where ten thousand dollars' worth of city lots has been already sold, and it is time some one was looking after the founding of a church in the city that seeks to be.

The minister had reconnoitered the place already, and thus knew about what to expect. On the present trip, by stage, he had the company of a young man and his wife from Iowa. They had read the papers, and seen the circulars and handbills sent out by the real estate speculators. Won by the fine prospects set forth, they had boxed and shipped their household goods, including an elegant piano, and were now on their way to this promising young city, where they expected to find a home and make their fortune. They had arrived at the end of the railroad on Friday evening, and were in the Saturday morning's stage when we entered it. They were well-dressed, intelligent traveling companions, and soon disclosed their

purpose and destination. It was evident that they were without experience in the rough side of life, and were certain to be sorely disappointed. They had been misled by the exaggerations and misleading statements published, and their ideal city was, as yet, chiefly on paper.

The day was wearing away. The sun was dipping toward the western horizon when, on the summit of the bluffs, the travelers descried the river in the valley below. The minister had not described their "city," thinking it better they should discover it for themselves. They eagerly looked forth, expecting, no doubt, to see well-planned streets, lined by substantial business blocks, and avenues graced by attractive homes.

What they did see was the river's bed, the pale, withered grass of the bottom lands, and the barren, rocky bluffs opposite those over which they were driving. Answering their inquiry, a few new shanties were pointed out, set on the bleached and withered grass in the valley, about a mile and a half distant. They were to be pitied in their exclamations of surprise and the expression of sadness which mantled their faces. They were silent for the remainder of the journey.

At the door of the little uncomely hotel, it was hoped some one would be ready to welcome them.

But the party had all to themselves the barren, untidy office room, in which the fire had gone out. The landlord was absent, clerk there was none, and the landlady was preoccupied in the kitchen. Notwithstanding endeavors to find some one who would receive these strangers and assign them a room, it was a full half hour that they were left to their dejection in the cold office. At last the landlady came and showed them to a room. Soon the real estate speculators came in, to set forth in glowing terms the prospects of the place. But the iron had struck too deep into the soul of that sensitive woman. In the anguish of disappointment, her mind was already made up, and she would not be consoled. Once deceived by their representations, she wanted nothing more of them but to be let alone. That very night the young couple engaged their passage out of town by the returning stage. On Sunday morning we travelers parted, they to return to the east and the minister to preach the gospel where he was.

The morning service was held in an unfinished, vacant room. The subject of the sermon was the relations of the gospel to the business thrift of any community, and the manifold importance of laying the foundations of a new town in righteousness. In the evening service was held in an unfinished store in a rival town not far away.

On Monday the preacher took the Bismarck stage northward. After a prosperous journey he came, in the early evening, to a county seat, where he was to spend the night. It was picturesquely situated on the river bank, surrounded by high bluffs, and, for a wonder, embowered in trees. He had had for a traveling companion a genial young lawyer, who had heard the sermon on the previous day, and who was not without sympathy in this Christian work.

As usual, the hospitality of the hotel had to be sought, for there was no other to be expected. In the edge of the evening the travelers were set down at the hostelry, and met by a kind welcome, and soon refreshed by the warm supper, much needed. The remaining glimmer of daylight was used to "do the town." As had been expected, it was yet largely unbuilt, and without church or minister. Some intelligent men held the county offices, and were now doing their business in a rude building made of logs. This was the courthouse.

Some of the families were religious, and would gladly have preaching there as soon as the right man could be found. But as they mostly belonged to another religious persuasion, it was not wise for the missionary, even if he had so desired, to suggest a church of his order there.

By the time these facts had been learned, it was

ten o'clock, and the tired missionary prepared for rest, as he must set forward toward the objective points of his journey with the early morning. He had retired, when there was a rap at his door. When it was opened, there stood a messenger from the courthouse, sent by the county officers, requesting the minister to make an address that night to a congregation already gathering.

The missionary donned his clothing, and was soon ready for the service. The officials and their friends and acquaintances had gathered until the "courthouse" was full—an intelligent and most interesting audience, ready for the Word. To the midnight message they gave a most attentive hearing. The service was not as long as that in which Paul once preached by night, nor did any young man fall from an upper window to lose his life. But it was one to be remembered, nevertheless, by speaker and hearers.

The journey of the following day led up over the high bluffs, and across a rolling, treeless plateau, where were few signs of human habitation. Occasional valleys or depressions in the prairie furnished shelter for wild animals. Once that day a coyote, or prairie wolf, was seen, which fled as the traveler approached. He was fleet as a greyhound, and in size a little larger than a good-sized yellow fox.

A few hours' ride brought the missionary to the place he was seeking, where he found one intelligent woman filling the double position of merchant and postmistress. She evinced a real interest in the religious welfare of her own soul and in that of the community. As was his custom, in lack of other accommodations, the minister sought the hotel. This was the most unpretentious he had yet seen. It was a low one-story shanty of a room and a half! The room was sitting room, dining room, office room, and kitchen in one. The other apartment, a space about six feet wide and twelve or fourteen feet long, was against the side of the wall, opposite the door. A series of bunks, one above another, like the berths in a canal boat, occupied this wall, to the number of six or eight. Into one of these hard and uncomfortable places the missionary crept, to get what sleep he could; nor did it prove to be the worst lodging of his missionary life.

A creek or small river bed, now dry, ran through the town. Fed by the moisture sometimes there, some small trees clustered along its edge, and in a grove of these service was appointed for the next Sunday forenoon. The two intervening week days were devoted to a side trip, in order to learn the condition of settlements still more isolated. Engaging the services of a team and a young man for driver who knew the way, the missionary proceeded.

His route led through a town of prairie dogs. The soil was honeycombed with their holes over a space some three miles wide and five or six miles long. This was the largest dog town the missionary had ever seen. The little creatures sat up at the edge of their holes by hundreds, and at human approach, with a short "Yip, yip!" would disappear. It is said that these prairie dogs often dwell in the same dens with owls and rattlesnakes. More than once the traveler saw the dog and the owl at the mouth of the same hole.

This visit was one of reconnoissance merely, as the missionary knew nothing of the circumstances; but it awakened an interest which led to another visit a few weeks later, when on a single Sabbath he organized two churches ten miles apart.

Back at the village where he had left his appointment for service the following Sabbath, the missionary learned that the Right Reverend Bishop S——, from the east, was spending a part of his vacation in the embryo village and surrounding region. The missionary had never met him, and had no special reason to expect his presence at the Sunday service. But when the people came together the good bishop came with them. He readily accepted the invitation to share in the service, and remained also to officiate in the afternoon, while the missionary rode ten miles to preach in another village.

The pleasure, the uplift of soul, which comes with the effort to preach the gospel to the hungry and poor in spirit in these new communities, can be learned only by experience. This Sabbath, with one service in the grove, and another ten miles distant in a rude place built for a dance hall, will not soon be forgotten. Such opportunities for effective service lead the minister to feel that "*it does pay*" to be a missionary at the front. The eager attention, the sympathetic hearing, the cordial hand grasp, the "Godspeed" after service, seem to bring together the sowing and the reaping time.

The Sabbath past, the missionary looks homeward. He is forty-five miles from the nearest railroad station. As the running of the stage is uncertain he is glad to get passage to the railroad by private conveyance. A lumber wagon is going thither, and, seated beside the driver, he is early on his way.

It was nearly noon when the wagon came to a farmhouse. The driver said it was about halfway, and it would be wise to rest and feed the team here. He entered the house, to return with the good news that they could have stabling for the horses and food for themselves. After the horses were cared for the missionary entered the house, to find there a woman preparing dinner. It was a comfortable house for the country, and in the sitting room he awaited the announcement of dinner, haunted by

the sad face of the woman he had seen for but a moment.

At the table he wished to learn something of the surroundings.

“Have you pleasant neighbors?” (None were in sight.)

“Well, I don't know. They are good enough, I suppose.”

“Have you any meeting near — any preaching service?”

“No; and it would n't make any odds to me if there was. If there was one on every corner of the lot, I would n't go anear one of 'em.”

It was evident what that sad face meant. The preacher could only say, “Well, we all need the Lord's help. If we are not satisfied with our neighbors, and do not like those professing to be Christians, we must not refuse His mercy and reject His love.”

It was the end of the conversation. The travelers finished their dinner, paid for their accommodations, and went on their way.

The driver said the woman had remarked to him aside, “I did n't s'pose I was talkin' to a preacher.”

The next day the missionary was at home, to find that “the God of all comfort” had kept in peace those “remaining by the stuff,” as well as him who had gone forth to battle.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

REVIVALS.

