

WOMEN and MISSIONS

NOVEMBER, 1924

Cycles of Service

By M. Katharine Bennett

Mrs. Fred. S. Bennett, one of the vice-presidents of the Board of National Missions, is too well known to readers of *Women and Missions* to need introduction. In this article she states convincingly the new problems of Christian work in the Southern Mountains—problems arising from changing modern conditions, which have reached even these people in their long-isolated mountain regions.

JUST recently the following paragraphs appeared in New York daily papers and doubtless in other papers throughout the country:

"Jerusalem, August 21. A small American automobile in four hours today did what it required the Israelites forty years to accomplish in their exodus from Egypt to Palestine. This was the crossing of the Sinai Desert, the wild and barren region between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Akabah, a distance of about 130 miles."

"Close upon the news that the famous 'road to Damascus' has been made into a first-class motor highway comes an announcement that Armenians are planning a tourist resort on Mount Ararat. The last strongholds of tradition are assailed; the immutable is, after all, changing."

As though these items were not sufficiently startling, the photogravure section of another paper pictures a cross erected on the spot on Mt. Sinai where Moses stood when he gave the Tablets of the Commandments to the children of Israel, and also shows the cliff in the Desert of Zin where "Moses lifted up his hands, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."

It is a distinct shock to read of the penetration of cameras, automobiles, airships, radios to those remote regions that have given a sense of security because somewhere in a hurly-burly world there was stability and changeless customs connecting the past and the present. But if the deserts and mountains of the Holy Land are becoming easily approachable,

it is probable that every part of these United States will be soon touched by the encroachments of industry and pleasure.

Both these stimuli direct attention to the southern Highlands, where a land of great beauty invites the tourist, and where the wealth of mines and forests draws those who would develop the untouched resources. "The road to Damascus" is being opened to even the most luxurious of wayfaring strangers, although but a decade ago they would have had to guide weary horses up rocky stream beds and over mountainous trails. The last ten years have wrought great changes in the Appalachian Highlands, the next ten are destined to see much of that whole country opened. The question will not then be one of isolation but of a people brought too suddenly from isolation and a primitive way of life into the hectic and high-speed existence of 1924. "Some of the young men about here," said a worker in a rather remote community, "go to Detroit and to Ohio towns to work during school vacation or when there is no farm work to be done." A short time ago these young men would hardly have known how to start on such journeys; now one calls to another and there has begun that which may easily lead to an exodus from the struggling existence caused by poor land, inadequate equipment, and isolation to the crowded streets, bright lights and good pay of prosperous cities. Some from the farm will always seek the pavements, and no plan or purpose may keep all the

mountain young people in the mountains. But as the world outside of the mountains pushes in on them, and as the lure of the big beyond draws some away, the church must teach them of their responsibility for their own localities and give them a message that will strengthen them as they go out to meet temptations, similar in type to those they have faced in the mountains but surrounded with unknown glamor and glitter.

One rejoices in all that is being done today in the Appalachians by the Presbyterian Church, but a long look into the past brings rejoicing for those places where the "bro't in" church worker once was but from which he or she has gone out, leaving a community meeting and solving its own problems unaided by outside agencies. That after all is the test—that out of the home folks shall be built up church and school and shall be developed the spirit that will carry on. Through the mountains there are just such communities, and more and more such should be fostered. But to make them possible there must be pastors for their churches, teachers for their schools and men and women with training to guide today's young people toward leadership in a period of transition.

The Near East can be scarcely more conscious of its confusion than is the Appalachian section of it. The immigrant parent is scarcely more confused by the results of the Americanization of his children than is the parent brought up in mountain isolation who sees his children facing contacts of which he never knew. Each older generation in America has seen the next generation face social impulses other than those that influenced it; the Appalachians have all of this in an aggravated form, for there extreme isolation and quick development jostle each other.

To meet these varying needs, mission activities must be of varying types and must adapt themselves. A visit to Presbyterian mission stations would show a wide range from the highly developed school in the city of Asheville to the work of a community nurse who wrote this fall that her community had no telephone connection with the mission hospital ten miles away and that it took five days to send a letter

and receive a reply. "The only road between the two stations is impassable about six months of the year, and during the other six months it is so rough that even a well person finds it almost too much to endure."

Of the Asheville equipment at the splendid school for teachers held there in August for six weeks each summer, Mr. S. Guy Inman, who lectured on "International Relations from the Christian Standpoint," writes:

"I was overwhelmed with the large service that is being done by your Normal School at Asheville. . . . I have often heard of the work but was not prepared in the least to find a school supported by a mission board reaching out into such wide areas and being conducted on such broad lines."

On this campus there have been added during the past five years the large dormitory, Florence Stephenson Hall, Faith Infirmary and three practice cottages, and an industrial building is about to be erected, all of these being for the purpose of preparing those who can meet the advanced standards for teachers' diplomas in North Carolina, or who can meet the demands of leadership in rural communities.

