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PLANTING  
THE OUTPOSTS



Robert Frederick Sulzer



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ROBERT FREDERICK SULZER.

# Planting the Outposts

Thirty-Five Years  
Among the Children of the Plains

By

ROBERT FREDERICK SULZER

District Superintendent of Presbyterian Sunday-School Missions  
for Minnesota and North Dakota

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



Philadelphia  
The Presbyterian Board of Publication and  
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To the many faithful coworkers and the boys and the  
girls in the Sunday schools of the Northwest  
who have made this work possible

**This Volume**

Is affectionately dedicated

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## FOREWORD

I at last yield to the many requests that have come to me for a number of years from personal friends and leading Sunday-school workers to write from memory a little of my life and experience. When the Lord called me to this work I thought I was not qualified for it, but he closed up every other avenue and compelled me to make the work of a pioneer Sunday-school missionary my life work. Whatever I have been able to accomplish has been possible only through the hearty coöperation of the workers whom the Lord has directed me to set at work.

While we all recognize that higher education is one of the most essential things in life, and especially in the ministry, yet the Lord can use men of limited education, but who are consecrated and possess common sense, to accomplish some of the work that he has foreordained to be done in the great work of saving the children. I hope this little book will stimulate many young men and women, who feel that they have not sufficient education and training for God's service, to take up the work, trust in God and go forward.

R. F. S.

PEN PORTRAITS  
OF  
ROBERT F. SULZER

## I.

### HOW HE BEGAN HIS SERVICE

BY DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D.D., LL.D.,

Pastor of the Marble Collegiate Reformed Church, New  
York City

In the summer of 1887 I had charge of an Assembly at Clear Lake, Iowa. A good many questions were ably discussed, for the most part by ministers; but there was one layman whose words were particularly to the point. He was a missionary in the employ of the American Sunday School Union, a homespun sort of man, with a German burr on his tongue and a quaint way of putting things that never failed to interest us. I presently sought him out and invited him to my cottage, where we passed many pleasant hours together. This was the beginning of my acquaintance with Robert F. Sulzer; and among the many friends of these thirty-five years none has been more beloved than he.

At the close of that Assembly I joined him in a hunting trip. On the evening of the first day we came in sight of a schoolhouse with its windows lighted up. He then confided to me that there was to be a meeting for the organization of a Sunday school. It turned out later that he had canvassed the whole neighborhood, some days previ-

ously, and had invited the farmers and their families to come and hear me preach. I demurred, but there was no getting out of it. Robert F. Sulzer never gives up. He has mastered the art of ultimate arrival. I preached, accordingly, in my hunting clothes. The schoolhouse was literally packed with people and there were others looking in at the windows. At the conclusion of the sermon Mr. Sulzer rose quietly and locked the door. Then I witnessed an order of procedure not laid down in Cushing's Manual or anywhere else. It revealed to me the secret of the man's power and of his singular success. He spoke to the people, as nearly as I can remember, in about this way:

"I have heard that this is a godless community and I am inclined to believe it. Some of you were brought up in Christian homes; but that was so long ago that you have almost forgotten it. You haven't a church within ten miles and you don't care. You haven't even a Sunday school; so that your boys and girls are growing up in sin and ignorance and are going straight to the Devil if you don't look out. It doesn't make so much difference for you gray-haired pagans; but you ought to be ashamed and sorry for your children. Are you going to keep right on living this way, or would you like a change? It's never too late to mend. You thought I invited you here to listen to a man preach; but that wasn't it. He has told you that you ought to be Christians, and that you must be if you expect to go to heaven; but I'm here to help you take the first step. We're going to have

a Sunday school in this neck of the woods; and we're going to start in right now. You can't get out of the schoolhouse till you've organized it. At ten o'clock next Sunday be on hand with your children in your best Sunday clothes. The bell won't ring, because there isn't any bell.

"But first we must organize; and to begin with we want a superintendent. Go on and nominate somebody. (A pause; with evident amusement.) Any Christian man will do. Is there a Scotchman here, who once learned 'The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want' at his mother's knee? (Good-natured laughter, with side glancings and pointings at one and another of the older men.) What's that? (Nobody had said a word.) 'Mr. McDougall?' Just the man! Mr. McDougall is nominated. All in favor say aye. Mr. McDougall you are superintendent of the Sunday school. Be on hand next Sunday at ten. Now we want a secretary; some bright young man who knows his a, b, abs and can write a bit. Ah, 'Harry Landis' did I hear you say? (Glances at the embarrassed youth, with laughter at his expense.) Harry is nominated. Those in favor say aye. Harry, you're it. Next Sunday be here promptly at ten with a pencil and scratch-block. Now for an organist. What's that? You say 'there's no organ here'? Correct; but I'll see that there is one. (And he did.) Now name one of your sweet young ladies who knows a cabinet organ from a jews-harp. 'Mary Ellis.' Fine; Miss Ellis is nominated. Anybody vote against her? Mary, I congratulate you on your

popularity. One thing more; we want a librarian; for there'll be a lot of picture papers to distribute here next Sunday and if the school lasts till Christmas I'll see that you have a library. Now, who'll take care of it? Better name one of the best mothers you have; a good housewife who knows how to take care of things. Thank you: 'Mrs. Elmendorff.' She's the elect lady. Now the Sunday school is organized and under way. Don't forget; next Sunday at ten. Bring your luncheon if you want to. I'll not be here; but the Sunday after look out for me: and as like as not we'll have another sermon, if you say so. Do you say so? Hold up your hands. (Every hand up.) Now the Lord bless the new school and every one of you. . Let us pray."

The Sunday school thus founded presently developed into a church; and it is a well-equipped and self-sustaining church to-day. Since then I have seen much and heard more of Robert F. Sulzer's way of doing things. His methods are out of the ordinary, but I have never known them to offend. His sense of humor is contagious and always carries him through. He makes people smile, but he makes them cry, too. His handshake is an open sesame to the hearts of those who do not like his religion. His homely prayer breaks down prejudice. His frank address is captivating and his blood earnestness is proof of his sincerity. He has lived for many years in the neighborhood of a college, but he never went through it. He has earned his only titular degree

in the University of Christian Work. I never knew a more tactful man: and I have seen him more than once at close quarters with the enemy. He conquers by the strategy of love.

I am reminded of a letter I received, more than twenty-five years ago, from a colporteur of the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, saying that he had been instructed to canvass my parish in Dubuque for the sale of the Board's books and tracts. It seemed to me a foolish thing to peddle the Board's publications in a city with a population of twenty-five thousand and full of bookstores. I wrote the secretary accordingly, asking him to head the man off. This was not done, however; and in due time the colporteur arrived with a raw-boned horse and wagon. He advised me that he was acting under instructions and must proceed to canvass the city; he thought this would require two or three weeks, adding that, as his salary was small, he would need to be entertained. Thereupon I gave him a letter to one of my elders, a bookseller by the way, asking him to find a suitable boarding house and have the bill sent to me. As the colporteur was leaving he read the note and, returning, said, "This is all right, as far as it goes; but how about my beast?" I added a postscript requesting my elder to find accommodations for his ramshackle horse—which looked as if it needed a whole crop of oats in about a minute—saying that I would foot the bill. The same night, after prayer meeting, I asked the elder whether he had made the desired provisions for

man and beast and his answer was: "Indeed I did. I told him Dubuque was no place for him and that my pastor was a fool. He's gone."

That set me thinking; and before I was through with it I came to the conclusion that the method of carrying on frontier work was superannuated and ineffective. The whole colporteur system was behind the times; and unfortunately home missions were involved in it. We were planting churches without rime or reason, in places that appeared to be destitute; but without knowing whether those churches were really needed or were likely to live. And we had no satisfactory means of finding out. A good many of our western ministers had expressed themselves in like manner; but the well-meaning, poorly equipped and ineffective colporteurs kept right on serving as the vanguard of home missions in the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. And meanwhile the American Sunday School Union was doing splendid work throughout the West, supported most largely by Presbyterian contributions, planting Sunday schools which often developed into "union churches," but rarely enrolled under the Presbyterian name. The other denominations had all practically abandoned the colporteur method and were pursuing their work in other and more effective ways.

Shortly after the incident referred to, I was asked to make a home missionary address in connection with a meeting of the General Assembly at Saratoga; and I told the pathetic (for it was pathetic)



story of the colporteur and his beast. It gave me an opportunity of freeing my mind with reference to current methods of home missionary work, and of expressing the sentiment of western pastors generally as to what seemed a better way. Why should not our Sunday-school Board put missionaries into the field under instructions to plant Sunday schools in destitute regions everywhere and let them develop naturally into churches? Many doubtless would die; but the fittest would survive and demonstrate their power of self-support. This suggestion had been made, over and over again, in our western presbyteries, but nothing had thus far come of it.

A few months later I received a letter from James A. Worden, D.D., LL.D., superintendent of Sabbath-School and Missionary Work, saying that the Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work was ready to act, and asking me to name the best possible man, in my judgment, for the position of synodical superintendent for Minnesota, to supervise the planting of schools. Of course I named Robert F. Sulzer, of Albert Lea, Minnesota. I did this by telegraph, saying, "He knows more about planting Sunday schools than any other man in America." My old friend Dr. Worden said that if Mr. Sulzer was the sort of man I said, he was just the man needed.

Presently Mr. Sulzer was offered the appointment of Synodical Superintendent of Sunday School Work—and declined it. I wrote him and he persisted in saying no. He came up from Albert Lea

to Minneapolis for a conference and was hard to persuade. The Board then offered him a larger salary; which he declined, preferring at length to accept the original proposition. He at once entered on his office without fuss or feathers. His understanding was that he was to plant Sunday schools, here, there and everywhere, in every destitute place. To do this he would require a considerable force of summer helpers, whom he proposed to get from among the students of various theological seminaries. The first summer showed a net result of about two hundred schools; a majority of which were, of course, frozen out in the ensuing winter. But the fittest survived; and among these were a few that developed a desire for preaching services. A score or more were provided accordingly, and most of these ultimately grew to be self-sustaining churches.

In his book Mr. Sulzer presents the method and outcome of his work. Not having seen any advance pages of the volume, I am naturally curious to see what he will make of it. I have no misgivings as to its readableness and profitableness; for whatever of euphuistic rhetoric it may lack, it is sure to be pervaded by sound common sense. And it will exalt the Master. He would not permit me to say these things about him if he knew it: for there is no more modest or self-sacrificing man than he. May his years be multiplied and his future work be greatly prospered, to the glory of our common Lord, who in all our service is first, last, midst and all in all.



1. Rev. Robert N.  
Adams, D.D.



2. Rev. Alfred W. Wright.

## II.

### A FELLOW WORKER'S TESTIMONY

BY R. N. ADAMS, D.D.

Field Secretary Emeritus of Home Missions, Northwest-  
ern District

From personal knowledge of the field work under the Sabbath-School Department of the Publication Board during the last quarter century by the author of this book I can unhesitatingly say to those who read it that the half is not told. This quarter century began with what is known as "The New Departure" in the plan of Sunday-school mission work of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America, which plan I may say was initiated in a large measure by Rev. James A. Worden, D.D., LL.D., and was successfully operated under his splendid leadership for most of the period named.

The first appointment made under this plan by Dr. Worden was Robert Frederick Sulzer, who, in 1887, was appointed synodical superintendent for the Synod of Minnesota.

Mr. Sulzer is a unique character. His remarkable success is due largely to the make-up of the man. It was not college and theological seminary training that brought him to the front in the Sunday-school branch of church work, but it was common sense, consecrated energy, rare German humor,

persistence, perseverance and loyalty to Christ. His apt illustrations in presenting the value of Sunday-school work lose but little of their freshness by repetition.

His efficiency and acceptability in public addresses are clearly shown by the fact that in the last twenty-five years he has addressed the General Assembly fifteen times. The secret of his remarkable success in this complicated work will not appear in the volume itself, but has been indicated to those familiar with him and his work by the wisdom he has ever manifested in the selection of his subordinates, and his tact in holding them for so many years in the same field, as, for example, Thomas Scotton, of St. Cloud Presbytery, who has been the Sunday-school missionary there for over twenty years, and S. A. Blair, who has held a similar position in Duluth Presbytery nearly as long, both of whom are widely known for their consecration and effective work.

I therefore predict that this little unpretentious volume will meet a hearty reception on the part of the many who are privileged to know the author personally and who will appreciate the opportunity of getting the stimulus of a live wire. Indeed, I believe that this simple story of the triumphs of Sunday-school work during a quarter of a century in Minnesota will receive a hearty welcome on the part of all those who believe that the saving and the training of the children of this land are at the foundation of civic righteousness and national development.

### III.

#### THE MAN WHO SAVED A COLLEGE

BY REV. A. W. WRIGHT

The church will never know how much it is indebted to Mr. Sulzer for its development and progress in the Northwest. A single instance, which in his modesty he never mentions, will verify this statement, that is the saving of Albert Lea College, not once or twice, but three different times. When nearly everyone else had abandoned the hope of continuing it, he came to the rescue with singular tact and rare ability, and at one time he caught the arm of the sheriff before the hammer fell. Then he rallied the financial forces which put the college on its feet.

His little book tells a wonderful story, of the discovery of desert regions and of rich blessings which came to them after his "planting" and causing them to "blossom as the rose." By his faithfulness he has often, in feeble home mission churches, "strengthened the things that were ready to die." The book, with all its excellencies, does not tell the whole story, nor could anyone write it all, but those who know the author can read between the lines and gather much more from it than can others. But it is an inspiration to all.