THE work in the home parish was going forward. A young man had been engaged to supply the pulpit for a few months, and our friend, the evangelist, had promised to come to the aid of the church. Tarrying at one place and another by the way, as his services were called for by the churches, he at last arrived at the parsonage. A blessing came with him, and the joy of Christian service found at this time to some the highest sense of recompense vouchsafed in a lifetime. There were afternoon and evening meetings when the voice of prayer rose with new earnestness in the church, and new-found joy in God found expression in the testimonies. What a comfort was the privacy of the parsonage in these days of special interest! The preciousness of one room there will ever be associated, not with the family comfort to which it ministered so abundantly, but with the private interviews with individuals, which were there held by appointment. There the secret history of more than one soul was revealed to friendly sympathy; vows were taken in the intimacy of its sheltering

walls, which were nobly fulfilled in the presence of the public congregation; there conversations were held, the memory of which months afterwards was recalled by the kindling of manly eyes and the silent but sympathetic grasp of strong hands.

More wonderful were the known results of the labors of our friend in the dear church of our first parish. This had now come to be the center not only of a growing village, but of a large surrounding region. The time was March, in melting weather, when ice had been transformed into mud, and the sloughs were nearly impassable, the roads through them being overflowed with water from one to three feet deep.

But the spirit of God, in answer to earnest prayer, was poured out on that community. From forty to sixty came every day over the nearly impassable roads, from five to eight miles beyond the bounds of the village. The distances and the state of the roads led the families coming to the morning meetings to bring their dinners and their suppers with them, and, as no one was left at home to care for the children, the babies were brought also. One Sabbath it was said that the number of children under three years of age in the church was over forty.

A lay brother here, who had been among the first to welcome us on our arrival in the territory, now had

the burden of many souls laid on his spirit. There was a tiny room over the vestibule in the tower of the church which became his prayer closet. From that belfry, looking far out over the boundless prospect, agonizing prayer went up by day and by night — prayer which the Father saw in secret and rewarded openly. When this brother descended the long flight of stairs from his belfry, it was with shining face and the enduement of power.

Every day in the lecture room of that church the midday and the evening meals were spread by those who brought their provisions from a distance, and, as at the day of Pentecost, “all that believed were together, and had all things common. . . . And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread,” — not at home, but in the sanctuary, — “did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.”

The brother to whom reference has been made, with his wife, came five miles to attend the meetings; and he literally lived, for the time, in the church, going home but once in twelve days when the religious interest was highest.

The whole community was profoundly moved. The results of such a work can never be numbered in time. Once a list of nearly sixty names was written out of

those especially interested; names which we could hardly read for tears of joy; names we had learned to love in those earliest meetings and Sunday-school sessions held in the depot, the schoolhouse, and the church; names, some of which have since been read far and wide in the roll of the church militant; names, some of which are now inscribed on the roll of the church triumphant. At more remote, but remarkable, consequences we will glance in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A PROMISING BEGINNING.

A LETTER of inquiry and explanation had come from a stranger, telling of spiritual wants, great and many. He asked if the missionary would “come over and help” when the winter’s snow had melted away. The reply was soon sent: “As much as in us lies, we are ready.” Soon the weather was favorable for the proposed meetings. A journey of one hundred and fifty miles by rail, and twenty miles by stage, brought the missionary to the point designated.

He had supposed it might be something of a village. Three or four miles before he reached it, the stage driver pointed out in the distance the settlement he sought. It consisted of one sod building, used for the threefold purpose of post office, store, and dwelling!

Here the stage set him down, and rumbled on its departing way. Inquiry revealed the fact that the friend on whose invitation he had come lived on his “claim” five miles distant. Various unfeasible plans for traversing that five miles were being revolved in

the minister's mind, when happily the writer of the letter appeared in sight. Which was the more glad to see the other it was hard to tell. That hearty Christian greeting over, they two took their way over the swells and through the sloughs. Arrived at the home of his new-found friend, another sod house, the missionary was introduced to the five young lady daughters. One of these had graduated from the classical course at Oberlin the year before, holding, as was afterward learned, front rank in scholarship in a class of fifty young men and women. The other sisters, though not as far advanced in collegiate attainments, were not behind in natural gifts and graces. Two or three were teachers; all were of marked intelligence and force of character. The mother had "passed on before," and the father and his five daughters had come to try their fortune in securing government lands. Three of the daughters could make "claims" in their own right, and the family had thus together secured in one body between one thousand and eleven hundred acres of beautiful land.

As night was approaching, the first wonder of the guest — a common one in receiving hospitality in frontier homes — was how the family and the new arrival were to get through the night. To find lodging for a family of seven or eight, sometimes in a house of one room, rarely with more than two, seems a diffi-

cult problem. Here, as always, it was found that the "will" could find a "way." When the hour for retiring had come, the guest was conducted to a smaller sod house, some fifteen rods distant, on the "claim" of one of the daughters. It was cozy, with bed and carpet, stove and lamp. By dint of feeding the stove with hay, one of the daughters had thoughtfully made the room warm for the expected guest. If it seemed a little lonely, it was nevertheless a comely and comfortable room, and the missionary slept and awoke to rejoice in the light of the Sabbath.

As the hour for service approached, all were ready and eager to be in their places, and a lumber wagon, with a team of mules, was ample enough to provide conveyance. Arrived at the place of meeting, it was found to be the rudest of shanties, built for a grocery. A few rough boards, lying loosely on the ground, and sprinkled with flour, formed the floor. For seats there were a few rough benches and a few rough boards. The damp and chilly winds of March were pressing in through the wide open cracks between the unmatched boards of the sheltering walls. A small stove, with a meager supply of soft coal, did what it could to drive back the cold. The people came from near and far, until the room was crowded, and the preacher, willing to give all the room possible to

the congregation, had crowded himself backwards into a corner.

It was soon evident that the intelligence of the congregation was by no means to be measured by its narrow and uncomely place of meeting. There were present a large proportion of bright, refined, and scholarly hearers.

Account for it as we may, there are inspiration and uplift of soul to a preacher in these rude frontier scenes, which come but seldom in elegant surroundings and more formal services. As usual, when the congregation pressed close upon the speaker, in default of table and desk, he stood with his Bible in one hand and Gospel Hymn Book in the other. On this occasion it was an unusual privilege to "divide the word of truth" with such ability as the Lord gave. Lifted up to the heights of this privilege, with the bright hopes of immortality thrilling the heart, and with the verified promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," one soon forgot all that was unattractive in present surroundings. How often has it been so in other and similar scenes!

One month later the missionary was here again, to experience a repetition of all that has just been noted, and also to see an added interest among the people. On the way homeward he stopped over night with a

young farmer, who freely expressed his interest in the service. He was the son of a Congregational deacon in one of the older states, and he said, "That was the first sermon I have heard in two years." And yet he was a member of the church to which his father belonged.

Soon a movement was made to secure a better house for worship. In the poverty of the people it was with much difficulty that one hundred dollars was raised for this purpose. But so great was the felt necessity that it was determined to go forward and do the most possible with the money in hand. In a few weeks the missionary was glad to go up to the new house for the Sabbath services. If the new accommodations were not what we could wish, there was the satisfaction of knowing they were a great improvement on the old.