At the Normal the school year for the seniors is divided into four eight-week periods. Each girl must spend one period in the main Normal building where she learns to live with over 200 girls and to help in the housework for that number of people; eight weeks she must spend in Pease House where she and the other members of her group act as teachers and big sisters to the little ones. "They have done hard work there—in the kitchen, cooking meals for sixty people; upstairs cleaning and scrubbing and teaching the little girls to do it; working Mondays in the laundry; helping the children to sew; playing games with them; singing with them Sunday evenings around the fire in the parlor; teaching them in day and Sabbath school; sitting at tables with them, supervising table manners—in fact, doing the hundred and one odd things that any big sister does for her little one. And all the time they are learning to handle children, to understand and to love them."

Eight weeks must be spent in "the campus hospital. There they learn to cook and serve attractive invalid trays,



THESE CHILDREN HAD NEVER BEEN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL TILL PRESBYTERIAN WORK WAS BEGUN AT COSBY CREEK

to disinfect and care for simple wounds, to make and apply a mustard plaster, to bathe a sick child and make her bed, to treat a sprained ankle, or take a cinder from an aching eye. Busy days, and sometimes nights, these girls have had, but they have learned to handle the simple illnesses and minor accidents apt to occur in any family. At the same time their understanding of sick people has been broadened and their sympathy deepened."

And then come eight weeks in one of the practice cottages on the campus, "In each of which live seven seniors with a supervising teacher. A family budget is established and the house-keeper of the week plans her daily meals and does her shopping at the Y. W. store or in the city market. She must keep within the allotted sum, otherwise the menus at the end of the week are very slim. Seven and one-half cents a meal, per capita, is her allowance. Meals planned, two other girls cook and serve them, others sweep and dust and tend fires for the week. Still another is hostess and on her rests the responsibility of looking after the comfort of the frequent guests, of keeping the conversation flowing smoothly at table, and, in a word, of oiling the wheels and making a happy family group. Then, too, there is the energetic milk-maid.

She feeds and milks the cottage cow, plans her rations, sells enough milk to pay for the feed, if possible, and in her odd moments looks after the twenty hens that the cottages have recently acquired. Out of consideration for the cow, the milk-maid keeps her work through the full eight weeks, but all of the other work changes each week."

On a smaller scale and with variations in detail, in other boarding schools of our church other young women and young men are being trained to take their places as leaders. They are at Alpine, Tennessee, where a fine new building has made possible a larger student body; at Dorland-Bell, Hot Springs, N. C., where the new Washburn Cottage, a memorial to Mr. Frank Sherman Washburn, presented by his wife, replaces the loss caused by fire last year and the tearing down of one cottage that was beyond repair; at the Stanley McCormick School, at Burnsville, N. C., where "the students are not the inmates of the school but a real part of it, cooperating, initiating and developing the project;" at Langdon Memorial School, Mt. Vernon, Kentucky, which in addition to its usual work has developed a most unusual and effective community program that is having a marked influence in the village; at Har-

riman, Tennessee, where the aim is that the Mossop school "may mean the highest and best in the lives of the girls who step from its doorway and that its influence may be a far-reaching one into the communities which so need a Christian education"; at Farm School, N. C., where last winter after special services all but eight boys in the whole school "signified their attention to follow Christ"; and at the Laura Sunderland School, Concord, N. C., finding itself after the departure of Miss Montgomery, who in twenty-five years of service laid foundations that were true and lasting.

From these schools, which make use of the best and most approved methods of that education which trains house-mothers, community workers, church leaders, Sunday and day school teachers, students go back to serve in the rural communities from which, through the influence of the missionary, they came out. Many of the missionaries of today are graduates of these schools. Thus is the circle completed.

As last spring we dedicated the beautiful new dispensary at Rocky Fork, Tennessee, and viewed that trio of buildings, teachers' cottage, chapel-schoolhouse and dispensary by the stream side in that hemmed-in valley, and saw some of the two hundred young men and women who, through the influence of the mission, have been stimulated to go out of the valley for education and most of whom have

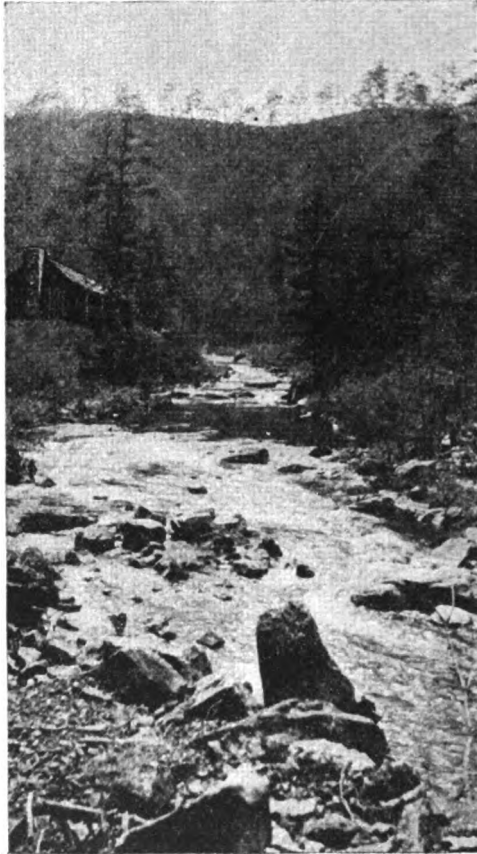
returned there, we saw again the cycle of service. But when that same evening we heard the first radio in Rocky Fork, we felt the too sudden impact of the new on the old and our heart clamored for haste in the Master's service. A little before, we had met in the new station at

