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Frances Hatton Eva Hasell and Iris Eugenie Friend Sayle**

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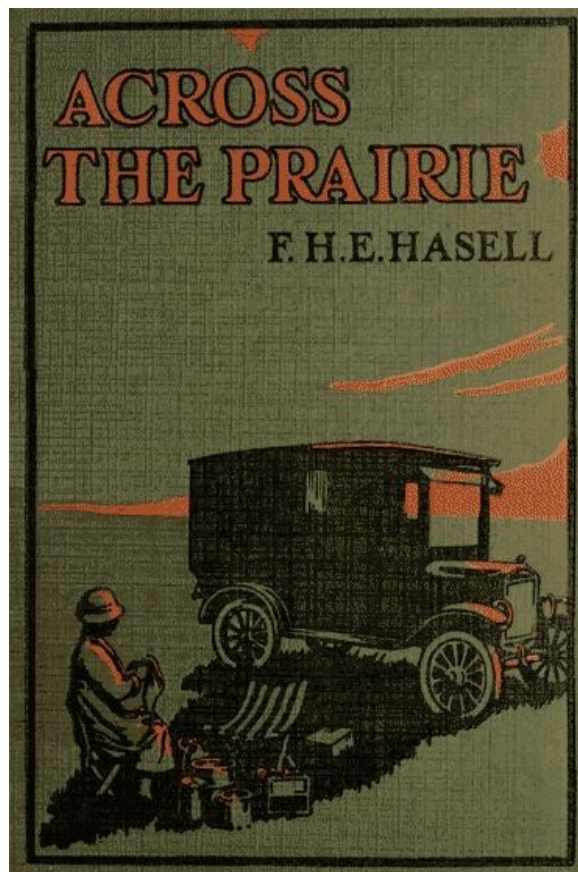
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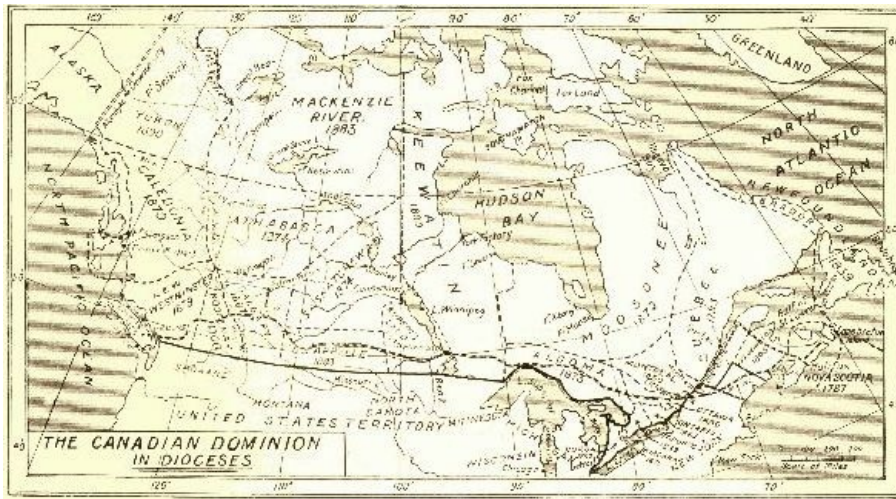
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CARAVAN \*\*\*



**ACROSS THE PRAIRIE IN A MOTOR  
CARAVAN**



*By permission of S.P.G.*

*Frontispiece*

## **ACROSS THE PRAIRIE IN A MOTOR CARAVAN**

**A 3,000 MILE TOUR BY TWO ENGLISHWOMEN  
ON BEHALF OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**BY**

**F. H. EVA HASELL**

**IN COLLABORATION WITH J. F. S.**

**WITH 18 ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP**

**LONDON**

**SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE**

**NEW YORK AND TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN CO.**

**1922**

**TO**

**AYLMER BOSANQUET**

**WHOSE SELF-SACRIFICE, DEEP SPIRITUALITY,  
AND FAR-SEEING VISION INSPIRED THIS VENTURE,  
THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED**

**PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN**

**LETTER FROM  
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP  
OF CANTERBURY.**

LAMBETH PALACE,

LONDON, S.E.

DEAR MISS HASELL,

I happen to have read the proof sheets of the little book which is to record the story of your work and Miss Ticehurst's in the prairie tracts of Canada, and I should like to tell you how glad I am that the account of these eventful journeyings should be accessible to the public. People realise too little what are the opportunities and responsibilities of pioneer days in those incomparable regions. The perseverance, the indomitable energy, and the buoyant hope which your pages record and inspire will have a place in the annals of that vast seed plot and cradle of a great nation that is to be.

I am,

Yours very truly,

RANDALL CANTUAR.

*October 5th, 1922.*

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# ACROSS THE PRAIRIE IN A MOTOR CARAVAN

## CHAPTER I

[1]

### THE CALL OF THE PRAIRIE

The diocese of Qu'Appelle, in the province of Saskatchewan, Western Canada, is so named from the Indian story which tells of the maiden who lay dying, calling piteously for her lover. He, far off in his canoe on the Saskatchewan River, suddenly heard a voice, and answered: "Qu'Appelle." The voice came again, and then he knew it for that of his beloved, and made all speed to her side. But, alas! when he reached her she was dead.

*Qu'Appelle* is a suggestive title and indicative of the call which so many have heard from the prairie provinces, a twofold call, urging some to earthly and some to spiritual husbandry. Some account of the Western Canada of to-day may be useful here.

The exigencies of life on the prairie tend to make men think rather of building greater barns than of that day when their souls shall be required of them. When a man with little capital takes up a prairie "section" he is gambling with fortune, the welfare of his nearest and dearest being at stake. At the same time it is a worthy venture, a response to the age-old command to till the earth and subdue it; and it is often the only way whereby a man may become his own master, a landowner, and one who, in developing the treasures of the earth, adds materially to the well-being of his fellows. For the wheat from the prairies of Western Canada is the hardest and finest in the world.

[2]

The prospective settler buys a section (640 acres), a half or a quarter section, as the case may be,

and, helped by a loan from the Government for the purchase of implements, ploughs and sows the virgin soil, building a shack for himself and his family. The first three years are touch and go. Drought in early summer or torrential storms in harvest will effectually ruin the crops, but when once a good crop is raised the profit is very satisfactory. The perils of drought and storm, however, always remain, though with increasing capital the risk is lessened. The life is one long wrestling-bout—man's brain and muscle pitted against the forces of nature; but when he is victorious the reward is great.

It is a virile country peopled with virile men (for only the strong can "make good" out there). But these men have already realised that man cannot live by bread alone. Close to nature, man feels the presence of God. The wide sweep of the prairie, enamelled with a thousand flowers or gilded with the ripened corn; the vast dome of the sky; the glorious sunsets and awful storms—all make men conscious of the power and might and majesty of the Supreme Being. So that beneath the feverish search for wealth there is a deep, if unrealised, thirst for the things of God.