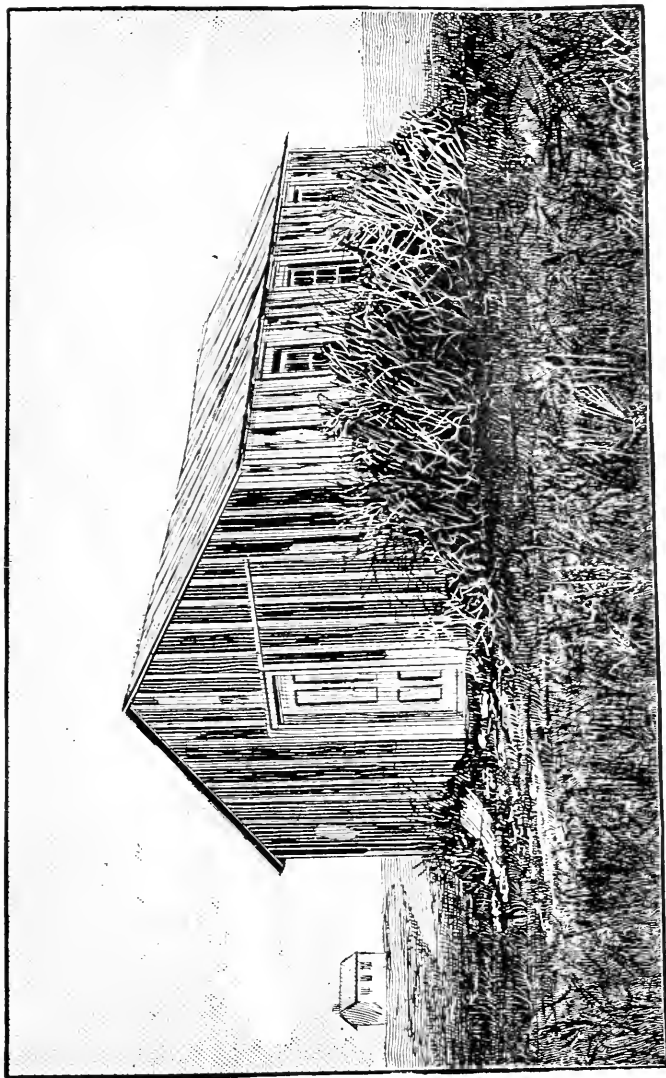
Of the outward aspect of the new building it is not necessary now to speak. The missionary was somewhat disappointed on entering it for the first time, on Sunday morning. In one corner, not far from where the pulpit would have stood, had there been any, was a carpenter's bench, beneath which the workmen had stowed away shavings and bits of board. For seats there were strips of board or scantlings laid on nail casks.

To the second Sabbath he was looking forward with

much interest, on account of special services expected that day. The morning dawned dark and rainy, and it was with some depression that he watched the clouds, fearing that the service might be prevented. "Many a cloudy morning turns out a fair day," he thought; and he remembered also the promise that *all* things, storm as well as sunshine, "shall work together for good." Soon the rain ceased, the clouds lifted, and the sun shone forth, it seemed, more brightly than ever.

A ride of two or three miles brought the missionary to the place of worship. On entering, he found that some of the nail kegs had been taken away on one side, leaving the boards slanting to the ground from their supports on the other side. The only hope for seats now was on what might be concealed in the pile of shavings under the workbench. The eager search, as for hidden gold, was rewarded by finding, at last, blocks and bits of board enough to pile one on another for supports to the seats. When the congregation entered they found the seats in readiness and the house in order. There was no need of anxiety as to the ventilation of the room, for the congregation could look out on every side, through the cracks between the boards, to the sky and the prairie. When the wind blew it was a breezy audience room.

In this sanctuary, such as it was, the missionary



A PIONEER CHURCH.

held services this day with real delight. There he organized a church of sixteen members; and a more intelligent company of that size was rarely, it is believed, organized into a Christian church.

That was the day of small things in that place. A railroad has since reached it, the community has grown, and the church has gone forward with its heaven-appointed work, the largest and most indispensable factor in the Christian civilization of a great region. Five years afterward—years of great immigration—it was still “twenty miles from *any* other church of its order north or south, and forty miles east or west.” At first it had been that distance from any church at all. One of the sixteen original members writes of its history as follows:—

“The people who compose the church came to get for themselves free homes. We came with very limited means. One man had one hundred dollars; another, perhaps, two hundred; another, fifty; and some, after filing on their land, had absolutely nothing. Many of us had come from Christian homes, where we had the advantages of church, Sunday-school, and prayer meeting; and we brought with us the desire for Christian worship. Early in June of the first season a number of the people met at a neighbor’s house and organized a Sunday-school. We continued to meet at the same place during the summer, some

coming ten or eleven miles with ox teams. Later in the season we were enabled to get the use of a sod house, some twenty by thirty feet inside. In this old sod house, with only two small windows to let in the light, besides the cracks in the door, with no floor except the black loam, we met, until the snow and severe weather made it impossible to get there.

“ We recall many interesting experiences in the old house. One good brother went one morning after a storm and found the house with two inches of snow over the floor. The stove and the hay, which we use for fuel, were gracefully wreathed in crystals. He brushed the snow off the stove, built a fire, and then, with a little board, cleared the floor. The house was in readiness for the congregation, and although the smoke puffed down the pipe so as almost to strangle us, we had a good attendance and a profitable service. Some of the sisters who used to go with oxen, and were more than three hours on the road, tell how they enlivened the trips by singing, studying the Sunday-school lesson, and sometimes by reading a sermon.

“ Early the following spring we reorganized the Sunday-school, using another building, more centrally located, ten by fourteen feet in size. Our numbers increased, and we saw it would be impossible to hold services here long, and so a plan for a union church building was talked of. But how could we build with

so little money? Each one was ready to do all he could. Still our means fell short of even enough to put up this rough building. God opened the way; for it was so ordered that one of our number, a good man from Illinois, received some money and lent us enough to make up the deficiency.

“It was pleasing to notice the interest that every one took in the building, and the feeling of ownership that each one had. Our ladies, who furnished the picnic dinner on that day, took as much pleasure in driving a nail into this building as some of our railroad magnates do in driving the golden spike. It was such an improvement on any place in which we had met before that we might be pardoned for a little feeling of pride.

“Then came the question, ‘What shall we do for a minister, and how can we support one if he should come?’ We found it impossible to do anything that autumn, but we kept up religious services by reading sermons.

“Again and again, we called for Christian young men from the eastern seminaries; but none would consent to take so new and large a field under such difficulties, and still we were left to ourselves. When arrangements were almost made with one would-be missionary, some drawback attendant on our frontier life, or distance from the railroad, made him give up the thought. Another, when about to come, was pre-

vented by ill health. *Finally, the conclusion was forced upon us that we could not expect outside help. We must depend on ourselves. Therefore we concluded to call one of our own number to act as pastor and carry on the work among us.*"

Is not this a repetition of the principles and the practice of the apostles? And is it any wonder that joy — that "joy of the Lord" which is "our strength" — came to one who shared, even in small measure, the privilege of helping such beginnings as these, and that he sometimes felt as though he were actually privileged thus to enter into the "Acts of the Apostles"?

Now this is no longer an isolated community. Railroads have opened up the country, and the church, in a comely edifice, is the center of a railroad village, with a greatly increased surrounding population.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BY THE WAY.

IN the “much land to be possessed,” only the more urgent calls can be early attended to. One came from “near the forty-sixth parallel,” and an appointment to “be there” was made. The journey was two hundred and thirty miles by rail and twenty by stage. But the stage ran only once or twice a week, and not on the day of the minister’s arrival at the end of the railroad. After waiting and watching for some farmer homeward bound, with whom he could catch a ride, it became certain that no such good fortune was in store for him. So he engaged a man to take him in a two-wheeled vehicle, paying two dollars therefor. It was a rough, uncomfortable, jolting ride, and he was glad when the end was reached. He was kindly received by a family whom he found to have come from the valley of the Kennebec, and from a town adjoining the one of the preacher’s nativity. It was pleasant to talk of friends and home, and of persons well known to both hosts and guests there on the unbroken soil of a new land, two

thousand miles from the scenes of their childhood. Here was a theological student from Andover, spending his summer vacation — a young man of promise, who had been doing a good work among the people. He met the missionary on the evening of his arrival, and together they planned for the services of the following day.

The student was boarding on the farther side of the river, and was to come over for the missionary with his rowboat on Sunday morning, which he did. Arrived at the other side, ponies were in waiting to take the two to the place of meeting, some miles distant.

Riding on ponyback was a thing to which the missionary had not been accustomed since boyhood days. But he managed to “hold on,” and made the journey in time for service. The ponies were ridden on the gallop as long as was convenient, either for the “beasties” or the riders, and then they were brought to a walk, and went quietly forward until fears of being late at the service would incite to a renewal of the gallop. At the end of the journey a rather intelligent congregation was found gathered for service in a store-loft. To them the Word was preached with gladness. Then the missionary returned by the help of ponies and rowboat to another service on the other side of the river in the afternoon.

Here he met a larger congregation, to whom he preached, and then proceeded to organize a church and administer the communion. To the great enjoyment of establishing Christian institutions was added, on this occasion, the special and unexpected pleasure of meeting in these new scenes a goodly number of persons not only from his own native state, but from the very scenes of his childhood and youth. It seemed like serving one's own people.

The day's labor ended, thoughts turned to the homeward way. Time was precious. How was the railroad to be reached twenty miles distant in time for the returning train next day? There was no Monday stage, and the farmers were pressed with the labor of gathering their harvests. The only hope was that the missionary might get a ride with a farmer who was going to the railroad station for a load of lumber next day. He lived two or three miles away, and was likely to start early. As he did not know of the wish to ride with him, it was necessary to start betimes.

