

WOMEN and MISSIONS

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On a Tour With Mrs. Missionary

By Florence B. Crooks

Mrs. Charles H. Crooks, wife of Dr. Crooks who is in charge of the Charles T. Van Santvoord hospital at Lampang, Siam, devotes her energies largely to evangelistic work. Readers of *WOMEN AND MISSIONS* will recall that last November we printed a story by Mrs. Crooks descriptive of an itineration, and this new account will be read with similar enjoyment and appreciation, we are very confident.

FOR seventeen years Mrs. Missionary waited for a trip to the out-village church of Cha Home; but opportunity, that fickle jade, always smiled on another. All things come to her who waits, however, and one morning, just as the "eye of day appeared in the west gate of heaven," Mrs. Missionary and her party sailed out of the city in "Madame Guildie." The Cha Home church is fifty miles from the city, and the good "madame" soon ran the eight miles she could go. The passengers were then deposited by the wayside and the esteemed lady from Detroit returned to her work on the hospital staff.

From there on, four men, with chair swung on bamboo poles, had bargained to carry Mrs. Missionary to her destination. The men looked blue when their passenger got into the chair, but they resumed their natural color when she announced that they were too slow and better time could be made by walking. It was a long, winding, tortuous path over rice fields and down canyons between the mountains, with dust ankle deep. But when you once get your feet upon a path, it smooths out before you most amazingly—metaphorically as well as physically.

The extreme heat soon made the travelers forget the dust, and fear of a night in the jungle gave speed to weary feet. At regular intervals the carriers of Mrs. Missionary's kit would stop to rest, for fifty pounds weigh down weary shoulders after a time. These men, not

possessing minds trained in lucid and orderly habits, never seemed to realize that the way to get on was to go. A special invitation for them to proceed had to come from Mrs. Missionary every time. "Come, brothers, let's get on. We don't want to sleep with Mother Bear tonight."

Lunch was eaten under a wide spreading tree by the wayside. The men took out their rice baskets and dishes of curry and fried fish. Lunch time found not half of the road yet covered, so the prospect of sleeping with Mother Bear appeared more certain than agreeable. The road lay deep in the mountains, surrounded by the space and silence of the jungle and the beauty of the over-hanging cliffs covered with palms. Mrs. Missionary was never quite sure of that afternoon—whether it was a nightmare or a dream of bliss.

Soon all the water the men had carried in their bamboo joints was finished and they were suffering from thirst. As the afternoon passed, many groups of people were met and they in characteristic Lao fashion would warn: "You people will never reach your rest house tonight!" or some other equally comforting remark. One gets more glimpses of human nature in one day on the road with the people than in a whole year in station work. For how can any one hope to understand a country in which he has not been born unless the sun and dust have entered into his being?

As the day wore on, the little caravan

A "Three Alarm"

By M. Katharine Bennett

First Vice-President of the Board of National Missions has prepared this article for use in connection with the observance of November as National Missions Month.

IF you have ever been in a fire-house when the alarm has sounded, you have been stirred by the alert response of the firemen—an alertness that has not been lessened by familiarity with the call, by the knowledge that a great majority of the fires are insignificant, or by the fact that there are many false alarms. It is not the thing that is, but the thing that may come if an incipient blaze is unchecked which brings the quick response—the fear that the one-alarm fire may become that dreaded thing, a "three-alarm" conflagration.

The alarm bell of national danger is being sounded constantly these days, both in the printed page and through the spoken word. We are told that, granting brilliant exceptions, the tendency of our national character is downward; that speedy termination of civilization threatens and that the churches, and Christianity itself, are proving unequal to the task of checking the progress toward destruction. No one of us can live so remotely from affairs as to avoid hearing this alarm. Are we like the fireman, quick to respond to those alarms that we know presage ills which, if unchecked, will devour the youth of this land or have we become callous to the signal and willing to trust that the fire of wrong will burn itself out? Is a moral appeal less tangible to us, less demanding, than is the physical appeal of a fire? If there be even the most brief unnecessary delay in response to the latter, we are quick to blame the fire department; but appeals to our Christian citizenship too often arouse us only to temporary anxiety so that we "view with alarm," but fail to send us forth to check the "one-alarm" before it shall have become a "three-alarm."