But many of these sheep have been for years without a shepherd, and such knowledge of religion as they once possessed has been choked by the cares of this world; and their children—the men and women of the future on whom so much depends—are growing up in many places without any religious teaching at all. One result of this state of things is that there is no Christian public opinion on which to start this new country. It is even said that it is not unusual to hear men boast: "We cheat others before they cheat us."

Another terrible result is that, unrestrained by spiritual forces, the animal instincts have gained the upper hand and immorality is rife. In the *Bulletin of Social Service in Saskatchewan* for June 1, 1920, under the heading: "Some Measures Urgently Needed," No. 10 runs: "Higher standards in our laws regarding sex offences. Ours are the lowest in the Empire, due to the Senate's repeated rejection of amending measures." [3]

A disintegrating factor in the religious and moral life of Western Canada is no doubt to be found in the mixture of races and the resultant intermarriages. Almost every race and sect is represented. There are about eighty different religions, including many eccentric and obscure sects such as "Daniel's Band," "Doukhobors," and "Holy Rollers." According to the census of 1916 the Christian churches in Saskatchewan are numerically strong in the following order: Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran, Greek Church, Baptist. The proportion of Anglicans has probably increased since then.

In 1910 the Archbishop of Rupertsland appealed to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to send out clergy to attend to the needs of the numerous British settlers who were pouring into the country. (Between 1900 and 1920 one million two hundred and fifty thousand persons have emigrated from Great Britain to Canada.) The Archbishops' Western Canada Fund was the answer to this appeal. The cause interested me extremely, and I became one of the collectors for the diocese of Carlisle. This diocese raised £3,000 and built St. Cuthbert's Hostel in Regina, and later raised another £1,000 towards the £50,000 needed for the endowment of the Western Canada missions.

Three missions were started by the Fund in Edmonton, Southern Alberta, and Saskatchewan respectively, but we are only concerned with the latter. In this province many small towns had sprung up owing to the great influx of immigrants (mostly British) and to the rapid railway construction, while the surrounding prairie was dotted with isolated farms and hamlets. It was with the special needs of these people that the Regina Railway Mission had to deal. Accordingly, several clergy and laymen went out from England, made the hostel at Regina their headquarters, and visited the surrounding country. They lived in one-roomed shacks, doing their own "chores," and often driving about eighty miles on a Sunday in order to take four services a day. They returned to the hostel once a quarter for spiritual refreshment, rest, and discussion of their work with the head of the Mission and with each other. [4]

Meanwhile, a pioneer movement was on foot in the Old Country. At St. Christopher's College, Blackheath, a specialised training in the matter and method of religious education had been inaugurated for women prepared to undertake this branch of social service. I was asked to become Diocesan Sunday School Organiser for the diocese of Carlisle, and went to train at St. Christopher's in 1914. There I met Miss Aylmer Bosanquet and Miss Nona Clarke, and was naturally very interested to find that these new acquaintances were anxious to go out to Regina and do Sunday-school work in connection with the Railway Mission. A firm friendship resulted from this common interest.

Aylmer Bosanquet's plan was to go out with Nona Clarke and live on the prairie, working amongst the children and supplementing the work of the clergy in any other possible way. She proposed to finance the expedition entirely herself. At first the Secretary for the Archbishops' Western Canada Fund was very dubious about accepting her generous offer, having been out in Canada himself, and knowing that life in a prairie shack is exceedingly hard for gently nurtured women. But Aylmer Bosanquet was so urgent that at last she won the day, and she and Nona Clarke went out to Regina in 1915. They established themselves at Kenaston, where they lived in a three-roomed shack and did all their own work, even to the grooming of the buggy horses.

The women missionaries went up to Regina once a quarter, when the clergy and laymen met to discuss their work. They brought valuable contributions to the matter in hand. They had found great ignorance amongst the children, some of whom did not even know the Lord's Prayer. At their first Christmas they found several children who had never heard of the birth of Christ. All

that the holy season meant to them was contained in the nursery legend of Father Christmas.

[5]

This ignorance is largely due to there being no Scripture teaching in the public elementary schools, although there is a clause in the Saskatchewan Education Act which says that the last half-hour of every day may be given to Scripture teaching if the trustees are agreed. Unfortunately, they seldom do agree in this matter, as they usually belong to different religious bodies. Nor is there any religious teaching in the collegiate schools (which correspond with English high schools), even in Regina, the capital of the province. The following answer was given by a collegiate girl in a secular examination: "When William the Conqueror went to England he found no code of laws, and so he drew up the Ten Commandments."

After about four years of strenuous work, Aylmer Bosanquet fell ill, and was obliged to go into a nursing home at Toronto for a serious operation. In the quiet time of convalescence her thoughts were busy with the work so dear to her, and she began to consider the problem of the many children in the enormous diocese of Qu'Appelle, who had no Sunday school, and who could not be reached by rail or buggy from the existing centres. She felt that the future of the Anglican Church in Canada depended upon the religious training of these children, and an idea came to her whereby these isolated places might be reached. Her plan was that trained women should go out on to the prairie, two and two, in caravans during the season when the trails are passable. They would gather the children together and start Sunday schools, training teachers to carry them on. In the winter they would return to some central town, whence they would keep in touch with the quite isolated children by means of the Sunday School by post. They would also lecture locally and give demonstration lessons.

Many of these trained women would be needed if all the children on the prairie were to be reached. It would be necessary at first to recruit from England, but later it might be possible to develop a movement already started, but which had had to be temporarily abandoned for lack of a suitable head—namely, a training college for the Dominion of Canada on the lines of St. Christopher's, Blackheath.

[6]

Aylmer Bosanquet wrote to me describing her new plan. She was very anxious to see it in operation, for the diocese of Qu'Appelle alone covers 92,000 square miles (about twice the size of England), and two women, though with the best will in the world, could do comparatively little in that immense area.

The project of caravanning on the prairie in the interests of religious education appealed to me very strongly, and as Aylmer Bosanquet soon afterwards came home to England to recuperate, we were able to discuss the matter together. Her idea was to have a horse caravan which should be moved on from place to place by the farmers. But as I have lived all my life in an agricultural district, I knew the difficulties consequent on wanting the use of farm horses in seed-time and harvest—the very seasons when the trails are open—and I also knew that horses could never cover the necessary distances. In my own diocesan work, which took me to little out-of-the-way villages among the fells of Cumberland and Westmorland, I had found it necessary to use a car, and I therefore felt it would be best to have a motor caravan.

It would be worse than useless to take a motor-car on to the rough prairie trails unless one had had long driving experience and done a considerable amount of running repairs. To learn to drive one year and to go out the next would probably mean finding yourself in a tight corner. As I had been allowed to use our cars throughout the War, in connection with my Sunday school work and a V.A.D. hospital, I had fortunately gained a good deal of practical experience, especially as it was necessary to drive in all weathers, day and night, over the steep hills of the Lake District. When these hills were covered in ice your car would run backwards or skid and come down sideways, and these happenings were a useful preparation for the steep, sandy banks of the trail, where the wheels could not grip. Then, too, as our chauffeur was called up and mechanics were scarce, we had to do our own repairs.

The diocese having consented to my being absent for six months, I found a substitute to carry on my work, and began my preparations for the prairie tour.