At three o'clock in the morning the missionary was up and ready, with valise packed and a cold lunch in lieu of breakfast. The young student brother was to come over the river and accompany him to the railroad, but was not there at the time agreed upon. The missionary looked and waited in vain. As he

had a heavy valise, and knew not how long the delay might be, it seemed best to start alone. All nature was yet silent, but the day was beginning to dawn, as he set out to trudge over the way, with valise in hand. In sight, at last, of the farmer's, he saw that worthy watering his horses, already harnessed for the journey. Looking backward he beheld the belated young friend coming on with lively strides.

The farmer, going for lumber, had removed the box from his wagon, for convenience and to lighten his load. There were only the wheels, the axles, and the long reach between them, but he was willing to take the missionary along. A board was found, long enough to reach from end to end of the skeleton wagon. On the forward end, between the wheels, the driver seated himself; the slender young minister was seated on the middle of the board, — which broke beneath his weight before the journey was over, — while the missionary took up his place at the further end of the board, between the wheels and over “the hind ex,” with his valise to hold before him, and his feet dangling toward the ground on either side the reach. The driver walked his horses every rod of the trackless way, and it was high noon with a scorching sun before the station was reached. But for the burden of luggage, it would have been as easy to walk that twenty miles, although boots and

clothing must have been cut by the wiry grass. As it was, there was need of patience. The board did not grow to be a softer seat, nor the spring of the wagon "ex" increase as the travelers "dragged their slow length along."

That tedious journey had been made for the sake of preaching "a free gospel"; but the Irishman, with whom we had been riding, though civil, was not generous, and we were compelled to pay his price for the memorable ride — two dollars. When we had thus paid for that ride, to call it a favor seemed, from one point of view, of doubtful propriety.

On one occasion, to meet a Sabbath's appointment sixty miles away, the missionary took passage from the railroad town by stage. The day was bright, and he chose his seat beside the driver. With much to cheer, there is always enough to depress, in these long stage rides over the uninhabited prairie. Anything which tends to break the tedious monotony of the journey is welcomed. As we rattled and rumbled along, we were glad to hear a man within the vehicle singing hymns.

The seats were all full inside, but by-and-by we halted to change horses. Then, alighting, we were glad to have some friendly words with the singing stranger. We found him tall and venerable in person, and decidedly Christian in word and atmosphere.

He was an Englishman, who, with his wife, had just arrived by way of Montreal from his native land. They had a son living near our route, whom we had met. He seemed cheered as he learned that we knew his son, and our interest in him increased and grew into a desire to learn something of his religious history. By-and-by we felt free to ask, "Are you of the English Wesleyan church?"

Instantly he drew himself up to his full height and replied seriously and sonorously:—

"I am a companion of all them that fear God!"

Instinctively we gave him a grasp of the hand and were satisfied. When, after a journey of forty or fifty miles together, we parted, it was with mutual interest and hearty Godspeeds, each cheered and helped by the comradeship of the way. Doubtless we shall never meet again on earth, but this milestone in our Christian pilgrimage will ever stand.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FORTY MILES AND TWO CHURCHES IN ONE DAY.

BUT other fields are ripening, and the reapers are too few. "Two by two" the Master sent out his messengers. There is in this, doubtless, a higher wisdom than has yet been perceived. Many a lonely toiler in the world's great harvest field has been gladdened by the coming of another, as was Paul by the coming of Titus. When, single-handed, one minister is toiling to reap the spiritual harvests in a county as large as one of our lesser states, he is cheered, sometimes beyond measure, if, for a single day only, he can have counsel from another in his perplexities, and a helping hand in his toil. To such a grateful service the missionaries were appointed.

It was a journey of two hundred and forty miles by rail, and fifty by stage. He was getting used to these "magnificent distances," and found them not as tiresome as formerly. And yet the pleasures of staging on the frontier are not those of a fully equipped, thorough-braced, four-horse Concord coach. Fifty miles over a dry and dusty prairie, under a scorching

midsummer sun, is not a particularly inspiring prospect with better accommodations than the old, cheap spring wagon which was in waiting for us, loaded with bags of grain and various merchandise, and with two worn-out horses hitched before it. Besides the driver there were three or four passengers, all needing to make the journey that day. The missionary's seat was one half a bag of oats. The driver had the other half. The bag was about even with the front end of the wagon box, alongside of which it lay, and our feet hung over in proximity to the horses' tails. Our fellow-travelers were mounted on other bags of grain behind us. If the comforts were not all that the minister could wish, they were more than equal to those of the others, and there was small chance for envy, unless indeed on the part of the poor horses.

We were late in starting out, and found it convenient to rest and take dinner at the first little town, fifteen miles on our way. Little kindnesses and courtesies which were extended to the missionary at the hotel, though unexpected, were such as not unfrequently met him in his missionary work. The ladylike hostess was not long in ascertaining that among her guests was a Christian minister. At once the best room in the house was placed at his service, while waiting, and its appointments had more of refinement than could have been expected in a town like that on

the unsubdued prairie. Of more importance in the character they reveal than in the gifts they bestow, such kindnesses leave in the hearts of those who share them a lasting memory.

Dinner over, we proceeded, having left behind a part of the load of our overburdened team. More and more wild and unbroken, fewer and slighter the signs of civilization, as we got beyond the vicinity of the railroad, the great civilizer of these vast plains. Still, here and there, we discerned signs of human life, in the rude shanty and the growing grain of the isolated farmer. As the sun was sinking behind the horizon, we neared the hamlet which we sought. The "town" was composed of one store, a blacksmith's shop, and a small house known as the hotel. At the latter we were expected to stop, and we soon learned that in it was to be held divine service on the coming Sunday morning.

Between the small office and the dining room there were double doors, and these were thrown open as the hour for service approached. The rooms were well filled with an attentive congregation. We had been called here to organize a church, which we now proceeded to do, after which the sacraments were administered.

To call a council in such a case seemed impracticable. There was but one church of our order within

fifty miles, but two within a hundred, and both of these were very weak and without a minister. In case a council had been called there could have been little hope that, in the pressing cares of the season, and with the difficulty of travel, a single delegate would have responded. We did not believe that Paul always called a council when he instituted the churches of Asia Minor. So the minister of this people, and the general missionary whom he had called for this purpose, went forward in what seemed the path of duty.

In the afternoon we were to meet by appointment another congregation, miles away. The shortest way led through the bed of a lake which was quite extended in the wet season, but now, under an August sun, was dry and covered with a rank growth of wild reeds and grasses, sometimes higher than the vehicle in which we rode. It was a romantic ride of decided interest. It brought us to a region of more mature settlement. Here were a goodly number of farmers of the thriftier class. True, they had no village, and were almost seventy miles from the nearest railroad station. A minister of another denomination, retired from active service, was in the thoughtful congregation, which had gathered in a private house, and there was another who was ready to act as pastor. They desired the organization of a church, which we pro-

ceeded to form, and encouraged the brethren as best we could.

The service over, we rode home with the minister, who lived four or five miles from the place of meeting, took supper with him and his family, and rested a little. We were twenty-five miles from the point where we might strike a stage next morning, and decided that it was best to go on.

The night was dark, but by the help of the minister whose call had brought us hither, we made our journey across the unfenced prairie to the village on the stage route. Late, and tired, but glad at heart, we concluded our work of "forty miles and two churches in one day." Rest was sweet in an open and unfinished chamber, with strangers sleeping all about. Another "stage ride" of forty-five miles next day, and we had reached the railroad with its welcome homeward train.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AUTUMN MEETINGS.

THE long, delightful autumn was approaching, the season of meetings of the local and general associations, of fellowship meetings and others in the older settled regions. The general meeting was a season of review, of stimulus and cheer, enlarged by the accession of churches and of helpers. It was held at the site of a frontier college, whose story was a volume in itself, and the laying of a corner stone was a part of the program. It was a privilege to visit its embryo library, and to listen in its class rooms. In one of these a translation from a classic author was rendered. It was an old story, but it came with peculiar freshness, illustrating by its ancient valor a motto worthy of the times and the work laid upon the Christian Church along the picket line of civilization.

“The spears of the enemy are so many that they darken the light of heaven,” said a scout before the battle of Marathon.

“Very well,” answered Miltiades, “then we will fight in the shade.”

To "fight in the shade" with the valorous Captain of our salvation was glory and privilege enough to nerve the arm and fire the heart of every soldier of the cross at this meeting.

"Thy saints, in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer, though they die:
They view the triumph from afar,
And seize it with their eye."