The easy access to the printed page, the avalanche of papers, magazines and books, to say nothing of lectures, sermons and the radio, surely supply us with knowledge. Even the babes "lisp in numbers"

these days, and the average adult has a most amazing amount of abstract information. How many have evolved from the isolated incidents an intelligent understanding of the principles governing the moral and social life of the land and of those duties and relationships that are more than individual, that govern our attitudes toward peoples both near and far? The trained youth of this country is beginning to query why belief and deed, Christianity and citizenship, are not more in accord one with the other.

If there be any groups that should be interested in these questionings and that should have some response to make to the constant alarm bells of the day, they are the missionary societies and mission study classes. These groups have been gathering information, have been studying. Have they in their collective and individual membership evolved the principles underlying Christian citizenship and set themselves to apply those principles? If not, and thought and speech relative to their fellow-men are guided by the conventions of that group with which they mingle, by personal prejudice, or by fear of discomfort or social blame, there is a large service for these societies and classes to render. Can they not become more definitely thought-forming groups? Cannot discussion sometimes take the place of presentation and with patience, mutual forbearance and kindness, analyze the basis of opinion and of conduct? The abstract and the concrete would thus be confronted one with the other; if such opportunity for comparison showed them quite unreconciled it would be clear that somehow, somewhere, error lay and the honest thinker would search for that fault and face it courageously.

This process would demand the justification of the Christian theory of an equal opportunity for all in this land, with the quick prejudice against the Mexican who crosses the Rio Grande to seek a living;

with the careless word that "the only good Indian is a dead one," even while money is being spent to make good Indians; with the thoughtless use of "Wop" and "Dago" with their content of scorn; with the quick and bitter revulsion against Negro or Jew who moves into the neighborhood, or perhaps even seeks to unite with the church. Allowing for all those racial and social differences that are inherent, can a principle of belief, speech and action be found that is of the mind and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Christianity takes people from undesirable conditions and prepares them for better ones. The Indian will not always live in isolation, he must come into the life of the nation. But it is necessary not only to prepare the Indian; it is also necessary to prepare the community into which he shall go. Many a primitive person has been thrown back to his own people by the hostility of the new surroundings. Christian citizenship is not completed until both sides have been taught; and the preparation of the Christian community to receive the primitive, the alien, the racially unpopular, may be the more difficult part of the task.

The Alaskans, "practically 100 per cent of their children in school largely through the influence of our Woman's Board," are facing difficulties of adjustment to the life for which church and government have united to prepare them—not because they are unwilling, but because great financial interests having gained control of the natural resources of the country, the native finds himself shut out from the opportunity to support life. The crowded ways of life, the rapid means of transportation and communication and the power of the electorate make all these things the concern of Christian citizens everywhere.

The Christian Church through its missionaries is educating future leaders in the West Indies; but the church must be concerned with more than the few that are directly touched. It must be concerned with the attitude of this government toward those islands; it must be concerned with the methods of American financial and industrial concerns among those people; it must be concerned with the impressions made by the life and

people of this country upon "a vacation excursion of eighty-four Cuban educators, composed of teachers, school officials, representatives of the Cuban department of instruction and belles arts and the University of Havana now in this country for the purpose of studying educational institutions and methods in the United States."

Tens of thousands of young Negro men and women have come through opportunity into splendid manhood and womanhood; they are confronting inhibitions and antagonisms that must test their courage and their faith almost beyond endurance. Hundreds of thousands of others, millions, valued for certain economic purposes but alien in the land of their birth, are nursing bitterness and hostility. The Christian Church must give an answer to the problem thus created that shall be couched in such friendliness as shall make available the possible rich contribution of the Negro to the national life.