Mr. Sulzer's institute work has been an inesti-

mable benefit to large numbers of Christian workers. His kindness to the children and his sincere interest for them generally and individually has gained for him their confidence and entitles him to be called "The Children's Friend." His well-chosen words, often quietly spoken at a judicious moment, have caused sinners to yield promptly to the call of the Master and become his followers, and when strenuous measures were necessary to capture the more obstinate ones, he found such measures in his possession and used them effectively. It makes me think, as I recall so many of these incidents, of the fitness of the little verse Dr. S. R. Ferguson dedicated to Mr. Sulzer:

The mountain stream with rush and roar,  
The dash of wave upon the shore,  
The cyclone with its power and might,  
The gentle morn with love and light,  
The quiet eve with peace and rest—  
All these are SULZER at his best.

Mr. Sulzer's work, together with that of his co-laborers, has settled beyond controversy the question of the value of denominational Sunday-school work. It is a distinctive work and yet the greatest assistant to home missions we have. May he long be preserved to lead the hosts in this grand division of the Lord's army in the Northwest, and when he comes to cast his troubles at the Master's feet, may we who here witnessed his labors also witness his unspeakable reward when it is bestowed upon him.

EARLY LIFE



## CHAPTER I

### EARLY LIFE

I was born in Koenigsbach, Baden-Baden, Germany, on January 16, 1845. This was a Lutheran village of about a thousand people. My mother's home had been in Heidelberg, my father's in a little Catholic village near there, and when they were married they had come to Koenigsbach to make it their home.

In these little German villages there is either a Catholic or a Lutheran church, but not both, and everyone in the village belongs to the church that is there. So my father had been brought up a Catholic, while my mother was a Lutheran. I was baptized in the Lutheran church of our village, but as I grew older I went with my father to a Catholic church in a neighboring village nearly every other Sunday.

There were two sisters and my three brothers in the home, and my old grandmother lived with us until we came to America. She was blind, and so could not read the Bible she loved, and after I learned to read I had to read it to her and commit some to memory. I did it because I had to. Sometimes she would pull me out of bed half asleep to say my prayers. I used to lead her to prayer meeting, and many a time there was nobody there but the preacher, my grandmother and

myself. It gave me a queer impression of Christianity. I used to think that when I grew old like grandmother I would be a Christian; that Christianity was only for the old folks.

We all had to go to church every Sunday morning, as the custom was. The boys sat under the organ loft, and our school-teacher sat on a high chair so he could watch the boys as the guard watches the prisoners in the chapel during service. In case any of us did not sit up as straight as a gopher or looked over the left shoulder we had our names read out in school the next morning and education put into us with a hickory cane.

The church on the hill was a large stone building, even the floor being of stone. There was no heating stove.

Easter and Christmas were great days. The preachers and teachers were very dignified and seldom recognized the boys and girls on the street. In addition to the other school days, school was held every Saturday for half a day, when we studied hymns, the Bible and the Catechism.

My brother and my uncle had come to America a few years before and settled at Easton, Pennsylvania. They were doing well and kept writing us what a wonderful country this was, and urging my father to come over. So in March, 1858, we left Germany in a sailing vessel bound for America. The voyage lasted for thirty-nine days.

I had learned a few words of English while I was on the ship. They were not good words, but I did not know this. I used these. We lived on

the East Side in New York City. My father sent me to the German school for some time. My schooling in the English language was only about three or four months in all.

One day when I was playing marbles on the street, one of the workers from Dr. Crosby's mission, which was located over a liquor store, asked me to come to the Sunday school there. Hope Chapel now stands near the site of this mission. The first Sunday I attended, two or three people offered me a hymn book. I couldn't read it, for it was English, but the spirit of the whole meeting made a deep impression on me; they acted as though they loved a fellow there, and boys like to be loved, as well as girls.

The next year I also attended the German Lutheran Church, of which my mother was a member, to prepare for confirmation. When fourteen years old I was confirmed (though not converted) in a class of thirty-eight. In the afternoon of the day I was confirmed I went with two or three of the boys in the class to the home of one of the officers of the church who kept a store, and we all played cards for the cider. Later that day we went down to the Bowery and had another good time. Soon after confirmation I taught a class of boys in that Sunday school and sang in the boys' choir.

At the close of the hard times, in 1858, my father was out of work for seven months and I had a chance to work in the first hoop-skirt factory started in New York by a Mr. Wagner of Paris. At first I worked for fifty cents a week,

and then my pay was raised to seventy-five cents. Later I worked in a confectionery store and had to go to Wall Street once a week with a load of fancy cakes to sell on the street. In 1860 I worked at the tinner's trade in connection with a hardware store.

When the Civil War broke out I enlisted in the Garibaldi Zouaves. When I offered myself for service the captain said, "You are not big enough to carry a musket." I told him I was big enough to carry a snare drum, and the bystanders told the captain to "take the boy." In my estimation I was the richest, greatest man in New York City on my way to the barracks. In a day or so I went back home to get a change of garments and told mother where I was. I said:

"Mother, I am a soldier. I am on a furlough of two hours, and I am going right back. I just came home to get some clean clothes."

But she replied:

"If you say anything more about being a soldier, I will spank you."

As I had not been sworn in—I was too young—she was able to keep me from going to the war.

When President Lincoln was in New York on his way to Washington for his inauguration I ran ahead of the procession and climbed a tree, where I waited for three hours to see him. Fortunately I was just in front of the Astor House, where he was stopping and so could see him and hear his address to the people.

My father—who was a tailor—wanted me to

work with him, but as I didn't like the trade I made up my mind to leave New York to make my way in the world. I was then seventeen years of age. As my mother kissed me good-by she said:

"Now, Robert, when you get into trouble any time, go to Jesus; he will help you out."

And in the days that followed, when I was at the card table or in the dance hall, these words would come back to me and make me think.

With eleven cents in my pocket I went to Passaic, New Jersey, where I worked for a tailor for a little over a day. From there I walked to Paterson, New Jersey. The town clock was striking twelve as I entered the city, and by one o'clock I had found employment and was at work. My pay was three dollars a week; out of this I paid two dollars and seventy-five cents for board and lodging, without washing. My employer promised to give me all the overtime I wanted at ten cents an hour. Some weeks I worked as much as ninety hours in all, and occasionally even more. Besides that I took care of two horses before seven in the morning and after six at night, for fifty cents a week. They had to be groomed and harnessed and the wagon put in front of the office before seven o'clock.

I didn't write home for a long time, and my father and mother were very much worried over it. My mother went to a fortune teller to find out where I was, and this fortune teller told her I had enlisted and that I was down South with the army; that I had just been in quite a battle

and that another battle was coming off in the near future. If I went safely through that I would return again. The battle came off; they never heard from me, and my mother went temporarily insane. When I finally wrote to mother, father came to see me and brought me a suit of new clothes. This was the only time he was ever out of New York City.

WESTWARD BOUND

## CHAPTER II

### WESTWARD BOUND

In 1863 I started for the West and worked my way to Port Jervis, New York. From there I worked my way on the canal boat to Dunkirk. In Dunkirk I could not find work, so I went on further west to Elmira. I rode part of the way on the top of the cars till the brakeman drove me off; then I went into the immigrant car and stretched out on a bench. When the conductor passed through the car I had my big slouch hat over my eyes and was snoring, and consequently he supposed I was one of the immigrants and passed me by.

Again at Elmira there was no work, so I took the train to the next station, where I stopped for half a day and helped plant tobacco. In that half day I had all the farming I wanted. I started on foot for Corning, New York, where I landed about dark, and at once was engaged to begin work in a hardware and tin store next morning at seven o'clock.

One Sunday morning—after being there for some months—I came to four churches in a row and decided to go into one, which turned out to be the Presbyterian Church. After the benediction I hurried out from the back seat, but the old janitor was too quick for me. He followed close



behind me, laid his gentle hand on my shoulder and urged me to stay to Sunday school. I stayed just to please him. The teacher was Rev. Wm. A. Niles, D.D. At the close of the lesson he asked me to come again.

The next day Dr. Niles called on me in the old dirty tin shop. This was the first ministerial call I ever had—and I was much pleased over it. The following winter an evangelist from Rochester held a series of meetings in Dr. Niles's church, and at this happy time I found Christ as my personal Saviour, uniting with the church on confession of faith.

Dr. Niles was a great missionary preacher, had missionary meetings once a month and always had some one present to speak, or a letter from the field. I became interested, and wanted to be a foreign missionary, but I didn't think I was qualified for it, and was somewhat ashamed to speak of it to anyone. But a chance to do home mission work was given me. The day after I united with the church one of the elders asked me to go with him across the river to help in his mission school. I told him I would come and fill up a seat; that was the best I could do. That was the means of setting me at work.

Mr. Parker, the evangelist, gave me lessons in English at thirty cents an hour, and I took as many lessons as my money would hold out for.

Dr. Niles found much against tobacco in his Bible lessons and was opposed to the use of it. I thought so much of him that I was ashamed to



The first Conference of Presbyterian Sabbath-school Missionaries, held in Covenant .  
Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois.

have him see me smoking. Whenever I met him I would throw my cigar into the gutter.

I had been boarding at the hotel, where there was a bar, but when I joined the church I went to board in a private home. At my new boarding place I had to room with three young men, none of them Christians. When I would kneel down on retiring they would as likely as not throw a boot or a pillow at me. I could not get peace. I had given up cards, but I tried to think dancing was all right. I wrestled for three months after I joined the church, and finally one night I decided that dancing was wrong and I would give it up, so I said to the Lord, "Here goes all," and the peace and blessing came.

Soon one of my roommates left town and a big, stalwart man was put in his place, who was a thorough Christian. When Sunday morning came he said, "Boys, we will all read and have worship," and there was not one of them dared to say no. It was a great relief to me and a help in my Christian life, and the question has been in my mind sometimes whether this relief would have come if I had not given up all.

On New Year's Eve of 1863, a friend invited me to take a drink with him and I refused, told him I had had two drinks already and that was enough. He insisted, and finally I told him that if I took another drink I would not touch it for three months.

About six weeks after that there was a lecture at Painted Post, three miles away, to which I in-

vited two young ladies. We went out in a sleigh and stopped at the hotel before the lecture. While one of the ladies was playing the piano I got three glasses of wine from the bar for them and myself. The one to whom I was paying some attention turned to me and said, "You know what you promised." I said: "Never mind. It is cold and we have to take a little for the stomach's sake." I swallowed the wine, but I said right there: "I will never take another drink. If I can't stop for three months it is time I quit." And that was the end of my indulgence in drink.

The following June I felt that I ought to go home and stay with mother. I reached home just too late for the funeral of my younger brother, who had been drowned the very day and hour I felt the impression that I ought to go home. He was a good Christian boy, about eleven years old.

I reached New York with the determination to live with father and mother and be a good boy. I united with the Young Men's Christian Association and with the Seventh Presbyterian Church and taught a class of boys in the Rivington Street Mission of that church. This mission school was held in the public-school building where I had attended school, and my class was seated at almost the same place where I used to sit.

I took special pains with my boys because I had been a boy and knew the temptations they had and how to sympathize with them. On Sundays the whole school marched to the church, every teacher with his class. The mission school

sat on one side of the gallery and the mother school on the other side during the morning preaching service, each teacher sitting with his class.

In the fall of 1864 I felt greatly worried for fear the old temptations would be too strong for me, so I laid the matter before the Lord and he opened the way for me to leave New York. I heard of a position at Towanda, Pennsylvania, made application for it, and secured it.

I took my letter to the Presbyterian church there in the fall of 1865. A few members, of whom I was one, proposed that we get Rev. E. P. Hammond to come to the town and hold evangelistic meetings. He came, and there were over two hundred conversions. I was then engaged to marry Cornelia C. Brown, of Towanda, who was not a Christian. I had decided that we would not be married until she was. These meetings led to her conversion. On January 24, 1866, we were married.

After the meetings some of us young people went out to various schoolhouses in the neighborhood and held evangelistic meetings. For four weeks I went eight miles, with a number of these young people assisting, and we had twenty-five conversions. I afterwards organized a Sunday school in the neighborhood and superintended it as long as I stayed in Towanda.

After some years in business at Wyalusing, Pennsylvania, I went west to Chicago. In a few days I got work with the Illinois Central Railroad.

In the seven months I spent there I taught a Sunday-school class in one of the missions on State Street, near Forty-first Street, and worked with Mr. Moody in the old Young Men's Christian Association building.

# MISSIONARY RAILROADING

## CHAPTER III

### MISSIONARY RAILROADING

In the fall of 1882 the Illinois Central Railroad was building new shops at Waterloo, Iowa, to take the place of the old shops at Dubuque, and I was sent to assist the architect in completing the work. After being in Waterloo for some weeks I asked the master mechanic if I might remain there instead of returning to Chicago. He said he would be glad to have me stay, and so about Christmas time Mrs. Sulzer and the two children, Clara and Mamie, joined me at Waterloo.

In January, 1883, I was elected superintendent of the Sunday school of the Waterloo Presbyterian church. Notwithstanding the growth of the school from forty-five to one hundred and twenty-five pupils in ten months, I was asked to resign in favor of another brother. One of the elders was elected the day I resigned, but he was asked to resign the next Sunday. When the pupils and teachers found out that I had been asked to resign they wanted to reëlect me, but I refused and told them I would stay with them. The same year I was elected an elder, but declined; the next year I was reëlected and ordained.

While I was superintendent the question of starting a railroad mission was considered. The workers wanted me to take the lead, but I abso-



lutely refused. Then I was stricken blind, and I promised the Lord to go on with it. When my sight was restored, I refused once more, thinking I was not the man for it. Then I was taken with a fever, and again I promised the Lord I would do the work, but when I got better I told him I couldn't. Then I had a relapse, and I promised the Lord that if he would spare my life and raise me up again I would certainly do the work.

I tried to keep my promise when I got well, but it seemed as if every way was blocked. There was no place to hold the session.