## CHAPTER II

[7]

### PREPARATIONS AND DEPARTURE

The first idea was to buy one of the Red Cross motor ambulances then being sold off in London, but transport difficulties made it impossible to take one across. Meanwhile Aylmer Bosanquet, having returned to Canada, found that the Saskatchewan Bible Society had a Ford caravan in which a man could live and sleep, travelling about the province with Bibles. Also, Archdeacon Burgett, the Diocesan Missioner for Qu'Appelle, was having a Ford caravan built for two of his mission clergy. She sent me details of these vans, and I asked her to order me a similar one, the interior fittings to be decided upon when I came out in the spring.

The next thing to do was to find a fellow-worker for the tour; and this was by no means easy, for she must not only have been trained at St. Christopher's and be physically strong, but she must

be prepared to pay her own expenses, there being as yet no fund to finance the venture. Fortunately, however, an experienced ex-student, Miss Winifred Ticehurst, offered to go. She had trained at St. Christopher's soon after its foundation, and had since had considerable experience in Sunday-school and parish work.

Then came the difficulty of getting passages and passports. These would never have been granted had we not been able to prove that we were going out to work. After the trials consequent on a visit to Cook's agent the following incident in the current *Punch* seemed peculiarly apposite. Scene: The office of a travel bureau. Clerk (helping nervous-looking lady to fill up form): "And the address of the nearest relation to whom the body may be sent if found dead?"

I intended to travel via New York, in order to visit some cousins. I had heard of the fame of the U.S.A. Sunday-schools, and wished to see some of them. I also hoped to meet Dr. Gardner, the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Department of Religious Education for the American Episcopal Church. It was therefore necessary to get my passport visaed at the American Consulate, and on presenting the customary letter of recommendation from a clergyman I was much amused when the clerk eyed me suspiciously and remarked: "A letter from a clergyman is nothing to go by. They are so easily taken in." [8]

The question of equipment had taken considerable thought, and the result seems worth setting down, in view of its possible service to others. The chief items were: a motorist's 1919 tent with bamboo poles, sleeping-bags, a double Primus stove and a Tommy cooker, a ferrostate flask and two thermos flasks, canvas buckets, clothes both for winter and summer (landworkers' suits for driving the caravan, which, unfortunately, the Canadians regarded as displaying an undue amount of "limb"!); Then, for use in the prairie schools, sets of Nelson's pictures and Sunday School Institute models (given me by the Girls' Diocesan Association for Carlisle diocese), and a case of books of graded lesson courses and a quantity of postcard pictures of "The Hope of the World" and "The New Epiphany." A tip from an experienced traveller proved most useful. This was to fasten the packing-cases with bands of tin nailed on, instead of with ropes, as the latter frequently break when the cases are swung aboard ship, scattering the contents on deck.

In February, 1920, we embarked at Liverpool for New York. Winifred Ticehurst was to meet me at the boat, and my feelings may be imagined as the time drew on, the friends seeing me off had to leave, and still no fellow-traveller appeared. At last, five minutes before they raised the gangway, she ran up, breathless. Her passport had not been dated in London, and they had sent her back from the boat to get it dated at the American Consulate in Liverpool. It was an ill-omened opening for her voyage, which proved one of great discomfort, as she was more or less ill for a week. She managed to write descriptive letters, all the same, and the following extract is a vivid portrait of our fellow-travellers (we went second-class to save expense). [9]

"The young men and maidens . . . sit about on one another's laps, and the correct way to get ready for lunch is, when you hear the gong, to part yourself from your companion, pull a comb out of your pocket and do your hair—then you are ready."

I did not suffer from sea-sickness myself, and never missed a meal. Indeed, the waiters seemed greatly intrigued at my appetite, and I fancy, from the way they pressed the various courses, that they were betting on how much I could eat!

A day or two before we reached New York there was a horrid orgy on board. Knowing that they were entering a "dry" country, many of the passengers got drunk, shouting and raging all night long, so that one could not sleep. On the prairie I afterwards found other ill-effects of prohibition—the smuggling of spirits and excessive drug-taking, the latter chiefly amongst women. Before passing such laws it surely would have been advisable to have created a stronger public opinion to support them. Otherwise there is danger of finding two evils in the place of one.

On the other hand, future generations should benefit greatly by this measure, however imperfectly it now works. It seems improbable that the health and industrial prosperity of non-prohibition countries will equal those of "dry" countries.

The day before we entered New York we got into the end of a blizzard. There was a tremendously high sea, and we moved very little that day. We received a wireless message from a ship just out of a Canadian port which had struck a rock in the storm, but we were too far off to go to her assistance.

Our stay in New York proved to be an amazing and exhilarating experience. The palatial manner in which, in a private house, one is assigned one's own "compartments," would have satisfied Mr. Salteena; and the restaurants are a paradise for the discerning palate. A brief but thorough experience of American luxury in a great city was, from its very contrast, a fitting prelude to the rough life of the prairie. You get a more complete picture with strongly-drawn lights and shades.

### CHAPTER III

#### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE U.S.A. AND CANADA



There is a very remarkable system of religious education in New York, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, and many other cities. The entire educational work of the Church in the United States is under the direction of the Department of Religious Education of the National Council (called in the United States "The Presiding Bishop and Council"). The Department of Education has several divisions: Theological Seminaries, Church Boarding Schools (the same as Public Schools in England), Church Sunday Schools, Week-day Schools, work among students in State Universities, Pageantry, etc.

All Church School teachers are urged to go to Normal Schools. These are successfully operated in New York City, Boston, Detroit, and Cleveland. The teacher attends the Normal School once a month and receives instruction from an expert in Child Study, Psychology, and Methods, and also has an opportunity to discuss the outlines and illustrations for the four lessons which are to be taught the following month. The lesson material is from the Christian Nurture Series. This Series is a most up-to-date graded course for children from four to seventeen years of age.

Week-day schools are provided for children who are excused from the public schools (that is, the great schools supported entirely by State funds) for one hour or more each week for religious instruction under the Church of his parents' affiliation. These schools stand for the co-operation of the Church and State in the education of the child. The State does not technically release the child for religious instruction, but honours the request of the parent and excuses the child for extra educational work desired by the parent. [11]

It is realised in America that religious education cannot be successful without the co-operation of the parents, therefore the Christian Nurture Series provides a "Monthly Letter to Parents" to be forwarded regularly by the teacher. These letters explain clearly what is required for the preparation of each Sunday's lesson during the week. Social gatherings are also arranged for the parents from time to time, at which an address is given bearing upon the importance of the religious training of the child, and calculated to enlist parental interest and co-operation.

An interesting example of the practical application of these principles was afforded by a visit to what we should call in England an "upper class" Sunday School. I had already met the superintendent, Miss Warren, and she had explained one most interesting feature of her system—namely, that each month she held a staff meeting of parents and teachers to discuss the lesson, the children, and the school. In each department of the school there was a superintendent; a grade leader who ensured a continual supply of teachers (absentees having to send in their names to her beforehand); a teacher and an assistant teacher for each class, the latter being there to learn her art; and a pupil teacher to hear the memory work. Some of the teachers received a salary, and all the children paid a small entrance fee. These fees, however, did not suffice for expenses, owing to the very good apparatus in use, but the deficit was made up by the church.