Nowhere have we heard a more vigorous discussion of the temperance question than here, and a missionary meeting of women, not large, but earnest, was a representative of the self-denial and the sanctified zeal and common sense of frontier churches, who see not an additional burden but a blessing and a help in practically remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

In returning, it was in our way to see something of more advanced methods in Christian education for the Indian than we had hitherto had the opportunity to observe. After a pleasant day in the company of missionaries we knew and loved, our team drew up at nightfall at the mission home at Santee agency, on the Nebraska side of the Missouri.

The Ponca and Santee Indians are here, but this advanced school has received many other represent-

atives from the forty thousand Sioux of the great Dakota reservations, with some from the Gros Ventres and the Mandans of the Upper Missouri.

Our visit, though brief, was one of delight. Here we could bow in prayer at a family altar, remembering the labors of Riggs and Williamson into which their children are entering, with achievement already setting its seal to those labors of faith and hope. Here, in the "Bird's Nest," where the little ones are gathered, in the boys' school, and the girls' school, and the church, we find Indians without the "heredity of civilization and Christianity," but with the redemption of the new life in Christ Jesus. They are, in part, the selected pupils from various mission stations, sent here by the missionaries, and with the consent of the parents, for better opportunities than can be afforded them nearer their homes.

Their progress, the result of years of toil and pains, is such as to justify a large hope for the seventy Indian tribes yet in absolute darkness, if the Church of Christ shall not too long neglect them. We visit the buildings where the Indian youth are instructed in agriculture and in trades; we scan the course of theological study for the young preachers; we sit with the older girls in their sewing room, and are shown by two dusky maidens the interesting details of the bread-making for the large family; we sing

with the assembled school, led at the organ by a polished Christian gentleman with copper-colored skin ; we sit with interest in the recitation room, and witness the drill of the bright boys and girls in mathematics ; in walking about the grounds we greet some of the youth we have entertained in earlier days in our home in the church. One sweet little girl who runs to meet us is the granddaughter of the Indian woman, Elisabeth Winyan, who saved the lives of the missionaries in the Minnesota massacre of 1862. We made the acquaintance of this gentle girl when, as one of the earliest guests at our parsonage, she with her teacher spent the night with us, *en route* from her home in the upper country to this school, and are glad indeed to see her again, happy and improving in her new world. We inquire for the little silent maiden who visited us in the church, and who did *not* freeze in the blizzard which overtook the party, thanks to the experience, wisdom, and fortitude of their missionary conductor ; but she has gone on to Hampton, if we rightly understand.

Long might we linger here with pleasure and profit, but time and work press, and we must go forward, by a circuitous and tiresome journey, with almost every variety of conveyance, till we reach our point of departure — home no longer, for the thought and the hope of home have vanished with the measureless

needs of the work. But we are glad of this one brief respite in the year, for larger outlook from the eminence "whither the tribes go up," and we are refreshed while we remember that already this young association, amid its own want, has given, in the providence of God, helpers to the "ends of the world," as well as to Mexico and Japan — to the freedmen of the South and the aborigines at our doors.

Not many weeks after we had the privilege of greeting a local association. In the smaller body, heart comes nearer to heart, and the spirit of God seems present in unusual measure. Entertaining a classmate in the person of a visiting ministerial brother, our talk at the tea table and around the fireside, though grave with the responsibilities and the toil of the passing days, was cheered by great hopes for the work, and by sunshiny recollections of student days which gleam through the rifts of present environments.

Next morning at the meeting we missed his face and wondered what could have kept him away. Later in the session we learned that he had departed, on an early freight train, for an adjoining town. And without a word of farewell or explanation!

In time that explanation came. Is it not too sad to tell? His son, a promising young lawyer, and a favorite candidate for judge in his county, was to conduct a suit regarding some land in dispute. Was

it an unhappy rumor or an undefined uneasiness which took the father suddenly from the midst of the meeting to the place whence the son had mysteriously disappeared, with no word for the father he loved and trusted?

Months of terrible anxiety to his parents followed. A letter from the mother, catching at the straw of a possible clew to the discovery of the missing son, reads like the wail of an agonized soul. The whole country gradually became wrought up to sympathy with the parents, as the proofs of a diabolical murder, at first utterly unsuspected, were found. Months afterward the awful truth was verified. Overtaken alone, riding in his buggy towards the trial of the suit, the young man was murdered by his opponents in sight only of high heaven; through the confession of one of the culprits, the fragments of his body were found, under the sod of the prairie where they were hidden.

This tragedy had been enacted two weeks, when the father sat, cheery and unsuspecting of wrong, beside our board and hearth, a few miles distant.

This appalling story had not yet its sequel. Before the courthouse, a few rods beyond the church and parsonage we had called ours, an outraged sense of justice executed "lynch law" on the miserable perpetrators of this crime. We were thankful to be spared the witness of that scene.

Within a few months, the only surviving child of that missionary father, a student in college, yielded up his young life to disease, and the heart-broken wife and mother passed from a world which had brought her too great a weight of sorrow, to the beyond, where the mysteries of life shall be unraveled.

Another meeting of this season remains in our memory. Our work had been distant from the famous wheat fields of the North, and communication was difficult. At last, providentially, we were speeding northward along their eastern border. The names of counties lying alongside in Minnesota were suggestive: Lac-qui-parle, Yellow Medicine, Renville, bring back memories of Indian wars and massacre. Along this St. Peter's river, what lives have been lived! What Christian heroism has consecrated these hills and valleys and these river banks! What hopes and fears and saintly aspirations have floated on this stream! Across the river from a station we have passed, we are told that the treaty of peace in 1862 was made between the Indians and the government. We looked over there, and imagined that perhaps it was here, on the meadow this side the hills, or beyond those trees and slopes, that it was done.

But the day draws to its close and we are still far from our destination. On into the gathering twilight

and darkness our train speeds. At a distance from the tracks, on either side, prairie fires light the horizon. Now, far away, so that only the sullen gleam on the smoke and the sky is visible; oftener, so near that its swift advance appears like the movement of an army with torches. For nearly a hundred miles we pass onward with the speed of steam between two broken walls of fire. The train halts at the picturesque crossing of a stream and the brakeman calls out the name of its station, "WILD RICE." We note with pleasure in the light from the train that trees are there, and speed onward.

The "Key City of the north," at last, and we are glad. "How large is it?" we ask ourselves. It is famous, so we guess at two or three thousand inhabitants. As we approach, our beacon is an electric light which gleams down on the city and surrounding country from its mast, more than two hundred feet high. We find brick blocks, the appliances of city life, and ten thousand inhabitants. The air is keen, reminding us that we are on the parallel of northernmost Maine.

A drive by moonlight reveals the beauties of the winding Red River of the north, and brings us to the comfortable home of those we quickly come to regard as friends. Unexpectedly we are with the children of those we have known and loved away on the shores of Massachusetts Bay.

At the church we find friends from Maine and Vermont, relatives, too, we think, if only we had time to trace the family links. Sunday morning there is the home missionary prayer meeting, a privilege we can never afford to miss. The church is not yet the elegant edifice that one day will rise here, but a comfortable frontier sanctuary, ceiled, like many of the homes, with matched boards. It is simply but tastefully furnished, and it contains one luxury. Beside the pulpit platform is a tiled fireplace, with a grate of glowing coal. What cozy chats, what hand-shakings, what foot-warmings, can it not testify to! Before and between meetings we partake of its comfort, and rejoice in the sight of its cheer as the services proceed, and inwardly resolve that an open fire, in addition to the ordinary means of warmth, shall always appear in our inventory of church necessities — at least in such a climate as this.

The meeting is the annual gathering of the ministers and churches along the Northern Pacific Railroad from the line of Western Minnesota to Central Montana. In private some of the brethren may have confessed their perplexities and occasional discouragements, and perhaps asked counsel; but there is nothing depressing or complaining in the atmosphere of this meeting. The triumphant ring of the Apostle to the Gentiles we catch again in the utterance of his humble imitators

here. There is no call for pity. If any can hear the prayers and testimonies of this meeting and not envy this little company, we marvel at him.

There is even thanksgiving that the crops are poor, and the price of wheat is low, though the church mortgages cannot be paid, and the building of new sanctuaries, so much needed, must be delayed.

“It is not well for us to go forward too fast,” said a brother. “Our churches and we too need yet to be kept in the valley of humiliation. We must learn to endure *hardness*, before our moral fiber can be tested.”