After six months a saloon-keeper moved from his old quarters, and we were told we could have the place, renting it from month to month, until a new saloon could be located there. But I had no money to fit it up. One night, at midnight, I was wrestling with the Lord, when the brightest vision I ever saw came and I heard a voice telling me that the first man who came to me the next morning after I went to the shop was the one I should ask to raise the money.

The next morning the first man who came was Bill McMillan, a drinking Scotchman, and the last man I had expected the Lord to send to help me. As I looked at him, trying to make myself believe he was the man, I said to him, "Bill, you know I have been talking about a railroad mission here." "Yes, Bob," said he. "Well," said I, "do you suppose we could raise enough money to start it up there in that saloon building?" And he said, "Sure." I gave him the subscription paper and

told him what to try to get. By eleven o'clock that morning he had more than I had asked him to get.

The school was organized with thirty-two members. I was superintendent, assistant superintendent, secretary, treasurer, librarian and also janitor for some time. We used a large beer box for the library books. The Christians had no faith that the mission would amount to anything. I started with nine unconverted teachers, but before the end of the first year the Lord gave us some conversions, so I could fill out all the offices. In two years we had two hundred pupils.

After we had been in the old saloon building nearly two years I wanted to get a new chapel. One Sunday I asked the teachers to remain, and I told them that the old building would have to be repaired for the winter. The teachers thought it would be cheaper to build a new chapel. We were not in the new chapel over a month before the old building was again rented for a saloon.

The railroad company gave the ground on which to build the chapel. I circulated a subscription paper among the railroad men, one being circulated among the business men, and in three months' time we had over a thousand dollars. We had no trouble raising the rest of the fifteen hundred dollars required. The chapel was dedicated January 1, 1876. With the assistance of C. S. Billings, a Sunday-school missionary, and the pastors of the town we conducted a series of meetings and had nearly a hundred conversions. By this time I had

a very faithful company of teachers and workers and a large body of interested young people.

I am glad to say that I never had a difficulty with one of the children. The nearest I came to it was one Sunday when one boy's elbow got into another boy's ribs, and the other boy's elbow flew down into his ribs, so that they had quite a little exercise before the school began. One of the teachers came to me and said, "Sulzer, if you don't put that boy out I am going." Said I, "Brother, I guess you will have to go, we will keep the boy." Neither he nor the boy went.

That week I looked up the family to which the boy belonged. I found a family of five children, the father a drinking man and the mother going out every day to wash and scrub, so the children had to bring themselves up. In a few months I had a Sunday-school concert, and this awful boy was the leading star. The last account I had of him was that he was an upright and prominent business man in an eastern city.

While I was superintending the mission I was invited to speak at various kinds of meetings. Once I was asked to give an address at a Sunday-school convention, urging upon the various schools the importance of keeping open all winter. A big Scotchman got up and called me down, saying: "What does Mr. Sulzer know about country schools; he lives in the city? It would be just impossible to maintain the country Sunday school during the winter."

Then another man got up, and he, too, went for



The Sulzer home on the North Dakota prairie.



Mrs. Sulzer and her Sunday-school class from neighboring homesteads.



Mr. J. B. Clapp, Mr. R. F. Sulzer, Rev. A. W. Wright,  
Mrs. R. F. Sulzer, Rev. John R. Hughes, at Oliver,  
North Dakota.

me, but I wouldn't give in an inch on my argument.

Two years after that I was invited to a similar meeting in the same locality, when this big Scotchman rose up and said: "I am glad Brother Sulzer is with us to-day. Some of you know what I said to him two years ago. I want to say that when fall came—the usual time to close up—the whole school voted to go on during the winter. I was the only one that was opposed to the plan, and I had to fall in. We had eleven conversions that winter."

The other brother made a similar statement, said that in his school they had had thirteen conversions, and had found out that they could maintain the school in winter.

While I was railroading I was interested in all kinds of mission work and often spoke to the railroad men about their salvation. One evening I said to one of them, "George, are you ready to become a Christian?" "No use trying, Robert. A man can't live a Christian and railroad." "Well," said I, "you come in here." This was after ten o'clock at night. I took him into the mission, the old saloon building, and in the dark I said, "George, if you ever expect to eat another meal you give your heart to the Lord right now, or you never will." He was converted, raised a Christian family, and is now a prominent official of a trunk railroad line in the South, and is letting his light shine along the lines of his road.

At one time one of the churches was holding

protracted meetings, and Billy, one of the railroad men, attended, became interested and went forward to the altar every night for a week or more. I met him during the day and saw there was no change, so one night after he had been forward I went for him outside after the meeting. Said I, "What are you going up to the altar for?" "I want to be a Christian." "Why aren't you one?" "Don't know." I said, "Come on with me." I took him up to the old saloon building, too, and locked the door. Said I: "This is the time for you to give your heart to the Lord. We'll settle it right here before you leave. Get down on your knees." He got down on his knees and I said, "Pray." He said he couldn't. I said, "You will have to if you are going to be a Christian." He repeated after me as I prayed. He also was converted and was leading a faithful Christian life when I last heard of him in Texas.

OBEYING THE CALL TO SERVICE

## CHAPTER IV

### OBEYING THE CALL TO SERVICE

About five years after I started this railroad mission I was asked to go out to visit and encourage a neighboring school. One of the missionaries of the American Sunday School Union had made this appointment for me at a schoolhouse about four miles out, and he had invited the secretary from Philadelphia and also the district superintendent, F. C. Ensign, of Chicago, to be there, but I did not know why they were there.

After the meeting Mr. Ensign asked me if I was willing to take up the Sunday-school work. I told him I didn't know; that I had never thought about it, and didn't think I was fit for it. Then I asked, "When do you want me?" "To-morrow," was the answer. "Well, you can't have me to-morrow," I said. "I will have to see Mrs. Sulzer first and pray over it." When I asked Mrs. Sulzer, her reply was, "You might as well go into it; you are two thirds in now."

After a few months of careful consideration I decided to take up the work and asked the master mechanic for my time. He said he would rather give me a lay-off for three months; I might not like the new work and he would hold my job for me. He did keep the place open for me for six months. Then, notwithstanding the fact that I



was getting four hundred dollars less salary than when railroading, I told him I felt that I was elected for the Sunday-school missionary work and would continue in it. In less than a year the superintendent offered me a good position on the New Orleans division of the road if I would come back, but I declined.

\* \* \*

One of my first trips in my new work was to assist at a Sunday-school convention. Then I took trips to spy out the land and find out where schools were needed.

On one of these trips I went to see a good Baptist deacon, who lived about seventeen miles south of Waterloo. When I got to the house he urged me to drive in, because he had a job for me that night.

As we were putting up the horses for the night I asked him whether the job was to clean out the barn. He said it was a worse job than that. The young people of the community had driven the Christian people out of the church, keeping them from holding prayer meeting there, and for that evening he had appointed a meeting in a private house. The young people had boasted that they would drive them out of that and he wanted me to help him.

After supper the deacon hitched up, took his family and me and drove some miles to the house where the meeting was to be held. As we entered I saw that in every room were two or three young couples, giggling and getting ready for the picnic

they expected to have. I had told the deacon on the way that when the time came to open the meeting he was not to give me any taffy, but simply rise up and say that Mr. Sulzer had charge of the meeting. I assured him I would do the rest.

When he made the announcement, I got up and shouted repeatedly, "Glory hallelujah!" clapping my hands and rubbing them together, and kept on till I had all the people in one room; they came to see what was going on. I told them we were going to have a glorious meeting, and I wanted them to be there to enjoy it. When they were all in I announced the hymn and opened the meeting. We had one of the best meetings I ever attended. The order was perfect, for the young people were taken by surprise by my procedure.

In about a month I went back there and arranged for an institute in the church. Again it was their prayer-meeting evening. They had gained courage and had gone back to the church. They asked me to lead the meeting. The church was two thirds filled with young people. During the opening prayer there was an awful racket. I opened my eyes and saw that the young people were having a good time. I took a text and tried to give them a good gospel talk, but while I was talking they continued to disturb the meeting.

When I was through my talk, I said: "Brethren, I believe the Bible, don't you? Well, you know that the Bible says, 'Watch and Pray.' Now, brethren, I want you to do the praying and I will do the watching." I sat up straight, and looked

the young people square in the eyes. The deacons were very earnest in their prayers, and I watched the young people. There was perfect order; not a move.

In closing the meeting I announced that two weeks from the next Sunday I expected to have services in the church from nine in the morning till nine at night, with a basket dinner, and the notice I wanted to leave was that the one who did not behave himself that day would eat dinner with the sheriff Monday noon. Then I dismissed them. I need not say that I had a good house when the time for the all-day meeting came, for people were there from nearly twenty miles around to see who would eat dinner with the sheriff Monday noon. Instead of any disturbance we had a number of conversions and the best of order, and we taught the young people a lesson on behavior at church services.

\* \* \*

When I began work as a missionary I bought a second-hand buggy and harness, for which I paid twelve dollars. After using it a year or two, I was driving one Sunday with a man whom I intended to put in for superintendent of the school to be organized that day. All at once the "one-hoss shay" went all to pieces. I laid some of the pieces across the axle, and rode on these. My companion walked. We made our appointment, and then managed to arrive home the following day. This was the last trip that buggy made.

The horse I had bought for half price because



Reaching for the Sabbath-school  
Lesson Picture Card.



The salvation of the children the  
hope of the country.



The Missionary Wagon.

he was a kicker and everybody was afraid of him. I was two hours hitching him up the first time, and there were two of us working at the job. But in two years' time the missionary horse was tame enough to stand anything and to stand anywhere.

Some weeks afterwards some friends raised the money and bought a good top-buggy. They arranged for a jollification meeting in the chapel and set the buggy up on the sidewalk. After a young lady had recited "The One-Hoss Shay" they presented me with my new "one-hoss shay," saying that the "Dr. Holmes's Shay" spoken of had never carried so many children to Sunday school as the one I had owned, and they hoped this new outfit would be just as roomy.

\* \* \*

A series of meetings that I conducted in connection with the Railroad Mission at Dubuque, Iowa, was very successful and resulted in the organization of the Third Presbyterian Church. During these meetings I decided that there ought to be a Sunday school in the vicinity. Many thought that nothing could be done, but I went to the man who owned a vacant hotel on the hill and asked him what he would charge for half of it for Sunday to start a Sunday school. He said there was no use trying to start a school there, but I asked him to come up the next Sunday and see.

On Saturday, when I went up on the hill to do some visiting, the children of nearly the whole community were coasting down the hill, which was about a mile long. I coasted with them, and then

after I had them all interested I invited them out to the meeting at three o'clock the next day. When the time came seventy-six were present. The owner of the building was there, and when he saw the fine turnout he was delighted. This school proved a grand success and afterwards developed into a church.

\* \* \*

After I had worked six months in northern Iowa, southern Minnesota was added to my field and I was asked to establish my headquarters at Albert Lea, Minnesota. The Waterloo people wanted to circulate a petition asking the Union not to remove me from that field, and offered to pay me to go on with the work of the mission there. My former railroad work with the salary of one thousand dollars was also open to me. But I felt that the call to the Sunday-school missionary work was of the Lord, and I must continue with the Sunday School Union. Though my salary of six hundred dollars was small for a family of seven to live on I knew that, with the Lord's blessing, it would be enough.

Of course we had some hard times, and sometimes it seemed as if I ought to give up the work. At one particularly hard time a man offered me a position at ninety dollars a month, which would have allowed me to be at home with my family every day, but I was doing the Lord's work and I could not leave it for a larger salary.

Sometimes the Lord raised up friends in the most unexpected places. In order to get groceries

at one time I had been obliged to sell my horse and go afoot. Some weeks after a good brother in Chicago, whom I did not know, heard of my trouble and sent me as a loan one hundred dollars with which to buy a horse. I bought a mare and after three years I returned the money by selling her colt for a hundred dollars.

After one very hard trip I came home with my mind made up to apply for work to one of the officials of the Santa Fé Railroad, for I felt that I ought to be at home more than I could be while in the Sunday-school work. I had found Mrs. Sulzer very much overworked and not able to get hired help. When I went into the bedroom to get this man's address I found my oldest daughter, Clara, lying on the bed quite sick. I sat down by her and held her head, and so remained. As a result I neglected to get the address and did not write for the position. During the night she grew worse, and in the early morning God took her home.

At her birth we had consecrated her to the foreign mission field because I didn't get to go myself, and it was a hard struggle to give her up. But after some days I saw my mistake and became reconciled to the loss. Then it seemed to me that by her death the Lord had called me to keep on working for him in the home mission field, and I went back to my work with a stronger faith in my call to it.

Mrs. Sulzer gladly carried the burdens of the home. My salary would not allow us to have the

help she needed in the household work. Overworked as she was, when she was attacked by typhoid fever in the summer of 1886, she had not the strength to overcome it and passed to her reward.

This great sorrow left me with seven children to care for as best I could. It was a hard struggle to continue my work under such conditions; many times it seemed that I must give it up. But the Lord led me to choose another companion and helper. We were married in October, 1887.

In 1887 I received a letter from the Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America, saying that I had been commissioned to take up the denominational work. My field was to be the State of Minnesota. My commission was the first one sent out by the Board after the General Assembly had instructed them to do this work.

I had been with the American Sunday School Union nine years and four months when this call came. In that time I organized two hundred and fifty-seven Sunday schools, out of which grew sixteen churches of various denominations.

The American Sunday School Union were very kind to me, and I enjoyed my work with them, but I had argued, even before I entered their employ, that it is essential that each denomination—in order to build up a strong, faithful membership—should train its own children. After twenty-five years' experience with the denominational



work I feel more convinced than ever that my early impressions were correct.

During part of this time Rev. Joseph Brown was doing splendid work for our church in the neighboring state of Wisconsin. When his health failed that state was added to my field for one year. In 1907, on the death of Rev. J. B. Clapp, synodical superintendent of North Dakota, that state was added to mine, Minnesota and North Dakota have been my special fields since that time.