The church sends men and women to present to Mormon people a better life, yet to too many church people Mormonism is a rather unintelligent joke and Christian citizenship takes no cognizance of the influences in a great state of the Union in which the doctrines of the Mormon Church prevail and in which there are 600 communities in which there is no evangelical teaching of any kind.

A man who has spent a quarter of a century in Mexico wrote lately to a New York paper commenting on the reports of the treatment received by an American from some Agrarians in Mexico:

"I think it should be understood that these people have been emancipated from virtual peonage for only a comparatively short time, and the pendulum has perhaps swung to the other extreme. However, the country has made vast strides in education and advancement.

"Does it not seem that people look at these occurrences in Mexico with a wrong perspective, particularly when perhaps more murders occur in some large cities in this country in two or three months than occur in the whole of Mexico in a year—a country with a population of nearly 15,000,000?"

In this just comment of the general

attitude of press and people toward the nearest neighbors of this country, there lies a warning to the Christian citizens whose representatives on both sides of the border are striving to teach and live Christ among these people. Twenty thousand Mexicans are within an hour's ride of Chicago; there are one hundred and twenty thousand of them in the city of Los Angeles. Even under the old dispensation it was ordered, "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you."

"The Harlem district of New York City has the largest settlement of Negroes in the United States. There are at least 70,000 children there, of whom only 10,000 are in Sunday schools. It is estimated that 800,000 youths in the Greater New York district are without Sunday school instruction. A judge who has been on the bench for eighteen years and has had before him 4,000 boys less than 21 years of age, states that only three of this number had been in the Sunday school. In his opinion, 'If we could keep the youth of America in Sunday school during the period of character formation or at regular attendance upon religious worship, we could close the criminal courts and the jails.'"

There are 2,000,000 Protestants in Greater New York, but all the Protestant churches together report a membership of only 420,000. There are 77,000 communities in the United States, and 10,000 have no religious services of any kind.

There is surely some relation between these facts and the citizenship of Christian people.

The alarm bell is sounding loudly, but never can the task of controlling the incipient fires be done by ministers and missionaries alone. It is a task for all Christian citizens. Are we waiting for a "three-alarm" call before we shall be stirred? And meanwhile do our thoughtless words and our careless actions hamper the work of our representatives, the work that we ourselves send them out to do? Shall it be said of us—?

"Who makes the law he breaks,
And breaks the law he makes."

It is much too easy to dream of great things had each person unlimited power; the greatest influence is aroused public

opinion, and each of us is public opinion. Right Christian thinking would express itself in words; words would create a new atmosphere in our immediate neighborhood, an atmosphere that would spread far beyond our personal touch and carry a power to overcome racial prejudices, financial selfishness, industrial greed and insular hostility.

This broader conception of our mission task must prevail; mission service must be reinforced by Christian citizenship, and there must be individual recognition that citizenship is not only occasional deeds, but a state of mind carefully arrived at and consistently adhered to. Missions are more than help, however generous that may be, to an individual, or a group; missions must take cognizance of conditions that make or keep individuals and groups in need of missions, and must strive in every way to remove such hampering and limiting conditions. "Conditions" are not always physical; sometimes they are the thing we are.

We believe that Christianity has the power to meet the ills that sound alarm in our national life; we know it has the power to care for the "three-alarm" evils. But we must face the fact that as co-workers with God, we bear our own share of responsibility and that often neglect of the part entrusted to us results in an unchecked conflagration which destroys great hordes and dooms others to suffering. Missions and aggressive Christian citizenship must go hand in hand, and each missionary society should be a radiating center for right and just thinking as well as for prayer and gifts. Let us pray as fearlessly for open-mindedness for ourselves as for those to whom the gospel is carried by our missionaries; let us accept the implications of the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," even as we accept "Thou shalt not kill." He who knew the end from the beginning gave us this direction, and surely we may trust Him to help us work out the problems; we know that so long as we fail to honor His word we are delaying the fulfillment of His purposes. An adventure of daring and of rich promise is before those groups who will think straight, speak fearlessly, pray largely about the facts brought to them.