A conspicuous feature of the school was a large diagram which hung near the superintendent's table. It consisted of five rings: the small central circle represented "Parish and Home," the next ring "Community," the next "Diocese," the next "Nation," and the outer ring "The World." At the end of the session an appeal was made by the secretary each Sunday for one of the above "fields of service," which took the form of a stirring address on the need for supporting the work. The secretaries were always some of the elder pupils, and their appeals were remarkably well expressed for such young persons. After the address the secretaries of each class were asked to vote a sum of money for the cause, which they did after discussion with their class-mates. The school had a choir of girls led by a talented musician, and they all united to teach the children hymns. [12]

Miss Warren took me to see Dr. Gardner, and, considering the excellence of the system at which the American religious educationist aims, it was encouraging to find him taking great interest in the proposed caravan tour. He even went so far as to ask for details of the plan, and to request that an account might be sent to him for publication. On the appearance of this article he appealed for volunteers and money in order to start a similar campaign on the plains of the U.S.A., where no religious instruction was at present provided for the children.

After ten days in New York, we went on to stay with friends in Toronto. Here we took the opportunity of inquiring into the methods of, and opportunities for, religious education in Canada. We were greatly helped in this by an introduction to the Rev. Dr. Hiltz, General Secretary of the General Board of Religious Education for the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada. The following is a summary of the information given by him or gleaned from other sources.

Under the British North America Act of 1867 the right to legislate on matters respecting education was reserved exclusively to the Provincial Legislatures subject to the maintenance of the rights and privileges of the denominational and separate schools as existing at the time of the union or admission of provinces to the union.

This gave to the Roman Catholics in the Province of Ontario the right to have separate schools, and to the Protestants in the Province of Quebec a similar right. In other provinces of the Dominion, with the exception of Saskatchewan and Alberta, however, separate public schools have no legal standing. The right to have separate schools in the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan was conceded to these provinces when they were admitted to the Dominion.

So far as religious education in the public schools in Canada is concerned, the following brief



summary will give some idea of the situation and at the same time strongly emphasise the need.

[13]

In *Nova Scotia* the matter is largely in the hands of the local authorities. So long as no one objects, religious instruction may be given in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the supporters of the school.

In *New Brunswick* schools *may* be opened with the reading of Scripture and the use of the Lord's Prayer, but as this regulation is permissive only, everything depends upon the individual teacher.

In *Prince Edward Island* the reading of the Bible at the opening of school is authorised.

In *Quebec* in the Protestant schools the first half-hour of each day is devoted to religious exercises and instruction in morals and Scripture.

In *Ontario* the public school *must* be opened with the reading of Scripture and the repeating of the Lord's Prayer, or the prayer authorised by the Department. Religious instruction may be given by the clergyman to the pupils of his denomination once a week after school hours.

In *Manitoba* ministers of the various religious communions have the right to go into the schools at 3.30 once a week and give the children religious instruction.

In *Saskatchewan* and *Alberta* the School Board may permit religious instruction to be given during the last half-hour of the day, and may direct that the school be opened with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

In *British Columbia* no provision is made for religious instruction, but the Lord's Prayer may be used in opening and closing the school.

In most large towns and many villages of the Dominion of Canada there are well-organised Sunday schools. Some of the dioceses have in the past had Diocesan Sunday School Organisers. The Diocese of Rupert's Land was a pioneer in this direction, and the Dioceses of Toronto and Huron have also had such officials. The City of Ottawa for several years had a resident Anglican Sunday School Organiser, an ex-student of St. Christopher's College.

[14]

The religious educational work of the Church in Canada is organised under the General Synod, the General Board of Religious Education being the officially appointed body for the promotion of this work. It began as a Sunday School Commission in 1908, but in 1918 was enlarged to a Board of Religious Education.

Its work falls into five departments, namely:

1. *The Department of Parochial Education.*

This department concerns itself with:

- (a) Religious education through the agency of the home.
- (b) Religious education through the agency of the Sunday School.
- (c) Religious education through the agency of Adult Bible Classes and Young People's organisations.

2. *The Department of Religious Education in Public and Private Schools.*

This department concerns itself with religious education in public and high schools and in church boarding schools.

3. *The Department of Teacher Training.*

This department concerns itself with:

- (a) The training of teachers and officers in the local Sunday School.
- (b) Teacher training in church boarding schools.
- (c) Training for leadership in provincial normal schools.
- (d) The training of students in our theological colleges in religious pedagogy.

4. *The Lantern Slide Department.*

This department concerns itself with the promotion of educational work through the medium of the lantern in all branches of the Church's activities.

5. *The Editorial Department.*

This department concerns itself with the providing of suitable material for use in the promotion of religious education through the other departments, including the preparation and publication of the necessary lesson helps for teachers and pupils.

[15]

In connection with the work of the Parochial Department, an interesting attempt has been made to reach the people in the scattered districts through what is known as "The Sunday School by Post." This is practically the only way in which isolated families can be helped who are too far away to make attendance at Sunday school possible, and too few in numbers to support a school of their own. This Sunday School by Post sends out monthly and weekly graded lesson helps,

each lesson having its own illustrations, questions, memory work, prayers, and Bible readings for each week. The parents are asked to see that the child has ample opportunity to do the written work, and this is returned to the Diocesan Secretary for the Sunday School by Post for examination and correction.

Sunday School by Post secretaries are now working in the Dioceses of Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, and Athabasca, and, now that the General Board of Religious Education has a western field secretary at work, in the person of the Rev. W. Simpson, it is hoped that other dioceses may be led to establish work similar to this to reach the church people in the more distant settlements.

Without some such help as this the parents usually find it impossible to give their children religious instruction. They have little time for thought or study, and have frequently forgotten what they once knew. But their interest is very keen when roused, as the following incident proves. In one of the public schools, during the history hour, the teacher read part of the story of Joseph, but not having time to read the whole of it promised to finish it next day. One child, thrilled by the story and impatient for the end, went home and asked his parents if they could finish it for him. "Joseph!" they said, "Joseph! Surely we have heard that name somewhere." At last they remembered that it was a biblical name. A long search finally revealed the Bible, dusty from long neglect, and a further search discovered the story, which was read with intense interest by parents and child alike. When the latter went to school next day he proudly told his class-mates how the fascinating adventure ended. [16]

In connection with the Parochial Department, much is also being done for the training of boys and girls of the "teen" age. With a view to meeting the needs of these young people, a Council on Boys' Work, a Council on Girls' Work, and a Council on Young People's Work have been formed, whose chief task it is to prepare and issue definite programmes of mid-week activities for organised groups of older boys and girls and young people. The plan which is largely followed is that known as the fourfold plan, the aim being to develop these adolescents physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. The programmes are of such a character that they can be worked out through any type of organisation desired, whether it is with an organised class in Sunday School, a Boy Scout or Girl Guide Troop, Trail Rangers, Tuxis Square, or Anglican Young People's Association.