Another said: “I wondered how that brother could come down here so cheery, and looking as though he had renewed his youth, until I remembered what his wife said to me when I was at his house. I said, ‘Sister —, how do you get along in this lonely place, without church privileges (her husband was a traveling missionary), and amid the hardships of a new country?’ She replied, ‘There is a little hill over there where I can go for solitary prayer.’ So I understood the secret of the brother’s power. His wife is at home praying for him.”

The brother referred to arose. “My wife,” said he, “has not heard a gospel sermon for two years, and she looked forward with great interest to a trip to this meeting, where she hoped to worship in company with the brethren and sisters, and to enjoy their com-

panionship. But the day before we were to leave home an accident occurred near us by which a young man was greatly injured. He was taken into our house ; she gave up her room to him, and she is now nursing the poor man, and caring for the broken bones that will keep him there, if indeed he recover, for two months to come."

The general testimony is all in one line. Each one the Master strengthens for his work ; each one is glad he came to the frontier ; to each the comforts of the divine Presence are greater than the toils of life in service. The sermon, the Sunday-school, with its music led by cabinet organ, flute, and violin, the sweet communion service of the afternoon, and the stirring missionary addresses of the evening, crowd the day with precious memories.

At daylight next morning we are on our homeward way. Now we see something of the beautiful fields and the vast farms of which we had heard, but our joy is in the seed-sowing of the Master's servants we have met, and in sure knowledge of the promise, "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ONE OF THE
LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YE HAVE DONE
IT UNTO ME.”

A CALL comes from the southland. A hundred miles by rail and fifty miles by stage and buckboard bring the missionary to the land of promise. The last twenty miles is on a buckboard, sharing the seat made for one only, with the driver, an Irishman overflowing with mother wit. The first thirty miles after leaving the railroad brings the travelers to the highest eminence in a vast region, whence the outlook, taking in the whole circle of the horizon, is grand indeed.

From that mount of vision a very gradual descent is made over lands most beautiful, until, near the end of the journey, a slightly depressed valley of surpassing beauty and promise is entered. Into this good land an enterprising people have found their way, and already it is nearly all occupied. In a few years it is almost sure to be not only a region of beauty, but of wealth as well.

The day was drawing to a close when the Irish

driver dropped the missionary at the door of a farmer, whose hospitality he was to share for the night. Though a stranger, and unexpected, he was kindly welcomed to this home by the way. The host had acres broad and fertile. He had just completed the harvesting of nearly two hundred acres of flax, the seed of which, when threshed, he expected to haul thirty miles to the nearest railway station and sell for about one dollar per bushel.

The house contained three small rooms below and two *and a half* in the chamber. There were horses and cattle and hogs and grain outside the house — enough to lead one to expect conveniences and comforts within. But the era of the latter seemed not to have yet arrived. At nightfall, when the work of the day was over, and the hired men gathered about the table with the family and their guest for supper, there was food in plenty, but only three or four chairs for eight or ten persons. Those not accommodated by the chairs sat on boxes and a rude bench. When bedtime came the guest was lighted to his low chamber by an elderly man, who had for days been following his mule team with the plow, turning up a black, dry soil. The first instinct was to find a chair on which to lay the clothing of which the guest was about to divest himself. But a glance revealed the fact that the only furniture of the room besides the

bed was the iron part of an unorganized plow. In a moment his clothes were on those irons. He had at first supposed that the good plowman was to leave him when the way to the room had been shown. But no; he was to be bedfellow for the night, and not without other “fellow-creatures” for company, who had shared with the dusty plowman the sheets for many a night since they were fresh. Shutting his eyes and setting his teeth, the missionary lay down, seeking comfort in other reflections. The coming of the next morning was “a consummation devoutly to be wished.”

The “call” to come to the help of the minister here had been so urgent that the missionary had hastened to respond to it without sending notice of coming. It was now Saturday morning and he must seek the minister, who lived on his “claim” three or four miles away, and spend the day in disseminating the appointments for the coming Sabbath. The “bishop in charge” received him with Christian hospitality, and the two spent a busy day, going up and down the valley, giving notice of the services, and conscious of a growing interest in the people, whom we found, on the whole, to possess much intelligence.

Sunday morning dawned hopefully. The morning service was held about five or six miles distant from the home of the minister, in the dining room of a

country inn — the best and only place to be had. The same strong contrasts between the narrowness and limitations of the place of meeting and the brightness and thoughtfulness of the congregation were here, as everywhere, to be found. We were especially impressed with the ability and culture of the chorister, who read music at sight, and led the singing in a manner worthy of a city choir. We were strengthened and encouraged at once as we joined in the service of praise which he led. The congregation packed the house and gave the Word a most sympathetic hearing.

At four o'clock in the afternoon many of our morning hearers, with others, came together for a second service at a farmhouse, three or four miles in another direction. Again we sang under the same delightful leadership as in the morning; again the Word was preached with a good hearing; and at the close of the sermon a church was organized and the sacraments administered. The people seemed blessed and the ministers were encouraged.

The services concluded, we returned to the home of the pastor, to share a second time the hospitality of his interesting family, with whom we had tarried the night before.

The preacher was a companionable, intelligent Christian man. His wife, with the two younger

children, had gone to spend a time with the eldest son, a young man in business in an adjoining state. When all were at home the family consisted of father, mother, and seven children. They were living in a sod house of two rooms, one serving the triple purpose of kitchen, dining room, and sleeping room; the other was the apartment of the parents, and especially the minister's study. In this apartment we spent our two nights, sharing one of the beds it contained with the pastor. The eldest daughter of the family, a most ladylike girl of about seventeen, occupied another, with two of the children, while the two large boys slept in the kitchen.

The limitations of that sod house were not the saddest features of the case. The shoes on the minister's feet — the only pair he had — were such as an ordinary farmer would throw away. His pantaloons, originally of a double-threaded “shoddy” cloth, were not only threadbare, but on each knee there was a hole as large as a man's hand. Thus clad, this good man was compelled to preach, or not to preach at all. In this clothing he rode about with us through the community on Saturday; with these garments he attended the services on the Sabbath. The queenly daughter had not clothing suitable to wear to church by daylight, as the father told me apologetically, as a reason for her absence from the Sunday service.

When meeting was held under cover of night she would go.

Such facts seem too personal and sacred for narration. It is far enough from a personal gratification to write them. But when the self-denying missionary is able to *endure* them, surely Christian people who live in comfort ought to know how fares it with their brethren. Our hearts ached for this pastor. Before leaving him we wrote to the secretaries in New York the facts which our brother would not state, asking for his relief; and when we reached home, unwilling to wait the needed time for the response, were only too glad to divide our clothing with the needy family, and with the help of a few neighbors, to send them a comfortably filled box of such things as we could command, with express charges paid. It would have been a greater pleasure to send **them** much more.

Many of the sufferings of the servants of God in the hard places of the earth are written only in the record which is on high. Of the frontier settlements, often it may be said, as here, that the money of the settlers is absorbed in the expenses of moving and entering their lands; that in a great number of cases where appearance of means is deceiving, the cattle and the crops are mortgaged in advance, the interest paid sometimes reaching as high as fifty per

cent for ready money. If, in exceptional cases, there is money, it is generally in the hands of speculators who have little or no interest in religious matters. Often there is absolutely nothing to be done but for the preacher in such a field to go forward, trusting in God and the Home Missionary Society, and hoping for better times.

CHAPTER XL.

THREE DAYS TOGETHER.

THE week had been a trying one, physically, and in the demands it had made for sympathy and counsel. The missionary had reached home Friday afternoon, longing for rest. Saturday morning he was really ill with a heavy cold. Propped up with pillows, all the morning he dictated to his wife as amanuensis. One epistle bore counsel to a minister in want of work; another gave suggestion to a laborer in the gospel who was very much wanted in two or three places at once; a third sought to cheer and encourage a church which was ready to falter, because, after repeated disappointments, a minister it loved and cherished had resigned, on the threshold of his work, to accept a call from a larger and stronger church at the east; a fourth asked the superintendent, in behalf of this church, to seek them another pastor without delay; another was addressed to a Christian layman, thinking of giving up his secular business, and devoting his entire time to reaping in these perishing fields, white for the harvest. A Sunday-school in New

England, gratefully remembered for its good deeds, wanted to know what to do with its home missionary money this year. It was told that the problem is, not to find a needy place, but to choose from many, and that the money it proposed to send should be well and wisely applied. Then a letter had to go to the Sunday-school secretary, telling him of two country churches organized within the last eight days, which were in need of Sunday-school lesson helps and libraries, and asking what could be done for these places, with their homeless churches and their children and young people, with no reading for the long winter which was before them. Last must be written a sorrowful negative to a ministerial brother who wanted a supply for his pulpit for a Sabbath, in order that he might minister to a church in need elsewhere. "I hope you will be able to go," wrote the general missionary, "but I am wanted in two or three places elsewhere on that day, and cannot meet your call."