After the General Assembly had decided to inaugurate denominational Sunday-school work, and I had agreed to take up the work for the Board, Rev. James A. Worden, D.D., who was then superintendent of the department, wrote me asking what work needed to be done and the best way for the church to do it. I wrote him, substantially outlining the system by which we have, to a great extent, carried on our Sunday-school work ever since.

One of the suggestions that I made was that it might be a good idea to hold a Sunday-school institute in connection with presbytery; but it was thought best not to have such an institute at that time. Later I suggested to synod's committee that they recommend to synod the holding of such an institute. The proposition was indorsed, and I was given the chance to hold one.

Accordingly, in 1892, I called the first synodical Sunday-school institute ever held in the Presbyterian Church. It was held at St. Paul and we had one hundred and fifty delegates. It was a

decided success, notwithstanding the excitement attending the National Republican Convention in Minneapolis at the same time. In 1893 we had another institute at Minneapolis with two hundred delegates present. These and subsequent institutes proved a great stimulus to our work throughout the synod and I have often felt that they had much to do with the success in developing not only the Sunday schools, but the churches throughout the state.

Of late years our General Assembly has strongly recommended this institute work throughout all our synods, especially for educational work. But while these institutes are largely of an educational nature they also encourage and stimulate the leaders to more active work, which was the object we had at the outset.

Some twenty-two years ago one of the presbyteries wanted to ordain me, but I objected. After I left the meeting they appointed a commission to ordain me, but I informed the commission that I believed in a thoroughly educated ministry and that a man like myself, with limited schooling, could do better work in the Master's service as a layman and ruling elder.

STUDENT MISSIONARIES

## CHAPTER V

### STUDENT MISSIONARIES

Before the Board had permanent missionaries in Minnesota, certain students from the junior classes of the various seminaries were appointed to do Sunday-school work during the summer vacation. This proved a great blessing to the church. Not only was good accomplished during the summers, but the experience that these young men received in going from home to home and community to community helped them to become better pastors.

One year we had fourteen students and we organized two hundred and sixty-nine Sunday schools during the year. Many of them traveled on ponies which I bought for them.

One of the pony-riders was a student from Princeton. I located him in the northern part of the state, which had not been cleared up very much then. After he had been there a few weeks, he asked me what I meant by sending him where there was not a Presbyterian church within twenty miles; nothing but stumps and rocks. He wanted to know what to do and where to go. I told him to hold down the stumps and rocks until I could come; in the meantime he was to make a week-day appointment in the schoolhouse.

At that meeting we had a good audience and organized a little Presbyterian Sunday school. The

man who was elected superintendent was not very enthusiastic. He had been trained as a Methodist, but he was not a Methodist in working order. He invited us to his house to stay all night. When we reached his home the student sat down and tried to impress upon him his duties as superintendent, and among other things wanted him to promise to teach the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism, neither of which he had in all probability ever heard of. No wonder he wouldn't promise to do as he was asked.

When we went upstairs to bed my student sat on the edge of the bed—there was space for only one chair in the room—and wept like a child. He said to me, "I don't see why a man trying to run a Sunday school won't promise to teach anything." While he wept I had to laugh. I told him that by the time he had traveled with me six months he would find that the woods were full of that kind of superintendents.

That young man organized fourteen Sunday schools in his territory that summer, and three churches have since been organized from those schools!

Three years later I was at the opening of Macalester College, Minnesota, when a young man came across the car and said he was glad to see me at the meeting that day. Then he told me he was from the field where the student had organized those fourteen schools. He said there were three more from the locality attending college that year!

One of the students had organized a Sunday school in a little town and I wanted to encourage it, but I couldn't find anything of the school. It looked as though the young student had carried the school back with him to the seminary as a sample.

When I went there and spoke to the people about reorganizing the school they wanted to know what I would make it. I told them I would make it Presbyterian. They said nothing could be done there unless we made a Union school of it. I told them they had had a Union school, and that it died quick; we would put something there with a backbone, so it would stand. Some people have more wishbone than backbone.

I secured a hall, paid fifteen dollars for the first month's rent, bought four dozen chairs and half a cord of wood, hired a man to saw the wood, put up a stove, and then went visiting from house to house, inviting the neighbors to the meeting. I found large families, and all promised to come. When Sunday morning came I wondered if the hall would hold all that had promised to come. I remembered that—in case I didn't have enough seats—I could fix up more seats from some empty beer cases I had seen in the yard.

When the meeting was called to order there was just one man, one woman, two girls and a boy present. I organized a Sunday school, elected the man for superintendent and the woman for assistant and teacher, and fixed the time of meeting. Then I told them I would be back in two weeks

and that there would be preaching morning and evening. When I came back I had thirteen in the morning and twenty-nine at night.

I paid the rent for three months, and after that the people began to be interested and so able to pay their own bills. A young man was put in as home missionary, and the school soon developed into a church, which is now self-supporting. Two young men have gone out from this school and are preaching the gospel to-day.

\* \* \*

In 1890 a student was located in Crow Wing County and soon he reported that he had a number of schools organized in his district. Late in the fall I wrote to one of these schools that if they would keep the school going during the winter months the Board would give them the needed supplies so that they could use their money to keep warm. The superintendent wrote back that they had no trouble about fuel; it was the room to meet in that bothered them.

Soon afterwards I received a letter from Maitland Alexander, now pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but then a student in Princeton Seminary, and also superintendent of the Sunday school. He said that the children of his school had brought in Christmas presents and that if I knew of some worthy school and could make use of them he would send them. I wrote to him to send on the box, and at the same time I wrote to this superintendent up in the Crow Wing district, saying that I had a



1. Student Sabbath-school Missionaries with their ponies ready to depart for their fields. Thornton B. Penfield, J.



Russell Jones, Edward P. Gilchrist and Philip A. Schwarz. Albert Lea College in background.



2. Rev. Christopher Humble, M.D., who was brought into the service as a Sabbath-school Missionary through Mr. Sulzer.  
 3. Luncheon at an open-air Sunday-school Institute, Lake Chetek, Minnesota.



box of Christmas presents for the children, and that if he had a place for a meeting I would come and bring it. He wrote back by return mail to bring the box; they would find the room. He met me at the station with a little Indian pony and cutter. Going about ten miles up the Mississippi River on the ice, with the temperature about twenty-five below zero, he kept quite warm and comfortable by whipping and urging on the lazy little pony. Finally I asked him to let me drive for a while, but he didn't see the point—that I wanted to get warmed up also!

We had a very pleasant evening. Learning that three residents of the neighborhood were not present, I told them I would postpone the distribution of the gifts until the next night and have another meeting. All the neighbors were there the next evening and so I distributed the gifts. The box was a little like the widow's cruse of oil; it seemed as though it never got empty. We had gifts enough to go three times around.

After the distribution I asked where the Sunday school was to meet the next Sunday. They told me they had no place for the school. I urged the importance of a Sunday school, and finally a good woman said we could meet at her house. Other offers followed, and I made provision for nearly three months' meetings from house to house. Then I proposed that the men come and chop down some of the pines and put up a log church. One man rose up and said that they didn't have

the money for doors and windows. I told them that the Lord helps those who help themselves; that if they did the rest I thought we could provide enough for the doors and windows and shingles. The Board of Church Erection came to our rescue, and furnished enough money to buy the necessaries.

I appointed one of the men to boss the job if I wasn't there. They put up the church and sent for me when it was completed. At the first Sunday service I held in the new house fourteen were converted.

ORGANIZING UNDER  
DIFFICULTIES

## CHAPTER VI

### ORGANIZING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

From the car window I saw a new town springing up. When we stopped at the station I learned from the agent that there was neither Sunday school nor church there. So I wired to our pastor at the next station, asking him to meet me when I came through. When I saw him I told him I wanted him to go to this new town and make an appointment for me. I had appointments every evening that week, but by traveling at night I reached this town again on Saturday morning.

That day I visited every home in the vicinity and made arrangements for a place over a store for our meeting; there was to be an entrance and a stairway on the outside so that we could get to the meeting place without passing through the store. We had to have our services in the waiting room of the depot the first Sunday. The agent was not a Christian, but he was a big-hearted man, as the railroad men generally are.

A Sunday school was organized, and as there was no one there particularly fitted to be superintendent, the people elected a young man, a foreigner. Some one said he had been the prize fighter of the community. After some weeks the superintendent was married and that ended his term of office. I was glad of the opportunity to

make a change. We elected another superintendent, a woman who lived in town, and I felt impressed that I ought to go and call on her in the afternoon. After I talked to her about the responsibility of the work and the important mission she had undertaken, she told me I had got the wrong person; that she was at a dance all the night before, and proposed to go to another the following Saturday night. I delivered a private lecture on the subject of dancing, free of charge. It had the desired effect—she resigned. Then we elected a man who was not a Christian and rather profane.

Soon afterwards an evangelist conducted some meetings at the school, and before she closed the meetings I had the pleasure of seeing superintendent number one and his wife stand up and ask for the prayers of God's people. Superintendent number two accepted Christ. Superintendent number three took a stand for Christ and was elected an elder in the church that we organized.

\* \* \*

While driving over the prairie on one of my trips I came to a schoolhouse when the children were having recess. I learned from them that they had no Sunday school. I told them I would see them again. In a few weeks I went back and announced a service for ten o'clock the next Sunday morning.

We had a full house and I gave them a gospel talk. When we got ready to organize the Sunday school there was a great deal of objection; among

other excuses they said they had no one for superintendent. The man I wanted for superintendent was right in the company. I worked and talked, trying to have them name some one for superintendent, but they wouldn't nominate anyone. It was nearly one o'clock. Some of them began to get ready to go home, when I stepped to the door, locked it and said that not one of them would get out of that door until they organized. It wasn't long before they nominated the person I wanted and he was elected superintendent.

The school did most excellent work. One of the little girls that I first spoke to afterwards graduated from college and now she and her husband are doing faithful missionary work in Kansas.

\* \* \*

While riding in a caboose on one of my trips a tall, old man, rather seedy-looking, entered. He had been away from home. His shoes were ragged and his face and hair looked as though he had not seen a barber shop for a month or two. He came in with a fiddle case in one hand and his wardrobe tied up in a red bandanna in the other. As he sat opposite to me my heart went out to him. I wondered if he knew that the Lord loved him and I became very anxious to speak to him about it, but, as he was a large man, if he did not take it kindly I didn't know how I would come out, not being able to run away.

After a while I asked him what he had in his box. When he said it was a fiddle, I asked him to get it out and play a tune. To my surprise he

played all gospel hymns, so I said, "You must play in church." He shook his head. "You certainly must play in Sunday school," I suggested. Again he shook his head. He told me they had no use for tunes of that sort where he played. Then he told me where he lived and said they had no Sunday school or church there. I told him that if he would promise, when he got home, to go around and give out an appointment for a certain Sunday, I would come and hold a meeting.

On the Saturday before the meeting he met me at the station, twelve miles from the schoolhouse. When we reached the schoolhouse we found it had lots of grain stored in it and that it had not been used, even for day school, for a long time. We cleaned it out and got it ready for Sunday morning, when we had a full house and organized a Sunday school. It flourished and in a year or two a church developed out of it.

One day when I was at his home, a couple of years later, I asked him to give me a tune. He said he couldn't; he had sold his fiddle because they came after him to play for dances. The family moved later from the place, and I have heard that both he and his daughter are to-day playing violins in Sunday school.

\* \* \*

I wanted to encourage the schools in a certain neighborhood to become "Evergreen," so I arranged for a little Sunday-school convention in a grove on Elm Creek. I didn't call it a convention; just called it a Sunday-school picnic for all that



Presbyterian Church and Manse at Blackduck, Minnesota.  
The only Protestant church in the town.



Presbyterian Church, Bemidji, Minnesota.



Chief Bemidji and his home.



The beginning of Bemidji Sunday school.



part of the county. By ten o'clock some half-a-dozen schools had gathered. Load after load came in on hayracks, their baskets well filled with cake and pie and other good things to eat. About eleven o'clock a shower came up, so I moved to adjourn to the new barn which had been built there. We stationed some strong men on the upper floor and then pulled up the boys and girls and women and gave them reserved seats on the new hay. We borrowed an organ from one of the neighbors and had one of the best meetings I think I ever attended. There was no running out, for no one could get down until they were helped. We had dinner up there, too, and adjourned about five o'clock.

As the people on one of the loads were starting home I told them I had heard nothing from their Sunday school. They said they had no Sunday school in their neighborhood. Then I got up on the hayrack—there were eighteen on the load, men, women and children—and I wanted to know why they didn't have a school and if they couldn't have one. I tried to show them that they could have one. By and by the man who drove the mule team said: "Look here, mister, you get off! We have six or seven miles to drive, lots of chores to do, and it is getting late." I answered, "I will never get off until you organize a Sunday school, and the quicker you organize the quicker I will get off." Right then I elected all of the officers, fixed the time for the meeting the next Sunday, and the only thing I forgot was to take up the col-

lection. And off they went. I shall never forget, as I watched the load, which was jolting up and down, how anxious I was as to whether they were going to lose the Sunday school out before they got home.

The man who was elected superintendent had been a school-teacher, but had gone on a farm for his health. Some months afterwards I wrote him, asking how the school was progressing. He did not answer. Then after a while I wrote again, but there was no answer. So in the fall I went out to see about it. I wondered that the superintendent had not written, for I found him all right and the school growing. It was snowing the day I visited them, but they had a good school and at the evening service there were three conversions. The assistant superintendent stood up with a baby in his arms and said he wanted to be a Christian and wanted us to pray for him. After the meeting he invited me to go home with him to show him how to establish a family altar, said he wanted to start in right. The school was afterwards moved to town and a church organized.