The publication work of the Board is extensive, lesson courses and helps, both for teachers and pupils, being provided for all departments from the little beginners to the adult Bible classes. These constitute the official lesson schemes of the Church of England in Canada, and are used in the great majority of the schools.

A very effective piece of work is being done by the Teacher Training Department, which not only provides courses of training for teacher training classes in the local parish, but has also made provision for definite teacher training work to be carried on amongst the Anglican students in attendance at the Normal Schools in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. In addition to this, definite courses of training are provided for the students in attendance at the Church of England Deaconess and Missionary Training School in Toronto, and in the various theological colleges of the Church of England. In five of these latter, the General Secretary of the Board of Religious Education lectures regularly.

Another important channel for the promotion of teacher training work is that provided through Summer Schools, which are held regularly at strategic centres from the Maritime Provinces to British Columbia. These schools are conducted under the auspices of the three Boards of the Church—namely, the Missionary Society, the Board of Religious Education, and the Council for Social Service. [17]

Dr. Hiltz kindly showed interest in our caravan project, and said that if it proved possible of accomplishment he would like a report of the work at the end of the season. He remarked that there was great need for work of the kind.

## CHAPTER IV

### LIFE IN A LITTLE PRAIRIE TOWN

We had arranged to work at Regina until the season was sufficiently advanced for us to take the road, but before leaving Toronto I heard that my caravan was not yet begun. This was exceedingly worrying, as it was now the middle of March, and I wished to start on the prairie by May 1, when the trails should be open. I had only six months' leave from my diocese, and was anxious to make the most of it, and now it seemed as if the whole plan would be spoilt by this delay over the caravan. I determined to stop at Winnipeg on my way to Regina in order to see about the matter, and to bring what influence I could to bear upon the coach-building firm. As a member of the Victoria League,<sup>[1]</sup> I had an introduction to a Daughter of the Empire at Winnipeg, and I wrote and asked her to use her influence in getting my order for the caravan put through without further delay. Then, arming myself with a letter from an official of the Royal Bank of Canada, stating that I was to be relied upon to carry out my business transactions, I had a "stop-

over" for Winnipeg put on our tickets, and on arrival in that town went straight to the coach-builder's office. The Daughter of the Empire had telephoned to the firm, and this, with the official's letter, had the desired effect. The manager was most civil and obliging, and promised to do everything in his power to carry out the contract. To my surprise I found that the order for the caravan had never been received, the firm through which it had been given never having transmitted it. When I pressed for a promise that the van should be finished by May 1, adding that otherwise I should not pay for it, the manager, knowing that I came from the land of labour troubles, said, with a twinkle in his eye: "Yes, if there isn't a strike."

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I spent some hours in attending to the details of the van, and then we went on to Regina by the night train, arriving there next morning. The clergy of the Railway Mission gave us hospitality at first, then Winifred Ticehurst went to work in St. Peter's parish, and lived at the vicarage, and I went to St. Mary's parish, and lived in lodgings.

Soon after I arrived in Regina Aylmer Bosanquet asked me to go out to her at Kenaston for a week-end. I was thankful that I was going to make my cross-country journeys by caravan when I found that it was no unusual thing for the trains in Western Canada to be three hours late in starting. This was so much a matter of course that a fellow-traveller—one of the Railway Mission clergy, who was going up to Kenaston to take service on the Sunday—telephoned to the station from the Mission-house before attempting to catch the train. These automatic telephones were a feature of every house in Regina, and were also installed in all parish halls and public buildings. The person using them could switch on to the desired number without calling up through the Exchange.

It was a five hours' journey to Kenaston, which is a typical prairie town—just a wide earth road, with wooden side-walks, and bordered on either side by wooden shacks. Even in Regina all but the main streets are of this unpaved earth, and when the snow is melting or after heavy rain this earth turns into thick and sticky mud (called "gumbo"), which cakes on your boots in lumps of incredible hardness, so that you often find yourself walking with one foot higher than the other. It is so hard that it can only be scraped off with a knife. Of course one has to clean one's own boots, unless one is near a "Shoe-shine Parlour" in some large town.

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Kenaston is surrounded by illimitable prairie, across which one can see for twenty or thirty miles. When I first saw it the prairie was covered with snow, stained crimson in the West by the red glow of the setting sun. An unforgettable sight.

The town has a lumber-yard and several elevators, both of which are found in every town situated close to the "track"—*i.e.*, the railway. The lumber (trees sawn into boards) is sent down from British Columbia and other parts for building shacks, etc., there being no timber trees on the prairie. The elevator is a high granary for storing the wheat till it is sent away by train.

Small as the place is there are three churches—Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Evangelical Lutheran. In many places there is a "Union" Church and Sunday school. This is a sort of co-operative Nonconformity, the ministers of the different denominations officiating alternately. Presbyterians have united in this matter with the other non-episcopal sects. The plan has been adopted to economise in men and money; but its weak point seems to be that, as the ministers have to please all denominations, the teaching is apt to become wishy-washy. A possible alternative occurred to me—namely, that all the religious bodies of a given area should combine to build a church, which could then be used for their own special services at different hours. But, of course, this plan would not economise in men.

Aylmer Bosanquet's shack had three rooms, all on the ground floor, with a veranda reached by steps. All the wooden houses have a basement beneath them, dug out of the earth and concreted. This helps to keep the houses dry and warm, and in the larger ones the furnace for the central heating is placed here. A stove going night and day is absolutely essential in the winter, as it is often forty or fifty degrees below zero. But the cold is not felt as severely as might be expected because of the dry, sunny atmosphere.

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Life in a shack was a distinct contrast from life in New York. My hostesses slept together in a bed 2½ feet wide in order to accommodate their guest. In the dark of the wintry morning, about 7 a.m., I roused up sleepily to find Aylmer Bosanquet bringing me hot water, herself fully dressed and armed with logs, just going out to light the stove in the church, so that it might be warm when the people came at eight o'clock.

St. Colomba's was a typical prairie church, square built, without a chancel, the plainness of the walls only accentuating the richness of the altar furnishings. The walls were hung with framed Nelson pictures, which lent beauty and atmosphere to the church, and suggested meditation on holy things to all who entered. Most of the pictures were Aylmer Bosanquet's gifts, and the little wooden font, with its brass basin, was given by the Sunday School children. The splendid attendance at Holy Communion and Morning Prayer showed that the adornment of the church was the expression of a real love for religion. The hearty way in which the congregation joined in the services was very striking. Their mutual friendliness also was pleasant to see, and gave point to the usual greeting: "Pleased to meet you!" murmured in broken English even by the Chinese member of the congregation, a phrase which left me at a loss for a suitable reply until I hit upon the plan of always saying it first.

Preparation for the afternoon Sunday School was somewhat hampered by the necessity for cooking lunch at the same time, and the peas got burnt while the sand-tray was being prepared.

At this unpropitious moment Mr. G., the Mission clergyman, looked in to smoke a surreptitious pipe, removed from the disapproving gaze of his flock, who have no sympathy with this form of self-indulgence on the part of their spiritual pastors. Unfortunately, in peas versus tobacco, peas won, and with a discerning sniff Mr. G. remarked: "You seem to be having very strange food." Which was the more disconcerting as the shack owners had more than once been reproved for their carelessness of their own comfort.