Cosby the local committee of men and had felt their earnestness as they planned for church and school, and we had been heartened by the forward-looking plans of those who themselves had missed a chance but craved it for their children.

The need of preaching and teaching among a people who are by inheritance Christian, by nature reverent, by ancestry intelligent, exists only because of isolation and past neglect. But that the need does exist let these figures taken from reports of Sunday school missionaries testify:

"Recently a careful survey was made of five mountain counties in Tennessee. These

five counties have a population of 52,162. Barely ten per cent of the population are in Sunday schools and there is not an *efficient* Sunday school in any of the five counties outside of the county seat towns. This inefficiency is due to lack of competent local leadership. . . . In the five counties there are 9,293 people who are nominal Christians, but less than three per cent of this number are active." "I have just finished my second summer's work among the mountaineers of Kentucky. When I entered my present field I found only six Sunday schools,



MOUNTAIN CABIN AND CREEK

although there are forty-eight school houses in this one county. This is a great field but we are handicapped because there are no pastors to follow the work. Our great need is schools and competent teachers."

Here is a great mountain area with a population of some millions. On one hand is the retardation of years, on the other hand the awakening of a great section to new and swiftly moving life. Secular schools are striving to bridge the time gap, but these are hampered by the lack of teachers willing to serve in lonely sections. The church is the one agency that can draw to itself those who gladly serve wherever need is. It is therefore the church that must reach these awakening peoples and both teach and preach. The most sympathetic and understanding leadership can come from within a group itself and the service being given by the Presbyterian Church is to provide this. It is not being undertaken through disconnected efforts unrelated one to the other; rather is it a statesmanlike program carefully worked out and strategically

located. The Sunday school missionary itinerating from place to place discovers need, establishes a Sunday school and through frequent visits encourages the people to keep it open; the community worker settles down in a chosen group and through religious services, day school, recreational activities, home nursing, first aid, canning clubs and the multitudinous activities of even the smallest community, tries by the intensive method to build up one section; the minister with a limited number of preaching points gathers the nucleus of a church, and his efforts are backed by the evangelist who from time to time comes in to help him. All of these select certain boys and girls for the boarding schools where Christian teachers train them to go back and strengthen the efforts of those who too often must call in vain for "pastors to follow up the work" and "competent teachers." It is a cycle of effort, of devotion, of accomplishment. The need is only the magnifying and enlargement of the work, that life may be lived beautifully in those most beautiful mountains.

Missionary Meeting in the Mountains

By Mrs. James Duguid

IN the small, one-room cabin on the mountain side, it is the day of the monthly missionary meeting. The house has been cleaned and scoured for the occasion. Never before have there been such "doin's" in this wee cabin home. When the presbyterial president first suggested a missionary society, Grannie, who sits today in her corner full of excited expectation, said to her daughter-in-law: "I know all about the folks in this part of the country. We uns can't have no missionary society. There ain't enough of us, and it ain't never been done!" But now it has been done. For more than a year it has been going on, a real missionary society. See them coming up the mountain—sun bonnets on, and their clean starched aprons! The children are coming, too—what else could be done with them? In ones and twos they come, until ten women have gathered in the cabin.

The president, with her fine fat baby on her lap, opens the service with a reading from God's Word: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of Him who bringeth good tidings, who publisheth peace." Together they pray, "Our Father! Thy Kingdom come." A few late comers straggle in, and while some-

thing to sit on is being hunted, Grannie remarks with great astonishment: "It appears you uns can get folks together where there ain't none!"

The meeting goes on. They are piecing a quilt, every one putting the bits together except the member who "used-to-be-a-teacher." She reads aloud about the folks in the hill countries across the sea.

So busy they are, and so interested, that the afternoon fairly slips away. One by one, the men folk have been arriving, on mule-back, on horse-back, and on foot, to take their women folk and the children home. A friend had sent money for tea and cakes as a treat to the society, but it was voted right into the treasury. "Don't they know that there is a deficit in the Board?" When the reading ceases, the treasurer takes up the sacrificial loyalty offering and exclaims with joy, "Why, we have doubled our apportionment! We paid all we had to into the presbyterial treasury, and now we can send just as much again!"

Then they go home in the sunset hour, rejoicing that they belong to the great company of His Obedient Ones who have heard the command, "Go quickly and tell."