\* \* \*

In a town where I proposed to start a Sunday school I was looking up the best man for superintendent. This best man had been a member of an evangelical church at one time, but had ceased to work at the business. He tried to persuade me that nothing could be done; nobody would come to a meeting. I told him I would see him later.

I went out visiting from home to home and

around in the country. Five miles from this place I called on a family, and when I told the woman I was a Sunday-school missionary and was trying to establish a Sunday school she broke down and wept. She explained that she had not seen a minister for fifteen years, and that her thirteen-year-old Johnny had never seen the inside of a Sunday school. On Saturday evening I went back to town, and the good brother again tried to convince me that nobody would be out at the meeting. I told him we would see in the morning.

At the appointed time he and his daughter were there and twelve or fifteen children, but that was all. I thought I heard him chuckle. As I started to go away I said, "You take care of the children till I come back." I went up the street and rapped at the door of the saloon. When I opened the door there was a great audience there. I told them I had no bell on my meetinghouse, and as they had not been used to going to services here I was afraid they might forget about the appointed time, so I had come down to ask them to go to the schoolhouse. They promised to come, and the proprietor and all kept their promise. Then I went to the store. The storekeeper and his customers came also, so we had a very good audience. The Sunday school was organized and did good work.

Some years afterwards I was called to this same place to assist in raising money for a church building. One of the men, who lived five miles out in the country, said, "Mr. Sulzer, I ain't got a dol-

lar, but you can come down to my barn and pick out five of the best milch cows there, and if five won't bring a hundred dollars you can take six." The next man said, "I will go out on the prairie and pick up the stone for the foundation." And in this way we raised the money. The church was built, and also a manse.

When the church was organized the man who gave the cows became one of the elders, and he was a very faithful one. He has gone to his reward, but his son, who was then a little lad, is filling his father's place as elder and worker in the church.

\* \* \*

While conducting services in a city in Iowa I heard of a small town where they had no Sunday school or preaching services, so the day after I closed the meetings I took the train to this place.

I reached the town at daybreak, and as I went up the street I saw people peeping out of the windows from behind the curtains; evidently they were wondering what stranger was wandering around. I visited every house in town and invited them out to a meeting that night, and then visited for three or four miles out from the town, and all I saw promised to be present.

When I reached the town again, just at meeting time in the evening, the schoolhouse was locked and I had to find the school-teacher in order to get the key. Then I found her kindling wood and built a fire, but when I attempted to light the lamps

I found there were none to light. I went to a neighbor's and borrowed a lamp and I set it on the desk. By this time it was nearly nine o'clock. I looked up the street and down the street, but saw no one coming.

I waited awhile, then took the front seat. And I kept on sitting there. Then I had a song service all to myself, and then I sat there some more. Then I had a prayer meeting. And still I sat there. By and by one of my German friends opened the door and I invited him in to help me sit there. After a while the door opened and eight or ten young people came—I suppose simply to see me sit there. When they sat down near the door I took the lamp and put it near them.

I didn't have enough light to read the Scriptures by, but I quoted some the best I knew how and sang hymns that I knew, and by the time I had given a gospel talk I had a fair audience, as the people gradually came in. I talked Sunday school and took a vote, then I made a motion and seconded it, put the question and I voted for it. Next I called for nomination for superintendent. No one said a word, so I nominated a certain man. I seconded the motion and then I elected him myself. I filled the rest of the offices in the same way. After I had elected the officers I asked the people to suggest a time for meeting the next Sunday. Again there was silence, so I moved that we meet at three o'clock. Then I seconded the motion, and voted "Aye."

It was about eleven o'clock when we got through

with the meeting. No one asked me to go home with him, so I was left alone.

There was a night express at twelve o'clock, but it was not allowed to stop there, so I borrowed a lantern of the saloon-keeper—the saloon was the only place that was open—and signaled the train to stop. When the engineer drew up to the platform he saw what the light was for and opened the throttle, but I jumped on.

The next day I went to the pastor of our nearest church and told him that I had found the best preaching place this side of China, and when I told him where it was he promised to go there and preach during the week. Six months afterwards I had a letter from one of the business men—the one I had elected as secretary of the school—thanking me very cordially for coming and starting the school. They had just bought a lot and hoped soon to build a church.

PIONEER HOSPITALITY

## CHAPTER VII

### PIONEER HOSPITALITY

After organizing a Sunday school in one of the rural districts, where the material for superintendent was very limited, the young woman who was elected invited me to go to her home for dinner. She was a very nice young woman, although inexperienced in Sunday-school work. I hadn't time to stop for dinner, but, as they lived along the road I had to take to my next appointment, I was willing to stop for bread and milk, as it would give me a chance to coach her as to her duties.

While I was talking to her mother and father, who were quite elderly people, she was out in the kitchen getting ready my lunch. She brought it in—a two-quart tin basin of milk with some bread and a piece of pie. I was very busy talking, breaking in considerable bread and eating it. After a while, when the milk got down in the pan, my spoon would catch on something, capsizing it, but I was busy talking and didn't think about it. When I got down to the bottom there were black rags pulled through holes in the bottom of the basin, and the old rags were floundering around as though they were little bullheads. After my dinner I went on my way rejoicing to my next appointment.



One very busy week I organized four Sunday schools. I started out early Saturday morning to revive another that had only about twelve in attendance when they ought to have had seventy-five. There was so much faultfinding with the superintendent and others that I had to preach a sermon in nearly every home where I went. About one o'clock I came to the home of the superintendent and drove into his barnyard just as he was starting for the field with a scythe on his shoulder. Calling him by name, I asked for dinner for myself and the horse. When he refused, I said that a little bread and milk would do me and a little oats for my horse. He said they had no time to bother with me. Then he began to tell about his good deeds. I just let him talk for nearly an hour; I made up my mind that if I couldn't get the bread and milk I would get the time. He was in such a hurry, but I wasn't.

I thought I would stop at the next house and rest up, for I was just about sick and I didn't feel that I could drive much further. The house I came to was near the schoolhouse, where the services were to be held next day. I rapped at the door, and when the lady of the house came I called her by name and asked her if I could stay till morning. She said she was sorry there were no accommodations for me. I told her I was willing to sleep on the lounge or on the floor, and begged to stay, as I was not feeling well. But she insisted that she did not have accommodations for me, so I turned away.

I crawled back into my "one-hoss shay," pulled up under a shade tree near the house and sobbed and rebelled, telling the Lord that I was going home, that I used to have a good deal more salary than I was getting now and had a place to stay every night. While I was thus rebelling a small voice said:

"Sulzer, what are you doing this for? Are you better than the Son of Man, who had not a place to lay his head?"

Then I straightened up and told the Lord that if he would forgive me I would go on with my work.

Just then the man of the house came in from the field, and, seeing me, said, "Hello, Mr. Sulzer, why don't you put up your horse and stay all night?" "Will it be convenient?" I asked. "Yes," he replied. "You go into the house and I will take care of the horse." But if ever I was anxious to take care of a horse it was then. I helped him unhitch and put the horse into the barn. Then once more he urged me to go into the house, as he had a few chores to do. I wanted to help him do the chores; he didn't know what his wife had told me. In order to get rid of me, he went into the house with me. When he ushered me upstairs to my room that night there were two empty beds—and I sleep in only one at a time.

The next morning when the Sunday school was organized this good woman was elected secretary and treasurer.

After a meeting one afternoon I went home with some people who had invited me. When I saw that supper was nearly ready—I could see easily, as the dining room, kitchen, library and living room were all in one—I asked if I might wash. At the mother's suggestion a little girl about ten went out into the barnyard and brought in a six-quart pan that had been set out with sour milk for the chickens. Then I washed.

When we came to the supper table I noticed the tea pot; it was different from most of those we have now. The cover, the handle and the spout hadn't got on it yet. It was a two-quart fruit can! The coffee pot the next morning was of the same patent.

That night we went five miles to the meeting. It was cold, dark and blustery, and we took all the bedclothes in the house in which to wrap up the children. During the meeting it rained and sleeted, and the bedclothes were wet through. When we reached home at eleven o'clock we warmed ourselves and dried the bedclothes by a hay fire; the man would bring in a fork of hay and I would twist it up and throw it on the blaze. (There was not a stick of wood or a pound of coal in the house.) It was nearly three o'clock when the mother of the family thought the bedclothes were dry enough. They gave me the spare bed—it was the only bed in the house—and the rest of them slept on the floor.

The school organized there lived all winter, and the next spring I had a letter from my hostess,

asking me to visit them and hold a Sunday meeting soon. The promise was made that my expenses would be paid. When the time came the schoolhouse was crowded and they had to pull up the wagons to the windows so that they could sit outside and hear. The people came from twenty miles around. One wagonload of folks came with dinner in a clothes basket.

After the dinner my host said:

"Friends, I promised Brother Sulzer that if he would come and hold this meeting to-day we would pay all his expenses. We will take a collection now. His expenses are four dollars."

They went all over the house and around the crowd outside; then they counted the cash. They took another collection and counted that, and another collection and counted that. When they started around the fourth time I said:

"Hold on there, how much have you?"

"We have one dollar and fifty-two cents."

"I am glad you have that much. I would rather talk to you the rest of the time than take collections."

We had a splendid meeting. While this little Sunday school never grew into a church it was all the religious training those boys and girls had, and so it meant much to them.

The ninety-year-old grandmother of one of the boys told me that the Sunday school had brought back her Christian faith. She knit lace collars and sold them for fifty cents each to earn money for missions. A short time after I was there she gave

five dollars for home missions and ten dollars to foreign missions, and later sent me six dollars for my missionary work, all earned in that way. I afterwards met one of her grandsons in South Dakota, and was glad to find he was an elder in the church there.

\* \* \*

One day I drove up to a log cabin and invited the family out to a meeting the next night. The head of the family promised to take all his folks. Then he asked me to put up my horse and stay all night. When I asked him if it would be convenient, he said they would find a peg to hang me on.

Seeing the small log house, and quite a number around, I wondered where they would put me. When night came I was taken upstairs to a room where there were four beds. The family consisted of father, mother, two daughters, one son and a "school ma'am." But in the small log house there was plenty of room to entertain the missionary. There is always room where the hearts of the people are large enough, or where they are interested in the Lord's work.

\* \* \*

Once when I had an appointment about thirty miles from home, on the railroad, to conduct a series of meetings, Mrs. Sulzer was taken quite sick. I provided for her comfort, and went down at the appointed time to say that I could not conduct the meetings on account of her sickness.

After I reached there a terrible storm came up and the railroad was completely blockaded, so that I could not get home. I conducted the meetings from night to night, having it understood that whenever the train came through I must go home. I was snowed in for ten days and unable to get any word from home. We had good meetings and there were fifteen conversions.

Then I was so nervous that I started home afoot. I walked two thirds of the way, breaking through many a time as I passed over snowdrifts as big as a house. Just at dark, when twelve miles from home, I came to the home of friends. I intended to go on my way that night, but the good Samaritan insisted I must stay until morning.

I started on after breakfast, and reached my home at half-past twelve. At one o'clock the first train arrived! Through the kindness of the neighbors Mrs. Sulzer had had all necessary care.

Some months afterwards a gentleman stopped me on the road and told me that I had spoiled his work when I held the meetings during the snow-storm. He explained that he was a detective for the railroad and had gone to detect thieves who were stealing out of the yards by the wagonload. He had his case all ready and was about to arrest them when I started the meetings. But the thieves were at the meetings night after night. As none of them ever came back to the yard, he could not make his arrests and so lost his case.

During some meetings I held in a country neighborhood in Iowa the young people in one family became much interested and one daughter decided for Christ. The father and mother were unbelievers. One evening these young people took me home with them.

The parents had already retired when we reached the house. I had a good talk with the young people. The door to the parents' room was partly open, and they no doubt heard my conversation. In the morning, while waiting for breakfast, the father said, "You are setting up the children against the parents." I told him I did not intend to do so. Just then the daughter came into the room. I called her by name and asked her if she did not love her father and mother just as much after becoming a Christian as before. She said, very emphatically, "Yes, indeed I do, and a great deal more."

In the afternoon, before we started to the meeting, I had prayer with one of the boys in the barn, and he suggested that I leave my horse and they would take me with them over to the place where the afternoon meeting was to be held. After the meeting I was invited to another house for supper. While there the boy brought my horse and cutter, as the parents had told him that they did not want me on their premises any longer. The good work in that family went on, the daughter, especially, being a determined and consecrated Christian, and all came out right between the family and myself.



Looking for their friend the  
Sabbath-school Missionary.



An outgrowth of Sabbath-school  
missions. Presbyterian Church  
at Otter Creek, Minnesota.



The Presbyterian manse, chapel and the pastor with his family,  
at Souris, North Dakota.



Not long after, as I was driving along in that neighborhood with another Sunday-school missionary, I felt that I ought to call in to see Mr. W., who had attended the meetings. We met him out in the barnyard. I told him we had come to see whether he was ready to give his heart to the Lord. I had my hand on one shoulder, my friend put his hand on the other, and we had a word of prayer standing. When he got into the house he was raging and told his wife that if those Pharisees ever stepped inside his house he would use his boots on them.

That night at the meeting—with his consent—we decided to have an afternoon prayer meeting at his house the next day. There were thirty-two present that afternoon. Before the close of the meeting he rose up and said, "I want to tell you that you don't need to waste any more prayers on me, for it won't do any good." When he sat down I asked them all to kneel and pray for him. That night he took a stand for Christ. After the meeting he invited us most heartily to come and stay at his house for the rest of the time that we held meetings; he said that we could do our praying standing, kneeling or sitting, just as we pleased. He was a faithful Christian man thereafter. There were forty-six conversions at the meetings. The community, which would not allow religious services in the schoolhouse before, but had infidel meetings only, was completely changed.