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This first experience of a prairie Sunday School was indicative of the problems to be faced. It was held perforce in the church, a necessity with which I was familiar in my little schools on the fells. There were only sixteen children at Kenaston, their ages ranging from two to seventeen, so that the grading of lessons and devotions was difficult. The intelligence and interest displayed by these children were very remarkable. They did credit to the excellent teaching they had received.

The women missionaries had classes in three other places, and held preparation classes for young teachers, thus training up a supply of teachers from among the young girls of the neighbourhood. The influence of the missionaries' lives on these young girls was very wonderful.

On the Sunday evening there was no service at Kenaston because Mr. G. had gone on to take one elsewhere, so we went round to visit the parents and children. It was noticeable how beloved the missionaries were. With some of the old people they held an informal service, which was greatly appreciated.

Aylmer and Nona intended to go out on the prairie that summer, in a different direction from that which I should take, of course, as we wanted to cover as much ground as possible. Aylmer had ordered a Ford roadster, which is a two-seater Ford with a folding camp-equipment attached. This caravanning was a subject of enthralling interest to both of us.

Life in a shack is a very busy one, but one soon got used to the inevitable chores, and remembered to keep the pan of melting snow on the stove always filled, this being the only water available for washing up. The shortage of water is one of the great trials of prairie life. When I remembered Aylmer's house in England, with its well-trained servants, her car and chauffeur, and all the luxuries to which she had always been accustomed, it emphasised all the more strongly the self-sacrifice of her present life.

On the Monday morning I wanted to telephone to Regina, and as my hostess said they were always allowed to use a neighbour's telephone, I took advantage of this neighbourly kindness. Whilst waiting for the long distance call I remembered that mutual assistance is the custom of the West, and helped to make the beds and sweep the house. It was about mid-day before I had finished with the telephone, and so I was pressed to stay for dinner. No newcomer is a stranger in that hospitable country. They were Yorkshire people and seemed delighted to meet another North Country person.

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It was a typical West Canadian meal. It began with boiled Indian corn served with white sauce, then meat and potatoes, and then delicious canned fruit served with iced layer cake, the whole accompanied by strong tea. It is difficult to do as Rome does until you know what Rome does do, and with agony the guest realised that she had nothing wherewith to eat the canned fruit before her, having been too engrossed in conversation to notice the removal of her knife, fork, and spoon. Like Chinese chop-sticks, these should have been retained throughout the meal. The scarcity of water necessitates these little economies.

## CHAPTER V

### IN REGINA

Within the last twenty years Regina, the capital of Saskatchewan, has grown from a colony of wooden huts to a town of over 26,000 inhabitants. Government House and the Parliament Buildings are finely built of stone, but most of the houses are of wood, there being no quarries on the prairie. One not infrequently meets one of these wooden houses moving along the streets—a fascinating accomplishment. When you wish to live in another part of the town you simply have your house lifted on to wooden blocks and skids, and it is then moved bodily with a windlass turned by horses or machinery. One day I went house-hunting quite literally, chasing my elusive quarry from street to street with a camera.

We stayed in Regina for eight weeks, giving lectures and holding demonstration classes. We were invited to visit parents and teachers, which we were very glad to do, as by this means we became acquainted with most interesting people, and saw how life is lived in this part of the world.

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There are four Anglican churches in Regina, St. Paul's having a splendid parish hall. But Anglicanism only comes fourth in numbers and wealth here, as it does in Western Canada as a whole. The Presbyterians are the most numerous, and have a fine church with a conspicuous tower. Methodism is also very strong. The Roman Catholics have built a beautiful cathedral on the highest part of the town, with two fine spires which form a landmark for miles around. Underneath the cathedral is a large parish hall with rooms for various purposes, and this economy of space allows room for two tennis-courts in the cathedral grounds.

A large piece of ground has been acquired for the site of the Anglican cathedral, but this has not yet been begun, because it was thought better, whilst funds were low, to build the theological college and the girls' school first. Aylmer Bosanquet gave £1,000 to start this school,<sup>[2]</sup> a project in which she took great interest. It is under the management of the Anglican sisters of St. John the Divine. It supplies a long-felt want, being the only Anglican Church boarding school in this part of the West. It has now taken over St. Chad's College, which was originally built for divinity students, but as their numbers were greatly depleted by the War, St. Cuthbert's Hostel is now large enough for their needs. Unfortunately, in many cases the children's schooling depends upon the crops. Only comparatively well-to-do parents are able to send their children regularly. Before they have made their way, or when the crops fail, they have to depend upon the public schools. To help such parents several bursaries have been given, but others are needed.

After my week-end at Kenaston I settled down to work in Regina until the trails were ready. My vicar made arrangements for me to lodge with a charming family—a Mr. and Mrs. W. and their two daughters. They had come out from England about twenty years before, and the girls were thorough Canadians and very delightful creatures. Mrs. W. made me feel like one of the family, and mothered me in countless ways. She taught me how to use the Canadian washing-machine, a thing not unlike a churn. You wash the clothes simply by turning a handle—so many times for white things and so many times for coloured. She also showed me how to iron my blouses, and, above all, helped me to buy the equipment for the caravan. Her advice here was invaluable, as she not only knew the best "stores" and what a thing ought to cost, but she also interpreted Canadian terminology, such as "coal oil" for paraffin, "wood alcohol" for methylated spirits, and "gasolene" for petrol.

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Mr. W. was equally helpful, and I soon came to regard him as an encyclopedia of useful information, especially with regard to practical business matters. Having lived on the prairie, he also gave me many valuable tips about prairie life.

The girls were members of the choir, and one was a Sunday School teacher, and by meeting their friends and going about with them I gained an insight into the life of young Canada. Pretty faces, very smart clothes, instant friendliness, swiftness in uptake, a keen interest in work and play, and a worthy ambition are some of the characteristics of these young people. The "movies" and ice-cream play a large part in their lives. The girls usually marry very young and have a large circle of admirers from whom to choose. Winifred Ticehurst sketched them as follows in one of her letters: "Choir girls, mortar boards and tassels, most chic; surplices and cassocks, curls each side of mortar boards . . . white Eton collars like little boys."

One of the social activities which interested me very much was the Canadian Girls in Training, organised by the Council on Girls' Work. They gave a banquet while I was in Regina, and one of the W. girls asked me to go as her "mother," it being the custom for each of them to invite a parent or some older person. I was much struck by the excellent speeches made by the girls. They explained the object of the organisation, and gracefully thanked all those who had helped towards its success.

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Another very interesting social gathering which I attended was a reception given by the Daughters of the Empire in the Parliament Buildings. I had received introductions to all the members of this association living in any of the towns where I was likely to go. The President thought that it would be interesting for us to meet the members who were coming in from all parts of Saskatchewan, and who might help us on the caravan tour. We were also introduced to Premier Martin, who was then Minister of Education for Saskatchewan. He gave a most interesting address on the rural schools, and after hearing about our project promised to give us introductions to the day school teachers in the places we hoped to visit.