These letters, every one written, not to strangers but to friends beloved, whose trials we knew, and to churches for whom we had wrought in love and prayer, were ready for the mail.

A hundred miles northward a pastorless church awaited in trust the promise of a pulpit supply for the morrow. "I am not well enough to go alone," said the minister. So the vision of quiet rest for one

vanished and together we took the train. A scorching sun and a cloudless sky indicated midsummer, though it was mid-autumn. The wrap it was not safe to go without was a burden, and the umbrella which intercepted the rays of the sun hardly mitigated the extreme heat. With the ponderous lullaby of the train, and the suspension of activities, came rest. Thank God for the "rest by the way" which always comes with the need for it! Refreshed, as the sun sank toward the horizon, we gazed from the open rear door of the train over the beauties of the valley we were ascending. Not the New England river valley, with its broad intervalles, its meadows, its graceful elms, its skirting uplands, its hillsides brilliant with the changing hues of autumn. Not a tree in sight for a hundred miles, hardly a curve in the river which, narrow and without affluents, traverses this upland plain on its way to join the rolling current of the Missouri.

But what broad and fertile acres! What gently undulating farms stretch away from the track on either side—that track which, straight as an arrow, shows its beautiful perspective behind us till it loses itself in the vanishing point on the far horizon.

What signs of progress in cultivation and civilization have two years wrought in this region! Small but comparatively comfortable houses with *brick chim-*

neys; increased acreage under the plow; stacks of hay and grain; once in a while, a good barn; now and again, a steam thresher at work; here and there, a man riding a sulky plow, which is turning neat furrows behind the patient horses.

The railroad towns are ten or fifteen miles apart. To a stranger their new and unfledged look might be unattractive; but we know their history. Where a church has been built, even though it have neither tower nor any other sign of church architecture, we think of the struggles and self-denials of the minister and the people, which make it beautiful in the sight of Him in whose honor it has been reared.

So we went on, until the sun sank in the west with the same effect as a sunset at sea. We talked of entertainment, not knowing what might await us. The wife, weary, and fearing possible hardships for the ailing preacher, begged to try a hotel. But no; we would trust the people and the Lord. Lo! the luxury of spring bed and hair mattress which was in waiting, added to the kind and self-denying hospitality which has never failed us anywhere, made this a red-letter day in our calendar.

Sunday morning dawns brightly, but ere time for service the sky is overcast, the chill north wind is rising, clouds of dust are whirling down the streets, the tumbleweed turns its rapid somersaults along the

roadside, and the shiver of coming winter is in our veins. We gather in the upper hall, used for courtroom, minstrel show, and what not, during the week — the only place which the little flock have for Sabbath worship. The chill, which is our first sensation on entering, gives place to reacting warmth after a little, and when a small bouquet of pansies, geraniums, and sweet alyssum in a graceful vase is placed by loving hands before the unsightly box turned upon a table which forms the pulpit, we see no more the rude box and its ugly black commercial lettering, for the sweetness and the glow of the flowers. The sermon is sympathetic, but not depressing. Both cheer and sympathy are needed, and it is strange to feel how this comes in the simple presence of friends whom the shepherdless people trust, and to whom they are not afraid to make known their obstacles and discouragements. They speak of the impossibility of building a house for the Lord until they have a pastor, the danger that their little number will be scattered through discouragement, and the weariness of their long months of asking and waiting in vain.

In the congregation and in the Bible-class sit a mother and father. They have brought their four young children, as usual, to the meeting. In rain or shine, never late, this family appears before the Lord, coming seven and a half miles every Sunday

morning, remaining through morning service and Sunday-school, eating their cold lunch in the wagon as they return, and going two or three miles beyond their home to another Sunday-school made up of their country neighbors, whose only Sabbath privilege it is. They do not alight at the door of their home until the night is drawing on.

“It is the hardest day of the week, is n’t it?” we said.

“Yes,” replies the hard-working mother, with a smile, “but we have been able to be always here.”

Before he goes homeward at the close of the service, the visiting missionary gathers the leading men about him — four or five — to consult as to the interests of the church. As the afternoon wears on, reaction comes with rest, and the minister says to his wife, “I do not feel able to preach this evening. What can *you* do with the service?”

“Nothing; but you will feel better by-and-by. It will be a dark and gusty evening. Only a few can be present. There is a cabinet organ, and a few singers will be there. You can extemporize a brief service and dismiss the little company.”

But as we enter, there is light, and cheer of fire. A larger congregation has come together than we expected. From two or three miles away come the young people, who lead the music, and lead it well.

Parents and children, professional men, a sojourning judge, drop in. The audience grows. The blessing of God is there. The familiar address of the missionary falls on sympathetic ears. He is strengthened *for* his work, and *in* his work, and when the evening is over, his illness has almost departed. There are warm farewells next morning when we take our departure ere the sun has risen. How glad we shall be to see these people again! How our hope rises that God will soon send them a pastor! How we are enabled to look beyond their present discouragements to the time when, the work of the Lord having been established here, children's children shall rise up to pronounce blessing on these Christian pioneers!

On the train there is one woman besides the minister's wife. She is in tears, and the indications of inward agony convulse her frame. She holds an open telegram in her hand. Drawn as by a magnet, and yet, fearing to intrude upon her grief, we approach. But in this new land friends are few, and real sympathy is never repulsed. Soon her story is revealed. An aged Christian father at the east, in the previous spring, had required this loving daughter's care. Four months she left her invalid husband on the western farm, where he is regaining his health, and nursed her father through pneumonia, and weeks of convalescence, to leave him two weeks ago in health, when

she returned to her home. On Saturday night she received a telegram summoning her again to her father's bedside. Thirty-five miles from the railroad, she has been driven in to take this sunrise Monday morning train. A moment before we entered the car we saw her calmly at the ticket office. Now she is here with the dispatch received just as the train started, announcing that the father she had so loved and attended has entered into the rest whither the mother had long before preceded. In the freshness of her grief it is a comfort to find that she knows the only Source of help. A long, sad journey is before her, with scarce the hope that she may be able to look on the loved countenance in death, and the certainty that the old home, hallowed by long associations, must now pass into stranger hands. How sad this world is, except for the brightness that streams into it from above! But what solace there is in Christian friendship! We do not know this woman's name, nor the denomination of Christians with whom she feels most at home. Unless by inference, she knows not ours. Yet we are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Without, the scene is in strange contrast with the oppressive heat of two days before. The cold northern blast is driving the sleet against the car windows,

and the snow is whitening the landscape. We turn to our papers. A leading editorial in an able secular journal treats of "The Strangers Within our Gates," the phenomenal increase of population which marks our recent history, the longing for friendly and kindly intercourse, the long repression of loneliness, the heartsickness of the early days in a strange land, the task of incorporating and assimilating these multiplying accretions. "The wholesome social influence of the churches," it says, "is probably the most powerful factor in making the newcomers at home with their new surroundings." But this, with all other factors, scarcely does more than disclose "the vast proportions of the social need."

Out in the snow and slush at length we must go. One square through the storm, we hear a shout, and turn to see a man rushing as if for dear life up the street, and another close behind him. Is it a fugitive from justice, fleeing, and almost overtaken? we ask ourselves as they flash past us. A telltale jet of smoke from a building opposite corrects our mistake. "Fire!" in a city where well-drilled fire companies and steam fire engines are on the ground at once is one thing; in a frontier city of boards, with an undisciplined horde of volunteer firemen, no engine, and an untried water supply, it is another.

We escape the gathering crowd and take refuge in

the post office, now deserted by all but one woman. Every other business door on the street is already locked, and its owner is at the fire. Clouds of smoke and excited shouts assail us as we take our two days' mail from the box and read: —

“I was interested in the disposition you made of the hymn books I sent you,” says, in substance, the letter of one who signs herself, “*A Working Woman.*” “I thought I would put my tithes together, so as to help that church before winter comes on. The secretary has — dollars, subject to your order.”

How the heart bounds at remembrance of the church to be helped by this woman's self-denials! It is a sanctuary of rough boards on the prairie, shrunk by the summer's sun, and now admitting the whistling winds and the driving snow, with its seats of boards laid on nail kegs, and the carpenter's bench still in the corner, waiting for means and workmen to render it more comfortable. Here is a message of substantial help and cheer.