\* \* \*

About a month after the close of the meetings

I was within ten miles of this place, visiting among the families. That day I could not find a place to stay. At one place the man told me he had no room for my horse, though he had a big red barn, and I knew there was always a way to make room for one more horse in a place like that. At the next place there were too many dogs inside the gate, so I did not dare to go to the house. Then I thought I would stay with one of my German minister friends. When I rang the bell he came around the house, but did not even ask me in. We talked so long I got cold and chilly, as well as hungry. It was about nine o'clock and I had had no supper.

Three miles further on I found a man who had just driven up to the front door to take in the women to go to a meeting at a neighbor's house. On seeing me he said he thought he would put up the team and stay at home. But I said we would put up my horse and I would go with him. He objected that I had eaten no supper. I assured him I could eat when we came back from the meeting. I learned later that he had been delayed nearly an hour; had had trouble in hitching up one of his horses. It was a fortunate delay for me.

The meeting to which we went lasted until two o'clock in the morning. I tried to close it three times, but it wouldn't close. There were five conversions, among them some that could not be reached during the meetings that were previously held at the schoolhouse. I could see then why

the Lord had closed up all the other homes and sent me there. I had supper about three o'clock in the morning.

A year or more later, in South Dakota, I called on Mr. W., who had moved there. I asked him what he was doing for the Lord. He said there was nothing to do; that it was of no use to try to have a Sunday school there. I went to visit the day school, where I found quite a number of children. When the teacher called on me to address them I asked them whether they would like a Bible school and they all said they would. So I appointed an hour for them to meet on the next Sunday. I could not be there myself, so I appointed a committee of three among the children to go and ask Mr. W. to teach them at that hour.

Then I went back to his house and told him what had been done. He said he would not teach in the Sunday school. "Well," said I, "I want you to promise that you will go there next Sunday and look those children square in the eyes and tell them that you won't teach them." The result was he went on with the Sunday school. In less than three months he organized another school and superintended them both. He always lived a devout Christian life, and his children followed their father's example.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Once when driving to an appointment about twelve miles from the railroad station I came upon a team hitched to a two-seated wagon standing in the middle of the road. It was headed for the station, eight miles away, and it was getting late. There was a man sitting on a side embankment smoking his pipe. It was difficult to pass his team. Said I:

“Hello there, what are you sitting there for? You are eight miles from home and it is getting dark. Why don’t you drive on?”

“I can’t. I’ve got a hot box,” he replied.

He had not oiled up that morning, the axle had become hot, and that was what set the wheel.

And the man sat also.

My partner was driving on. Said I:

“Just hold a minute. I will go back and help this fellow out. It won’t do to leave him there all night.”

I went up to his wagon and said:

“You come down here. Get that monkey wrench, take off that burr, and now let’s both get hold of the wheel.”

We pulled, but the wheel did not budge a bit. I told him it was coming. I always talk encouragingly when a man is in trouble. At the second

pull it did not budge a bit. I again insisted it was coming. I was in hopes it would. The third time I said:

“Now—together—pull!”

And the wheel came off. The fact is, that man pulled the wheel off alone, as I didn't pull an ounce. I only talked encouragingly and he did the work.

I hadn't thought of this incident for years, when at a meeting of some church leaders I was called on to give a report of my work. This incident flashed into my mind. After I had told it I said: “Now you fellows have done the work. I just talked encouragingly and you pulled the wheel off.”

\* \* \*

One day Mr. Wright and I were invited out to dinner by a woman who was a professing Christian, but her husband was not, and she gave us to understand that we had better not say anything to him in regard to religion, as he might not take it kindly. After a pleasant visit and a good dinner we concluded to go around the lake for a little hunt, and before we started one of us suggested that we have a short Scripture reading and a word of prayer. Before kneeling I put my hand on the husband's shoulder and said, “Now, John, just give your heart to the Lord while we pray.”

He came to church that night without his wife, and, when returning home, on passing a little wood, he felt impelled to go into the grove and pray. He did so, and as he arose he felt so light

and happy that he hardly knew what had come over him. All at once it dawned upon him that he had accepted Christ and that his sins were forgiven. When he reached home he waked his wife and told her the story. The next evening, at our meeting, he related the incident of the night before and gave a rousing testimony of how the Lord had forgiven his sins. He was afterwards made an officer in the church which we organized immediately following this series of meetings.

\* \* \*

On the train at one time I felt impressed that I ought to speak to a gentleman who sat in the seat in front of me. Finding that he was a contractor in South Dakota and that he had been up near Devil's Lake, we talked of the country. He was very enthusiastic about it, and spoke of the bright prospects of that country.

After a while I spoke to him about his soul's salvation, and the prospects for eternity. He was a little inclined to be an unbeliever, but when I came to my station and bade him good-by he handed me a five-dollar bill, and said he had never had a man talk to him who came so near his heart. That was the last I saw of the man. I hope the seed-sowing was not fruitless.

\* \* \*

While driving along one day I saw a man chopping wood by the side of his house. I felt impressed that I ought to speak to him about his soul's salvation, so I hitched my horse and introduced myself. Then I said, "Are you a Christian?"

He straightened up and replied that I had better go into the house and talk to the women. I told him that I would like to talk to the women, but that I was after him just now. He pointed two miles off to a church steeple, and said:

“Do you see that church steeple down there? I want you to understand that I pay that preacher down there five dollars a year and my women attend his meetings. If my soul isn't saved that preacher is responsible.” I pitied the preacher as well as himself. And there are many who have the same idea of getting saved.

\* \* \*

During a series of meetings I became much interested in a big, young man who attended every night. His sister was a member of our church, but was not very active. She promised to take hold of the work and do something for the Master.

One night the pastor of the church and myself were invited to take a little lunch at the home of the girl. Her family was the wealthiest in town, and they had a beautiful home. While we were sitting there the young man in whom I was interested came in and went upstairs. When she told me he was her brother, I said to her that she had a good subject in him to work on. She promised to use her influence to help win him to Christ.

After he was converted I found out that this young man had been away in another state, and would draw on his father for quite large sums of money—five hundred to a thousand dollars at a





A Sunday-school picnic at New Prague, Minnesota.



Sunday-school Institute at Slaughter Schoolhouse, Montrail County, North Dakota.

time. His father at first thought he was putting it into business, but later found out that he was gambling and had told the young man that he disowned him. The young man had come home to try to make up, was happily converted and his father forgave him. His sister became an active church worker.

\* \* \*

Driving over the prairie one day I passed a schoolhouse just as school was out, and I invited some of the boys into my "one-hoss shay," as they were going my way. I had nine of them, and we were having a good time as we rode along. I asked one little fellow, about nine years old, if he loved Jesus. "I don't know the man," was his reply. He had never heard about Jesus. I told him I would be back in a few weeks to see what I could do to help him learn about Jesus.

I came back in a few weeks and helped organize a Sunday school, and as there was no Christian in the district we elected a good woman for superintendent. In about a month or six weeks I received word from her that the people were crowding in and filling the schoolhouse chuck full. She asked me to come to her assistance. I got there on Sunday quite a little time before the Sunday-school hour, but she was there. We were alone for some time, and in talking things over she told me she thought the superintendent and teachers ought to be Christians. I told her I thought so myself, and thought so when she was elected, and added:

“You just kneel down right here and give your heart to the Lord.”

She did so, and the school had a Christian superintendent right away. She united with the church and lived an exemplary Christian life.

\* \* \*

One day I saw a young woman sitting in the seat behind me on the railway car. I felt impressed that I ought to speak to her, but it was quite embarrassing to do so. But after a while I got up courage and asked her where she lived. She gave me the name of the town and her own name and told me that she was going to South Dakota to hold down a claim and to teach school.

Then I reminded her that there was no Sunday school where she was going. When she said she knew this, I told her she must have one when she opened her school. She said she had never taught in Sunday school, so I said:

“But you will have to do it now, and, furthermore, right here I elect you superintendent and assistant and secretary and treasurer. And I will send you the necessary helps for the school.”

Finally she promised she would do as I asked. Only a few months afterwards I received a letter from her saying that they had forty-seven in the Sunday school, preaching every two weeks, and were looking forward to a church organization—and all this was the outcome of improving a little opportunity.

After organizing a Sunday school I was asked to send helps and supplies. The people present said they would send me the money. I sent the supplies and helps, but they forgot to send me the money. Three years after, when standing on the platform of a depot about three miles from where the treasurer of this school lived, I thought I would make the wait pay. I had three hours to wait for the train, so I decided to go down and get the three dollars and fifty cents they owed me.

I took a bee line across the prairie. On the way I saw a man plowing in the field, and something said to me, "Sulzer, talk to that man about his soul." I was in a hurry and I said, "Not now." The second time something said, "Go and talk to that man about his soul." But I said, "When I come back I will." The third time something said to me, "Talk to that man about his soul." Whereupon, I ran over to where he was, halted him and asked him, "Are you a Christian?" He stopped his team and said he didn't know. I told him he had better find out.

During the conversation that followed he told me that he sometimes felt that he ought to be a Christian, and that he thought if it were not for his wife he might be a Christian. Usually the difficulty is on the other side. I asked him if his wife was at home. He pointed down to the house; there she was, washing. He left his team standing in the field, and we both went to the house.

When we got into the house I saw three beautiful children. "Are those children yours?" I

asked. "Then don't you know that those children need a praying father and a praying mother?" After I talked with them about their soul's salvation they both kneeled down and gave their hearts to the Lord. They had both been afraid, as is often the case, to talk to each other about this most important matter.

When I was ready to go it was nearly train time, so I rushed back to the depot without seeing the treasurer. And I still have the money for the supplies coming to me!

\* \* \*

In Chicago one day a man told me I ought to go down to a little town in Illinois, where there was no Sunday school or church service of any kind, and see if I could not plant a Sunday school there; he was alarmed about his nieces and nephews who were living there. I told him I would go. As soon as I could do so I went to the place and found a town of twelve hundred people. After securing a room by the week I started my visitation. I gave notice for a meeting on the next Sunday, at the same time keeping my eye open for the proper person for superintendent. But after visiting from house to house for two days and a half I had seen no person that I thought was fit for the office.

After dinner on the third day I rang the bell of a house on the hill and a young lady of about thirty summers met me at the door. The first impression I got was that she was the right one for superintendent, so I told her she was the girl I wanted for superintendent of the Sunday school

I was trying to organize. She told me I was wrong; that she would not superintend a Sunday school. I told her that she would, but she insisted that she would not, so I simply said that I would tell the people as I went along that I had found a superintendent.

They all thought she would make a splendid officer. When Sunday came she was elected, but absolutely refused to act, so we couldn't do anything that day. But I told them I would remain in town till they should organize a Sunday school, and the sooner they organized the sooner they would get rid of me. I announced that there would be another service the next Sunday. They organized quick that day. The young woman was again elected superintendent, and made a most excellent leader. The next winter I went to the town and held meetings. There were fifteen conversions, the superintendent's own sister being among those deciding for Christ at that time.

\* \* \*

I had quite a lesson taught me by some boys, as it showed me how children will not only watch the parents, but also their Sunday-school teachers during the week. One winter the young people in our town were getting up a play for the benefit of a church. A friend sent two tickets to our home. Mrs. Sulzer thought we ought to go. I did not want to refuse, but hoped something would happen so that we could not go.

Nothing happened, so when the evening came we were both ready. When we got down town I

looked at my watch and saw that it was nearly an hour ahead of time. I asked Mrs. Sulzer to wait for me at the office of a friend while I went to the post office to get the mail. On the way I had to pass the opera house. Three boys were standing on the sidewalk at the foot of the stairs, none of them over ten years old. When they saw me coming I heard one of them say, "There comes Mr. Sulzer!" Another said, "You won't catch him upstairs!" And the third said, "You bet your boots you won't." As I passed on I said to myself, "Lord, take those boys home before I come to go upstairs," and when we got ready to enter the building the boys had disappeared.

While we sat there waiting for the curtain to go up something occurred at the rear of the hall, and everybody looked around. Two young women from the Bible class were sitting in front of us and they saw me. The one put her hand up to her face and said: "Jenny, we're all right. Mr. Sulzer is just behind us."

Soon after that I looked up the three boys and found they were from homes where there was no Bible or Christian influence, and they had no religious instruction except what they received in the Sunday school. The remarks of these boys showed the influence of the Sunday school in developing higher standards.

THE WEAK BECOME STRONG



## CHAPTER IX

### THE WEAK BECOME STRONG

Hearing of a northern town, the terminus of a railroad, that had no Sunday school or church, I took the train and arrived there in due time. Inquiring for the hotel, I was told how to find it. I was glad there was an identifying sign on the building. It was a log cabin. When I entered I found some fifteen woodsmen sitting around, smoking their pipes; if it had not been for the sign I would have thought it was a smokehouse instead of a hotel. I registered, told the landlord I would be back after a while, and worked my way to the door to get some fresh air. It was quite fresh, for the thermometer registered between twenty-five and thirty below zero.

I saw two or three children coasting down the hill, and I proceeded to get acquainted with them. Then I gave them each a Sunday-school card and told them to coast on. When I went to the nearest house and the good woman came to the door I supposed, of course, she would ask me in, but she didn't. I had put my foot up on the doorsill, and I kept it there for fear the wind might blow the door shut. I asked questions. By and by the door knob began to rattle, and a neighbor who was sitting inside began to pull up her shawl. They were quite anxious to shut the door, as they

were getting cold, but I hadn't finished my visit, so I kept my foot on the doorsill. Finally the woman asked me to go in. After I stepped in the neighbor woman asked me where I was stopping. When she learned that I was at the hotel she called it an awful place and asked me to stop at her house while in the town. I accepted quickly, but said I would take supper with the men at the hotel, in order to get them out to the meeting.