Further official encouragement resulted from an introduction to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Richard Lake. He welcomed me as a compatriot, as he had been educated at Heversham Grammar School, in Westmorland. We had an interesting talk on prairie trails and motoring, and the need for religious education in the day schools. He was strongly in favour of this, and expressed regret for the continual opposition to it.

The Daughters of the Empire sent the editor of a Regina newspaper to interview me. She questioned me on what I had done during the War, the reason for our coming out, and the places we intended to visit. The result was an embarrassingly flattering article in the local paper, which was copied by the *Saskatchewan Star*. A few weeks later the following notice appeared in another paper: "Bachelors, beware! Two women are going in a caravan on the prairie. This is Leap Year!"

In Regina I met some very nice girls who had come out under the Fellowship of the Maple Leaf.<sup>[3]</sup> They had come to teach in the prairie schools, and a good many were now in training at the Normal School. I gave a tea-party for them, and they told me a good deal about their work, and in return showed great interest in our caravan scheme. Those of them who were going out to the prairie that summer said that they hoped we would visit them. I was very glad of this opportunity of explaining our hopes and aims to these teachers, for I knew it had been suggested that they should help with religious education, either by starting Sunday Schools or by giving instruction after school hours during the week. I foresaw that our great difficulty would be to make our work permanent in districts where there were no clergy, and I realised the enormous value of the help of these trained women. They would already have some knowledge of teaching methods, and some acquaintance with the Bible and Church doctrine. It would be a simple matter to show them how to apply psychological methods to religious education, and, helped with lesson courses and

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pictures, they could easily carry on any Sunday Schools we might be able to start in their neighbourhood.

We did not talk shop all the time; the "green Englishwomen" were put through a severe catechism on Canadian as it is spoken. But the W. family having instructed me carefully, I came off better than might have been expected.

I saw a good deal of the deaconess in charge of the Maple Leafs. She found them comfortable lodgings, and befriended them in every possible way. She asked us to look up any of them whom we came across in the out-of-the-way prairie schools. Her only way of visiting was by train, and some of these schools were far from any "track." She was very kind to us and helped us in many ways.

Whilst I was in Regina I had to plan out the organisation of the caravan tour. I was given the names of a large number of places to visit and the routes we were to follow, but no names of the clergy in the different "districts" (parishes). I had no idea how far apart these places were, or how long it would take to get from place to place in the caravan. I therefore got a map and worked out the mileage between the places. On the earth trails outside Regina I had often seen motor-cars stuck in mud-holes, and I had noticed the deep ruts of these unmetalled roads, so I concluded that we could not make more than ten miles an hour at most in the caravan. On these two calculations I based the mileage we might hope to cover. [27]

When at last I obtained the names of the clergy on my proposed route, I found that there were large areas in which there were no Anglican clergymen at all. I then wrote to the clergy, and, lacking these, the leading laity when I could find their names. In some cases this was impossible until I neared their district. In these letters I made the following suggestions. We should like to come and stay a week in their locality, living and sleeping in the caravan and doing our own cooking (I wished to make it clear that we should not be burdensome), but we should be glad to receive invitations and hospitality at times in order to get to know the people. Where there was a Sunday School in existence, we proposed to superintend the school and teach, while the teachers watched. Where there was no Sunday School, we should like to have the children gathered together to form one. In this case we hoped that prospective teachers would come to be shown how to teach, that they might carry on the school when we had started it, helped by the books and pictures which we proposed to leave them. We also requested the trustees to allow us to give Scripture lessons in the day schools in the half-hour allotted for that purpose, and also expressed our great desire to meet the parents, that we might discuss with them the problems of religious education.

I received most kind replies to these letters. The writers offered us a hearty welcome, and said how pleased they would be to have people coming out to them, for, as a rule, they had little help in these matters, beyond an invitation to a summer school just when the harvest was in full swing.

I should add here what I had been most careful to explain—namely, that we were given diocesan authority for our work by Archdeacon Dobie, D.D., who was acting as Commissary for the Bishop owing to the latter's breakdown through overwork, and by Archdeacon Burgett, the Chairman of the Sunday School Diocesan Association, who was also Diocesan Missioner.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MOTOR CARAVAN

Whilst in Regina waiting for the caravan to be ready for the road I took steps to be ready for the van. I had never driven a Ford, but Aylmer Bosanquet's Ford roadster arrived whilst I was in Regina, and she allowed me to have lessons on it. It was quite easy to drive, and on the second day I took it out alone. I also went to a motor school and had a course of lessons on Ford running repairs and vulcanising tyres. The head man was exceedingly nice, and took infinite pains to help me in every way. I was the only woman in the shop, but there were a great many men learning motor-tractor work preparatory to working on the prairie farms. Most of them had been in the army. They took a most embarrassing interest in me and my future plans, putting me through the usual catechism, with the inevitable leading question: "Are you married?" They seemed to think it was not fit for two women to go out alone on the prairie, as in Western Canada women hardly ever drive outside the towns, and never do their own running repairs—and seldom even oil their engines, judging from the sound.

On May 1 I heard that the caravan was ready, but, unfortunately, the trails were not yet open. However, spring comes suddenly on the prairie. On May 2 there was a blizzard of snow, and on May 5 it was like an English midsummer day. Archdeacon Burgett advised us not to fetch our caravan until his clergy had arrived at Regina with theirs, as they could then tell us what the trails were like. They came in on the Saturday, May 8, having had a very rough time with snow-drifts and mud-holes. They had bent their back lamp and damaged a rear mudguard. I noticed that they had no shock absorbers, which accounted for a good deal of the damage. They gave us a book with directions and maps of the blazed trail between Winnipeg and Regina, and gave us a

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lurid description of the perils of the way, apparently wishing to dissuade us from what they considered a mad attempt. But as I had mapped out the caravan itinerary with but little margin, I did not wish to lose any time in getting off, so Winifred Ticehurst and I started for Winnipeg late on Sunday evening (after working pretty hard all day). We took a blanket or two and a little spirit lamp and saucepan as our sole camping equipment. The parish hall, in which our sleeping-bags, etc., were stored, was locked, and the caretaker had gone to church.