But we are already at our own door, thanking God, as many times before, for the privilege of laboring in this vineyard.

CHAPTER XLI.

A SONG. — A MIRAGE.

AN enterprising young student who is doing missionary work at a new county seat is urged to look at the wants of another and newer place. The discoveries of his last visit he makes known to the missionary, and urges that he hasten to meet the needs of the promising young town.

Soon we are on our way thither, two hundred and thirty miles by rail, and thirty or forty miles by a cheap spring wagon loaded down with bags of meal and bundles of twine for the use of the farmer on the “self-binding” harvesting machines.

The blazing midsummer sun, the dried and heated prairie, the riding on a “stage,” which is scarcely better than going afoot, are enough to lengthen the journey and make one glad to get to its end. After watching the shanties which along several miles indicated the approach to the new town, the missionary drew up at the door of the frontier hotel, and received a civil and not unfriendly welcome. There was the office, dining room, kitchen, and small sleeping room on the lower floor; above, an open and unfinished

chamber, containing six or eight beds, and one corner partitioned off by an old rag carpet. The beds were filled by what the boys called "prairie feathers." These "feathers" were not common straw,—that was a luxury not yet to be had,—but common, wiry prairie hay. The "extra room" behind the rag carpet was assigned to the missionary, who was glad to find even such comfort in a place so new.

It was not far from four o'clock in the afternoon when he alighted from the stage. Not long after, the wind, which had been blowing from the south, veered to the north. Soon dark clouds shut out the sun, the heavens grew weird and the air damp and chilly. As the sun went down behind the clouds, the gathering darkness, the treeless landscape, the dried and withered prairie grass on which were set the few new shanties, used mostly for the double purposes of dwellings and lawyers' offices—all conspired to depress the spirit, while awaking the deepest sympathy for those who had come to make their homes and seek their fortunes amid such scenes.

The burdensome sadness was the mood of but a few moments. From the little shanty across the street, anything but cheery in outward aspect, came strains of music which gladdened the heart. A few strains on the organ, touched by a skillful hand, reached the ear, and then the cultivated tones of a woman's voice, singing with rare pathos and power,—

“Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near!
Oh, let no earthborn cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.”

The power of these precious lines of Keble assumed new and precious augmentation in that instant. We had heard them many times before, in elegant churches on fine avenues in the great cities of the east, but never with such heavenly sweetness and divine suggestiveness as now. Instantly the chill without and around, and the weird black heavens above, were forgotten. Heaven was near.

*“Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near!”*

The very barrenness of life and nature around gave unwonted attractiveness to the riches of divine grace, as suggested by the Christian thought soaring forth on wings of sweetest melody from that humble cabin home across the way.

The next morning found the preacher with some anxiety for the effect of the service to be held. He was surrounded by entire strangers. In this embryo county seat there was yet neither house of worship, schoolhouse, nor hall. By the courtesy of a young lawyer the congregation were to meet in his office for the second religious service ever held in the place.

The impressions made that day might have much to do in determining the religious trend and history of the town.

By the welcome partition of the rag carpet the preacher was shut in for prayer and meditation in preparation for the coming hour of worship. Waiting there, under a deep sense of his own weakness, with the recurring question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" he was again cheered and strengthened by another hymn of aspiration. As on the night before, so now, the blessing came when least expected.

In conditions which would depress many another housekeeper, the good landlady of the house, amid her morning cares, was relieving her heart and strengthening her hand by singing, —

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last!"

The familiar lines had a rare benediction for the heart of the waiting missionary. How vividly they

brought to mind the helps of God's great love in Christ for all the weary and heavy laden of earth! The heavens bent over him, and the "God of all comfort" seemed near, while the divine Advocate with men took of the things of Christ to reveal them to the soul. To be a missionary then was to enjoy the rarest privilege of earth.

When the hour of service came the message of divine mercy was in his heart. To speak was a relief rather than an irksome duty. He met the people in the lawyer's office with pleasure, and they gave earnest attention to the Word.

After the service of the morning he rode nine or ten miles over the prairie, and at four o'clock in the afternoon spoke again, to a good congregation, in the open space of a farmer's granary.

When Monday morning dawned upon him he was some twenty or twenty-five miles from the nearest railroad station, which was the county seat of an adjoining county. Seated beside a farmer in his lumber wagon, the drive was not without interest. There were, on either hand, some far-reaching landscapes of unbroken prairie. There were also many new-made homes, surrounded by beautiful fields of grain, some of it already cut and in the shock; some, still waving, ripening, and waiting for the coming reaper.

Of the phenomena of the mirage on these great

plains he had heard much, but now witnessed one most remarkable. Approaching a town eight or ten miles distant, which commonly would have been hardly perceptible, it was seen lifted up into bright and beautiful prominence. It was situated on a flat prairie, but it now seemed to be on a hillside with a slight incline, and only two or three miles away. The buildings seemed higher, and the village more city-like than was actually the case. As it was approached, the two or three miles lengthened into eight or ten, the appearance gradually changed, and the mirage vanished.

CHAPTER XLII.

MULTIPLES.

ON a winter's day the minister was at the first schoolhouse in which he ministered in this new land, pursuant to a call to organize a church and ordain a pastor. It was a part of his first parish. Why this movement, on the part of a portion of that little church of eight members, within three years? It seemed in those first months of pastorate that at least twenty-five years would be needed in order to show substantial results of labor in such a field as that. Now what is the story, in this brief space of time?

Natural growth and one blessed far-reaching revival in that village church had increased its numbers to sixty members, and the church, with a parsonage, prayed and wrought into being by another minister's wife, was out of debt, except what it owed to the church and parsonage building society.

In the judgment of those who had wrought here from the beginning, the time had come for a second church organization on the prairie. That at the vil-

lage was strong enough to stand by itself, and another in the country parish could start out with the hope of soon being independent, and of reaching many who would not go to the village. A small council was gathered, and the church was organized with thirty members, who had been dismissed, at their own request, for this purpose, from the village church, which retains an equal membership.

“With our staff we passed over this Jordan, and now we are become two bands.”

Soon there was a new church building in the rural parish, which became a center of good for a large community of farmers. In time a neat parsonage rose up beside it.

This is not all. It was the privilege of the missionary not only to assist in the organization of this second church, but at the same time to lay ordaining hands on the head of one of the eight original members called by the unanimous voice of these, his neighbors and friends, to serve them in the new pastorate. We had long known his fitness and the divine call to him, and for nearly a year past he had given himself almost exclusively to study and to Christian work. This was the beginning of a career of singular consecration and usefulness.

Another of that first little band of eight was already serving in the Christian ministry, in a county not very

far away, which before he went to it was practically destitute. It was early in that first summer, that in our little cabin the minister had laid before this brother the conviction that God was calling him to this service; but, with a high ideal of the qualifications needed, he was not yet ready to entertain the thought. In time the providential indications came to be too plain to be disregarded; and in a visit we were privileged to make in the following year to the hospitable home which had been our first shelter its master and mistress gave us the great joy of knowing that they were ready to follow the unmistakable call. Soon they removed to the destitute field, and gave themselves with rare fidelity and success to its spiritual culture. A circuit of five communities, miles apart, was supplied with the Word by this brother, while his wife led the temperance and missionary work. Three churches have since grown out of these labors, with a church edifice and a parsonage, and the end is not yet.

A third member of that first church of eight members was afterwards licensed to preach, having exchanged his work as a teacher and superintendent of schools for more exclusively Christian work, because of the vast field in perishing need of more laborers. The fourth and only remaining man of that little band is still, as at the first, a deacon, though

now in the second church. A younger brother who came to the country subsequently and became a member of this church, after using his spiritual gifts and his fine voice in lay work, which proved most effective, decided to make full preparation for the ministry, and is pursuing a four years' course of study in a theological seminary and at the same time supplying a suburban pulpit.

Two or more of the boys of that country Sunday-school are in college, with the Christian ministry in view.

Such are a few of the results that can be tabulated as growing out of the founding and early history of one weak church in a new community in the west, in a brief space of time. Many multiples of these beginnings are already setting in motion other waves of influence for good that can be measured only on the shores of eternity. This church would be far enough from claiming to be a model, either in its collective life or the individual life of its members. Still further from such a claim would be its ministry, sowing the seed in weakness and sometimes in discouragement and lack of faith.

But the promises and the providence of God are over all our work, and we know not which is great and which is small. Let us do it faithfully, "and not presume to fret because 't is little." And when the king-

doms of the world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord, and we "join the everlasting song," our ascriptions of praise shall be to Him who was, and is, and is to come.

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

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