That evening I organized a Sunday school. I had intended to go away the next morning, but I was a little afraid that my school wouldn't last until Sunday if I didn't stay with it.

When Sunday came none of the officers elected would act, so I reorganized the school. We borrowed a woman from the next town to superintend it, and I remained three weeks, holding services every day and sometimes twice a day.

We secured a lot for the church, and the pastor from our nearest church—seventy miles away—came and organized the church. Soon afterwards a building was put up, and it is a self-supporting church to-day. This good woman told me that up to the time I came they had had but one sermon in the twelve years she had lived in the town; that was preached by a minister who stayed over Sunday when on his way through the place.

\* \* \*

I visited one little town with the intention of organizing a Sunday school there, but the people were all foreigners and there was no one to lead. I watched the place for fourteen years, when

finally I heard that several promising families had moved in. At once I wrote to one of the women, who was a member of the Presbyterian church in another place, saying that I would be there the next Sunday to see about organizing a school.

Before going to the schoolhouse I called on her. She told me that she had received my letter and called the women of the town together to see what could be done in the way of organizing a school, but they had decided that they could not do it, because there was no one there for superintendent, and the people would not come out anyway. I asked her if she didn't know that I had decided to have a Sunday school, and also that she would be superintendent. Of course she did not know it, and she said she was unwilling. I merely told her that I would see her about it later on.

We had a fine audience at the schoolhouse, and when the meeting was over the school was organized and this woman was elected superintendent. Our neighboring pastor went to preach for them. They paid him two hundred dollars a year; this payment helped to make his little church self-supporting. One of our missionaries and I went out the following winter and held meetings, at which there were fifteen conversions.

\* \* \*

After organizing a church in a town of three or four hundred, where there was no English church and no English Sunday school, I conducted some evangelistic meetings for a few weeks and secured money for the erection of a church build-

ing. While busy with these meetings I heard of a new town to the north, where there were large stone quarries, but where there was no church or Sunday school. I was told that this new town was a hard proposition, but I felt impressed that I ought to go there, and so closed my meetings two days earlier than I had intended.

I arrived about twelve o'clock, and stopped at the first house I came to, not knowing one person from another. It happened to be the right place for my errand. I found an excellent Christian woman, a Scotch Presbyterian. I told her I was a Sunday-school missionary, and had come to see what I could do to help them get a Sunday school started. She was delighted with the idea. Then I went off to see the man who had the right to let me have the schoolhouse.

I secured the schoolhouse and invited some of the quarry men to come out. They promised to come, and did. I organized a Sunday school the following Sunday, and then held two weeks' services. During the services Dr. Adams came and organized a Presbyterian church, which has been self-supporting for some years.

\* \* \*

One day I received a letter from a woman, stating that a certain town had had neither Sunday school nor preaching service of any kind for some time. She said that the American Sunday School Union had tried in vain to have a school, and that two denominations had also failed. At the first opportunity I went to this town, and while

I was looking the place over two or three business men were looking me over. I had fully decided that something ought to be done.

After I had made my plans, and was fully convinced that these were some of the men who had driven out the other Sunday schools, I asked them if I could not have the schoolhouse for Sunday school the next Sunday. They looked at each other, then one spoke. He told me that if I would get each voter in the district to sign a petition, and would give bonds for the schoolhouse, and pay so much a Sunday, he thought I could get the house. I looked him square in the eye and said: "Do you see any green in my eyes? Do you suppose I have time to waste in that way? How much is the rent of that dancing hall over there? Will you let me have it for next Sunday if I pay for it?"

"I guess you can have it," they said.

"Thank you, it is engaged."

The next Sunday, after my service and the organization of a Sunday school, I went to the rear of the store where the men were playing cards and asked how much the rent of the dance hall was for the month. They said five dollars. I paid it and said I would be back when the month was up. When the month was about up I wrote to one of the business men and told him if they would let me have the hall free of charge we would hold some special meetings. When I came he handed me the key and we went on with the meetings.

During the three weeks' meetings there was one very stormy night, when not a woman came out,

but these men were all there. Before we dismissed that evening we had four hundred and fifty dollars pledged toward a church building. After three weeks we closed the meetings with a church organized. Enough money was raised—with the help of the Board of Church Erection—to put up a good church building. I understand they have a new manse now.

\* \* \*

In a destitute town I held the first religious service and organized the first Sunday school they ever had. I went back to visit it a short time afterwards while I was looking after a school thirteen miles south of there. The teams were not very plenty, and the roads, if any, were poor, so when I saw a freight train moving north I jumped on. I rode in a coal car eight miles, then walked five miles through the woods and reached my school in time to encourage them. In the evening I held a service and had a good audience.

After the meeting an elderly man came up to shake hands with me, and said:

“Glad you came. I have not been in a church for years, and you and I don’t think just alike about this matter, but I heard how you came in here to-day, and I thought if you were that kind of fellow I would come and hear you. Let me know a little beforehand the next time you come and I will have a houseful for you. Come around in the morning and I’ll give you the best lot in town to build a church on.”

I thanked him, and accepted. A lady standing



Grace Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Presbyterian Church and Manse at Lewiston, Minnesota.

near spoke up and promised ten dollars for the lumber, and a man offered fifty dollars. I accepted the gifts, and informed them that Dr. Adams would be on hand soon to see what could be done. A series of meetings was held soon afterwards and a church was organized.

\* \* \*

I heard of a mining town where they had no Sunday school, so I went there and organized one. We had the meeting in the city hall and a newcomer was elected superintendent. But he moved away in a month or six weeks, and that brought the Sunday school to a close. They objected to the hall being used again, so there was no place to meet, even if the people had wanted to continue the school.

I wrote to some of the people there, asking them to let me know how soon they could secure a place to continue the school, but, not getting a favorable reply, after a few months I went back. I secured a store building, borrowed an organ, re-organized the school and held three weeks' meetings. Then Dr. Adams came and organized a Presbyterian church, securing the promise of a lot for the church building. The school and church have been flourishing ever since.

The only opposition I had to the opening of the school was from a woman. She was confined to bed all the time I was there; thus I had clear sailing to establish the school. One of the merchants who had told me that nothing could be done there became interested. I had him put in for



superintendent, and afterwards he was elected an elder in the church which we organized.

\* \* \*

My attention was directed to a small town north of Minneapolis, where we had a little church and Sunday school. When I reached town and inquired for some of the workers I found a young man who told me that they had had a meeting a few nights before and wondered to whom they could write to get permission to use the Presbyterian church building for their Union Sunday school. The Presbyterians had not had a pastor for a year and a half, and so no services or Sunday school were held. He said he was so glad I had come. I informed him that I was not out to rent Presbyterian churches, but to encourage the little churches and schools. "Why," said he, "our little school here is Union and we wanted to see whether we could buy the Presbyterian church." I told him I wasn't sent out to sell Presbyterian churches.

I put up notices that gospel services would be held that night in the Presbyterian church and that all were invited. I held services for over two weeks, and when Dr. Adams came a number were received into the church. Both the church and Sunday school were revived, and I am glad to say that the building was not sold. The good work has been moving on ever since.

\* \* \*

A promising railroad town about ten miles from the county seat was without a church or Sunday

school. A Scotch-Irish Presbyterian had moved into the near-by country, bringing a family of five sons and one daughter. They, with others, wanted a Sunday school in town, but needed a little encouragement in starting the new school.

The Baldwin fund of twenty-five dollars was available, so supplies and hymn books were granted for a year with the understanding that they would try to keep the school going. The old school-house was used as a meeting place for quite a while. Then special services were held, which were very successful and made possible the organization of a church seventeen months after the school was started. They now have a beautiful house of worship, Sunday school and regular preaching services with resident minister.

\* \* \*

A few years ago a young lady wanted to invest twenty-five dollars in the work. I advised her to use it in having a Sunday school established in some needy place. One of our missionaries found a place where there was no school. The people were mostly Unitarians, but were glad to have the school started for the children. The money was used for supplies. With this encouragement the people became interested, took hold of the work and in a few years a church was organized. They now have a church building costing twenty-five hundred dollars. A large paper mill has since been located there, and the Presbyterian church is on the field, ready for newcomers. Where can we get as much in return for small investment?

INFIDELITY ON THE RUN

## CHAPTER X

### INFIDELITY ON THE RUN

There is no genuine infidel. One day, in my search for needy places where the gospel had been neglected, I found a neighborhood where a school was much needed. I called on one of the leading families and made my errand known; I was there to assist in establishing a Sunday school. The good woman was very prompt to answer. She said there was no use to try to have a Sunday school, or any other religious services, while a certain man was living in that vicinity, as he was one of the most radical infidels and would come down quickly on anything that was of a religious nature. When I proposed to visit the neighborhood from house to house she said I had better not go near him because he was a very cruel man, and if I should say anything to him about Sunday school he might knock me down. I promised her I would be careful when I called there.

When I got to the place I was glad I could run, if necessary; the knowledge of my ability gave me courage to tackle this terrible man, whom I saw busy in the barnyard. As I approached him my knees shook, but I called him by name, gave him a hearty handshake, told him I was glad to see him, and made him feel as if his old country cousin had come to see him. Then I said:

"I am a Sunday-school missionary and am around here to see what I can do to establish a Sunday school."

He replied promptly, "I wish you would."

My knees straightened up quickly and I asked him why he wished this.

"Why, Mr. Sulzer," he said, "if you knew what a mean set of neighbors are living here you wouldn't ask such a question. This is one of the worst neighborhoods you ever struck, and the boys are perfect little sneak thieves. For the last two or three years I haven't been able to raise any watermelons, and I wish that you would start a Sunday school."

The school was organized the next Sunday and the boys proved to be better than their reputation. Even the testimony of infidels goes to prove that Sunday schools are a means causing boys to be better and grow up to be trusty men.

\* \* \*

One of the first suggestions I made to the Board was the planting of Bible schools out around our little home mission churches and putting in our own literature in these little schools. In this way we would make our weak home mission churches self-supporting. This plan has been carried out very successfully in Minnesota.

For example, there was a little church that for about thirty years had been drawing home mission aid of from two to four hundred dollars a year. I organized a little Sunday school about six and a half miles southeast. As there were no

Christians in this district, I had to go six miles the other way to get one of our elders. With his daughter he came over six miles to superintend the school. Each fall, when the cold weather came, they would close the school for the season, and I had to go back each spring and start them up again.

The third time I reorganized the school I told the superintendent that I wished he would let me know when the time came to close the school, as I would like to come and see how it was done. I told him I had opened a good many schools, but I had never seen one closed. In September I received a card that read something like this:

“According to the agreement, I notify you that on the last Sunday of this month we will close the school for the season. We would be very glad to have you with us.”

When the time came I went, reaching his home Saturday afternoon. After supper I suggested to him that perhaps it might be a good idea to continue the school instead of closing it the next day, but he couldn't see it that way. We had quite a discussion, but I saw that it was useless to argue (since he was Scotch and I was German). As I always like to give in when I can carry my point I didn't say anything more about it.

The next day after the lesson he said:

“Brother Sulzer is with us to-day, and we will be glad to have a word from him before we close for the season.”

I tried to show them the excellent work he and

his daughter were doing. All at once I pointed to a young man and said:

"What is the matter with your helping to keep up this Sunday school this winter? Will you?"

"I guess so."

"No guesswork; we want to know definitely. Will you?"

"Yes."

Then I took another young man and asked him the same question. He promised too. I said:

"All in favor of carrying on this Sunday school this winter say 'Yes.'"

And they all voted in favor of it, except my dear Scotch friend.

When I sat down he got up and went for me as only a Scotchman can. Among other things he said:

"I have six and a half miles to drive, and if I hitch my team out to that barbed wire fence during the winter, by the time Sunday school is over the team and all will be blown away."

"What do you say to putting up some horse sheds where you can drive your teams in and have comfort?" I asked. "You build sheds for your pigs in the fall in order to keep them warm; you might do as well for your children to feed them on the Word of God. Fifty dollars will build a horse shed. I will give five dollars."

But there was no response, so I appointed a committee and put the daughter of the superintendent on as chairman of the committee to solicit,

thinking she could begin at Jerusalem. Then I left an appointment for two weeks ahead.

At the appointed time the pastor of the home mission church, six and a half miles away, went with me and we began meetings in the school-house. After the first meeting I called for a report from the committee. They reported eight and a half dollars collected. I told them that would not build a horse shed, but we would put up a wind-break. One man volunteered to bring the necessary lumber. I appointed one o'clock the next day as the time for the men to come with tools. About six o'clock we had the wind-break up.

The meetings were continued for three weeks. At the close there were twenty-five conversions. Then the meetings were moved down to the little church in town and carried on three weeks longer. The first Sunday after the meetings closed seventy united with the Presbyterian church, and nearly as many with the Methodist church. One of the men who lived within a mile of the schoolhouse, but never came to Sunday school and never went to church in town, was converted and was afterwards superintendent and elder in the town church.

After the close of the meetings I saw one of the elders, and suggested that as other churches had an eye on their pastor, it might be well to do better by him unless they wished to lose him. I further suggested that they call a congregational meeting and see what they could do. He promised to do so. At the meeting the people made



provision for the entire eight hundred dollars' salary. This was the first time in thirty years the church had gone without aid from the Home Mission Board. The next year a four-thousand-dollar church was built and paid for. The church has been self-supporting ever since.

\* \* \*

While passing along one day I found a town in which most of the people were Scandinavians, without a church or a Sunday school of any kind. I at once went to work to see what could be done for them, at least for the children. I found one of the business men, a so-called infidel, who, I was informed, would oppose all such work. I got him interested and finally he told me to see another man, also an infidel, and that if he was in favor of a Sunday school I could have the hall at cost for the school.

I found the other infidel and told him my mission. He told me I had come to the wrong man; that he was the biggest sinner in town and took no stock in such things. Then I was informed that a Union missionary had been there on the same mission, and had left only ten minutes before, giving it up as a hopeless case. I told him I was glad to know he was a sinner, for Christ came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and he was therefore the man I was looking for. He at last told me he would let four of his children come to the Sunday school, and I finally got his promise that he would come also.

We had a good meeting the next Sunday. The



Rally Day service at Allen Sabbath school, North Dakota. There were nine baptisms at this service.



Presbyterian Church at White Earth, North Dakota.



Presbyterian Church at Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

hall was well filled. After the school was organized my infidel friend came to me and gave me a dollar for gospel hymn books for the school; he said "he wanted the work to be a success."

Some time later a letter from the secretary of the school said that the superintendent was a splendid Christian man, that the hall was so crowded every Sunday they could not divide the school into classes, and that they hoped to have a larger place soon.

\* \* \*

One Sunday I had an appointment in a German church. It was very rainy, so we decided we would not hold an evening service. I thought I would drive five miles beyond, where I had heard that Mrs. S. had started a Sunday school. Her husband's health failed when he was in business and so he had gone out and bought a farm, where he hoped to recover his health.

On the morning of the first Sunday after they had moved to the farm Mrs. S. learned from her husband that there was neither church nor Sunday school in the neighborhood. She inquired who the school director was. She was told that he was an infidel who had driven out all the ministers who had come in to try to preach.

She went to see the infidel, and asked him for the schoolhouse for Sunday. He told her she could have it. He thought she couldn't do any harm. The next Sunday morning after breakfast she asked her husband to hitch up and take the family to the schoolhouse. That first Sunday they

were all alone, but the news soon spread around that there was a Sunday school, and others gathered in. To my surprise the school had grown to forty or fifty on that rainy Sunday when I called there just to encourage Mrs. S.

I had never met her before. She pleaded with me to have an evening service, and I did. Then she wanted to have another service Monday night, and I held this. I did not think anybody would be out, but I wanted to encourage her. There was a fair-sized congregation. Then she begged for another meeting for Tuesday night, and finally I told her I would hold services the rest of the week.

After I had held meetings for some nights the schoolhouse was filled and I decided to go and get Mr. Billings, the missionary for that district, who had been the means of getting me into the Sunday-school work. When I found him he did not want to go; he said it was a hard neighborhood, and that he didn't think anything could be done. But I told him to get into the buggy with me, and he did.

The infidel, when he saw that the meetings were becoming quite interesting, came one evening with a bundle of leaflets, called "Contradictions of the Bible," and when we passed from the meeting to the after-meeting he distributed them all over the house, and then came and sat down on the platform with us.

All the neighbors were worked up about his procedure and wanted me to go for him about the

matter. The next evening, after the meeting opened, he was there with another bundle of leaflets. Turning to the audience I said: "I went home last night all worked up over what this man did, and I turned to my Bible and found the Thirty-seventh Psalm. I have turned this man over to the Lord, and the Psalmist says, 'Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness.' Now notice what he says he will do with them, 'For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.' And the Psalmist says to you and to me, 'Trust in Jehovah and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on his faithfulness.'" The man never distributed another tract or molested the meeting in any way.

We carried on the meetings for a few weeks and had forty-six conversions. The Lord rewarded Mrs. S. for her faithfulness by the conversion of her own son, and he has been a very faithful worker in winning souls for Christ. For some years now he has been one of the district superintendents of the American Sunday School Union.

THE LORD'S MEASURE

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LORD'S MEASURE

While organizing a Sunday school one hot June day where there were a fine lot of boys and girls from twelve to fifteen years old, I felt that they ought to have something more to read than merely papers. So I suggested that if they would raise twenty dollars I would put five with it and we would get a twenty-five-dollar library for these boys and girls.

While I was raising the money a man in the audience rose and said:

"I have been saving up money for the last four or five months, and was going over sometime this coming week to Neighbor B. to get a hive of bees, which would cost just five dollars, but I will give the five for the books for the children and let the bees go."

"Thank you, my brother," I said. "You will get the honey just the same."

This brother had two and a half miles to drive. When he reached home he found that somebody's bees had swarmed and settled right over the center of the outside door to his house, and he had to hive them before he could get into the house to get his dinner. When I went back with the books about a month afterwards he took me to his home and showed me the very spot where they

had hung, and said it was the largest swarm he ever saw. I told him that he might have expected this; that the Lord didn't do anything by halves.

As a great many have questioned the truth of this story, I tell this sequel:

At least twenty-five years after that summer I was attending a Sunday-school institute in another state, when an old gentleman with long white whiskers and hair asked me to sit down alongside him. He told me had come a long distance to hear me again; that he was from the county where the bee incident had occurred. "Don't you remember," he asked, "when you organized a Sunday school in my schoolhouse, the brother who gave his last five dollars for the library, and how, when he got home, he found a swarm of bees hanging over his door? Don't you remember about him?"

At once I called Dr. Henry and Brother Ferguson to come over and hear my friend tell the bee story.

\* \* \*

Some years ago I went to a certain city with a missionary brother, who wished there was a school in a section of the city where there was no place in which to hold services. Finding a frame, one-room schoolhouse, I asked if this would not do. He said the school board would not allow it to be used for religious meetings. Later I saw a one-story, square building vacant, except for a billiard table in the center of the room. I asked him what was the matter with renting this building for the school. He



objected that it was a billiard hall and that the table was in the way. But I told him we would rent the building, put the table upside down in one corner, and put the primary class into it. We rented the building, started the Sunday school, and in three weeks' time the school board offered the brother the use of the schoolhouse free of charge. Two or three years later a church developed and the people of the neighborhood built a fine stone structure across the way from the schoolhouse.

\* \* \*

I was afterwards invited to the same city to conduct a series of meetings. We started the meetings in a store building down town, but by the end of the week the building was too small and the skating rink was secured. There the meetings were continued for three weeks. We had appointed a committee to look after the finances and the arrangements, and had put one man on who was quite active in church and very well off financially, thinking that if we should run behind fifty dollars or so he would be a good man to make this up in case it was necessary.

At the close of the second week he came to me and said we would have to close the meetings the next Sunday, as we were behind twelve dollars. I asked him if he had that money the next Monday would that do? He said it would, but wondered how I would get the funds.

On Sunday morning I told the audience that the committee needed fifty dollars to carry on the work. When the offering was counted there was

over ninety-six dollars on the plates. Two business men the next day stopped me on the street and wanted to know whether I got all the money I needed; that at any time I could call on them for five or ten dollars to help the work.

The meetings continued for two weeks longer, with at least two hundred conversions, making nearly three hundred conversions for the month. That brother—who was an active member of the church and independently rich—would have sold out the salvation of nearly two hundred souls for twelve dollars!

\* \* \*

When I started those meetings one of the pastors did not attend my services. I spent three days finding him, then I asked him why he did not come to the meetings. He said he had a church, and that he had to get out two sermons a week, and had not much time. I told him I did not believe that was the real reason. Then he said he did not know much about evangelistic meetings. He said that if I should ask him anything about Hebrew or Greek he thought he could answer as well as the next man. I told him that all the knowledge he had in that big head of his would never help him save souls unless he had the Spirit of the Lord in his soul. Then we had prayer and he said he would come to the meetings, but would do only what I asked him to do. As I left he said:

“My prayer meeting is earlier than your service, and I would like to have you attend to-night and give my people such a shaking up as you gave

me. You can stay just as long as you want, walk out when you want to go, and I will go on with the meeting."

I did as he asked. His whole church came to our meetings and he was one of the most faithful workers we had. And after these meetings he helped some other brethren in similar meetings.

\* \* \*

At the Sunday morning church service I attended in a town where I was holding special meetings the offering was announced. I expected to take part in that as usual, but I found I had only ten cents to my name. I thought of ninety-nine places where I needed that ten cents the next day. As I did not know where I would get another cent for two or three weeks, I made my mind up I wouldn't put it into the collection, so I straightened up and looked as solemn as I could until the plate had passed, and then congratulated myself that I had done well.

After the sermon the minister announced that there was a brother in the house who had done most excellent service among his own tribe, as well as assisting Governor Ramsey during the Indian massacre in Minnesota. We had all noticed a big, fine-looking Indian sitting in the congregation. He was engaged in Sunday-school work among his own people, and the minister announced that a special offering would be taken for his work. When I heard that he could do Sunday-school work among those Indians—which was more than I could do—I chipped in my last

ten cents, forgetting all about my wants. If ever I was sorry that ten cents wasn't a dollar I was then.

The next morning when I went down to the post office I hadn't two cents to mail a letter. Among my mail was a post card asking me to call at the bank. As I walked into the bank my knees rattled and I could hardly step; I feared some one had sent a bill for collection. But the cashier reassured me, telling me that on Saturday he had received a letter from a man in Florida who had been reading about my work, and that inclosed was a check for twenty-five dollars for me and my family.

When we do our duty the Lord will provide for us in one way or another; I have never known it to fail.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### I. THE WORK OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

The following report covers twenty-five years of Mr. Sulzer's Sunday-school missionary work in Minnesota:

Sunday schools organized.....	2,350
Sunday schools revived.....	738
Number of pupils gathered into these schools.....	79,680
Families visited .....	126,692
Miles traveled .....	658,351
Presbyterian churches developed.....	197
Churches of other denominations developed.....	61
Value of church property.....	\$287,145

In the year 1888 Minnesota Synod reported four presbyteries and 160 Presbyterian churches. The Sunday-school membership was 14,377. Last year Minnesota reported eight presbyteries with 302 churches and a Sunday-school membership of 32,568, not including mission Sunday schools under the care of our missionaries, which would bring the total membership up to 42,500. The total offerings to the boards of the church in 1887, the year before the work began in Minnesota, were \$60,172. Last year the offerings to the church boards were \$129,932.

### II. LETTERS OF CONGRATULATION

PHILADELPHIA, June 25, 1912.

MY DEAR MR. SULZER:

The twenty-five years of Presbyterian Sunday-school missions and your twenty-five years of work as missionary—presbyterial and synodical—in Minnesota, and afterwards in Minnesota and North Dakota, come together in their end, July 1, 1912. How well you and I recollect how I was led to you by Rev. Dr. D. J. Burrell, and how you plunged in. The slow-going presbyteries waked up, and out-of-the-way places soon learned who Sulzer was and wondered how he discovered the needy points. You seemed to win the parents, the children and all. . . .

You have been for a quarter of a century our Board's

hero, and the church's encourager and champion. You have stimulated all of our Sunday-school missionaries by your inspiring example, your indomitable faith in God and in Presbyterian Sunday-school missions, and by your presence and addresses at synods, presbyteries, General Assemblies, conventions and institutes. All the time you have laid the greatest emphasis upon the winning of the young to the Saviour, the building them up in Christ and training them to work for Christ and his Church.

The Board appreciates you and your work. May the Head of the Church reward you on earth and give you a crown of righteousness in heaven.

Your companion in labor,

(Signed) JAMES A. WORDEN.

PHILADELPHIA, June 25, 1912.

DEAR MR. SULZER:

The completion of twenty-five years of pioneer Sunday-school missionary work is a fitting occasion for the sincerest congratulations. You have had a privilege that is given to few men. Through all these years you have been laying foundations upon which lasting structures will be reared by generations yet to come. At the same time, you have been able to rejoice in present results.

Not only is this true, it is also a fact that your work and the spirit in which you have done it has been an inspiration to multitudes of other workers, especially to the missionaries of the Board.

In these twenty-five years you have seen a rapid development of Presbyterian Sunday-school missions, and a growing appreciation throughout the church of the importance of this service. Here, again, the work that you yourself have done, and your graphic presentation of it to so many audiences, have been potent factors in bringing about this result.

The personal service you have given, the multitude of lives you have influenced for good, the many friendships you have formed that will last beyond the grave, are additional causes for gratitude and joy.

As secretary of the Board, it gives me pleasure to convey to you our heartiest congratulations, while personally I assure you of my warm esteem and sincere friendship.

Your fellow worker,

(Signed) ALEXANDER HENRY.



Rev. Alexander Henry, D.D.  
Rev. James A. Worden, D.D.

Rev. Samuel R. Ferguson, D.D.  
John M. Somerndike.

Mr. Sulzer and Grandchildren.



PHILADELPHIA, June 29, 1912.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I want to add my congratulations to those of the many workers in the cause of Sunday-school missions who will be thinking of you and writing to you as you celebrate the completion of twenty-five years of service under the Board.

I realize that you had many years of consecrated, self-sacrificing labors in the Sunday-school field to your credit before the Presbyterian Church organized the Sunday-school work of our Board as her great pioneer agency in the homeland. It was your rare privilege to be among the first to enlist in this service under the Presbyterian banner, and you have had the satisfaction of seeing the cause grow and develop from very weak beginnings into one of the most effective missionary agencies of modern times.

You have had a large part in making this development possible. Not only have you demonstrated by your own labors in pioneer districts the needs of the outlying regions, and the opportunities of the church in ministering to them through the agency of Sunday-school missions, but you have trained many of our best workers now laboring efficiently in other fields.

As you look back over these years of fruitful service for the Master may you have the consciousness of the divine approval and the joy of realizing that God has used you so abundantly for the upbuilding of the kingdom.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) J. M. SOMERNDIKE.

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA, June 28, 1912.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

Just a line to extend you my very sincere and hearty congratulations for having attained the twenty-fifth year of your service as missionary of our Board. No man in our church has rendered more valuable service and few are more appreciated; and as the days and years pass by this work, upon which you have impressed your individuality in such a remarkable way, will occupy even a more conspicuous place in the work of our church, and you will justly share the honor.

May the coming years be even more fruitful and may you long continue to be a counselor for the young men in this mission work, a guide to those who lead in this cause, a comfort to your associates and an inspiration to us all.

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

(Signed) S. R. FERGUSON.

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