### **THE CARAVAN AND HER CREW**

**(W. M. T. LEFT, F. H. E. H. RIGHT)**



### **THE INTERIOR OF THE VAN**

*To face p. 28*



### **TIDYING UP (see page 54)**





## A SHACK ON THE MOVE (see page 22)

We arrived at Winnipeg at 11.30 a.m. on Monday, and went straight to the coachbuilder's. The manager showed us the caravan, which was all ready for the road, except that they had not put non-skid tyres on the rear as ordered. I pointed this out, and the manager said that the mistake had been made by the Ford Company, but he would send the car down to have it put right in the morning. We had expected to start that afternoon, but were told that the car had not yet been passed by the Government officials, who were going to register it as a commercial vehicle to escape taxation. As it was a public holiday this could not be done until next day. [29]

The caravan was much like a tradesman's van in appearance. It was painted black, with "Sunday School Mission, Anglican Church," lettered in red and gold on one side. The driving seat could be completely closed in when necessary, for, besides the wind-screen, there were half-glass doors on either side, which in hot weather could be taken off and put behind the mattresses. There were two doors at the back of the van, which opened outwards. As the side doors had their catches inside, when we wished to leave the caravan we got out at the back and padlocked these doors, thus making all secure. The back of the driving-seat was hinged and folded forward at night, so that the six-foot mattresses which were strapped back to the van sides during the day could come down over it. Beneath one mattress was a wooden locker, and under the other a wooden shelf with legs. There was also a shelf on one wall of the van. When I got back to Regina, before starting out on the prairie, I added further items, which the run from Winnipeg had shown to be desirable. An electric bulb was fitted to the roof of the van, and a reflecting glass put on the left side. I also got an inspection lamp for use at night in case anything went wrong with the engine. This could be attached to the electric current which supplied the bulb. We racked our brains to think of some means of keeping the things on the shelf, and finally nailed on wire netting, which we hooked to the roof. This proved very effective, but so great was the jar that the dancing pots and pans wore it out from time to time. We made a bag to hold our tidiest clothes, and blue cotton covers for the mattresses and a bag to keep our pillows clean. We also nailed linoleum on the floor of the van, because dust and draughts came through cracks in the wood-work, and this made the floor easy to keep clean. [30]

The caravan had a Ford chassis with electric starter and head lights. I had heard that for the rough prairie trails nothing could beat a Ford engine. Only a car with a high clearance is of any use on these earth roads, and whereas a heavy car would stick in a mud-hole the light Ford can get through. Then again, even little "towns" which are nothing more than hamlets stock Ford spare parts, both in garages and in the ordinary "hardware stores"—*i.e.*, iron-mongers. I had had two extra petrol tanks put on the foot-board, each holding 8½ gallons, so that we could carry 25 gallons in all. The tool box, also, was on the foot-board, so the spare tyre had to be strapped inside the caravan above the driving seat. We had very strong shock absorbers to prevent the body smashing the back axle and springs when we went through very deep holes, and sub-radius rods to strengthen the steering-rod and front axle. I carried three spare tubes as I had not remountable rims, and a pyrene extinguisher fixed inside the car in case of fire through damage to the petrol tanks on the rough trails. [31]

I fitted out the caravan in the light of what I had learnt about the prairie from the Regina Railway Mission clergy lecturing in England, and from books on the subject. From these sources I knew something about the condition of the roads and the storms one might expect. This was why I insisted on having a caravan rather than a Ford roadster, for though the lightness of the latter would enable it to get through a mud-hole where a caravan might stick, I guessed that a prairie thunderstorm with its terrific winds and torrential rains would sweep away the tent and hood of the roadster like straws, leaving the occupants homeless.

As we could not get away that day we were obliged to find lodgings for the night, and had not the least idea where to go. I would have asked hospitality from the Daughter of the Empire to whom I had an introduction, but we did not care to present ourselves to a stranger in our travel-stained condition, and we had brought no evening clothes with us. Winifred suggested that we should try to find a Y.W.C.A., which we did. The head received us very kindly, and gave us cheap and comfortable accommodation. Had we not been so tired we might have attended a concert in their concert-hall.

Next morning we went to a store which sold camping outfits and bought several things, in particular a cunning arrangement of aluminium cooking utensils which fitted neatly into a canvas bag. Canadians make a speciality of this kind of thing, as people often camp out when on a shooting or fishing expedition. I also had to get several extra tools for the car, as very few were provided with it. Whilst I did this Winifred went off to buy food.

When I went to fetch the caravan I found that a mechanic was just about to take it to the Ford Company to have the non-skid tyres put on, so I accompanied him. I noticed that it was not easy to drive in traffic, you could not see out of the back, and as yet it had no reflecting glass. The engine was very stiff as it had just come out of the assembly shop and had not been run, so it was difficult to steer and to regulate the speed. Also it swung a good deal as the body was very long, and the shock absorbers helped to make it swing. Though Main Street, Winnipeg, is much wider than Oxford Street, it also contains much more traffic, including trams, so it was not surprising that we nearly ran into a motor bicycle and other vehicles. Then the pyrene extinguisher fell out, and I had to rescue it from under the nose of a tram. [32]

Seeing what Winnipeg traffic was like, and how stiff the engine was, and also not knowing the

way out of the town, I thought of the suggestion made by the Regina motor school, where I had learnt Ford running repairs. This was that I should ask a mechanic of their Winnipeg branch to look over the engine and see if it were rightly adjusted, and then take us out of Winnipeg. Leaving the caravan at the Ford Company, I went to find this firm. The address given to me proved to be a barber's shop. This was rather disconcerting, but, on inquiring the way, I found that it belonged to the same firm, and they directed me to the motor shops. They sent a mechanic with me, but he seemed all the time to be in a great hurry, and kept looking at his watch. I left him looking at the engine while I went after something or other, and when I came back he was gone. I then saw that I should have to take the van out of Winnipeg myself, as they could not spare a mechanic from the Ford Company.

What must be must, so Winifred and I started off and drove into Main Street, with its surging stream of trams and cars. The rule of the road here is the opposite of the English rule, all cars having a left-hand drive, so I thought it best to cross over to the right side of the street. But just as I had turned across the tram-lines a policeman stopped me, saying that I must cross further up at the regular crossing-place. The engine, being stiff, stopped dead, and there we were, right in the way of the trams. However, by the help of the self-starter, I got it going again and tried to turn, but the steering-wheel was so stiff that I nearly ran into the pavement. We went on further up the street until we came to a red notice which marked the crossing-place, but as I had to drive slowly through the traffic, the engine kept stopping, so I turned into a side street, and with a good deal of difficulty found my way out of the town. With every mile the engine ran better, and after fifty miles it went quite easily.

## CHAPTER VII

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### THE PRAIRIE TRAILS

The prairie trails are simply earth roads, it being impossible to get stone for them. The very best trail is much like the worst cart road in England. The trail is made by scooping out the earth on either side of a wide track, and throwing it into the middle, where the clods are baked as hard as bricks by the sun. These clods would knock the bottom out of any car which had not a high clearance—the more so as a used trail has ruts about two feet deep. Trail-making is usually done by a scoop drawn by two horses, but in some places a kind of motor-plough is used. In dry weather a simple track across the prairie made by carts and horses is much easier going, but these tracks are impossible when the snow is melting, or after the heavy thunderstorms of summer. Therefore all the main trails have to be raised in the middle to let off the water, which would otherwise stand till it formed sloughs. When once on the trail you have to keep there, as it is either bordered by a three-foot bank whence the earth was dug, or else it slopes straight into a slough. These sloughs are like great ponds, their bottoms are covered with deep mud, and if it once gets in, a car sinks deeper and deeper, and cannot be got out. The sloughs are very beautiful, reflecting the wonderful blue of the sky, or the marvellous colours of sunset. A prairie sunset is quite beyond description. I have never seen such colours in England.

The flowers on the prairie are lovely, forming a changing kaleidoscope of colour throughout the summer months. They border the trails and the sloughs, and grow in riotous profusion on unbroken ground. When we first took the trail I specially noticed a lovely little pale mauve anemone.

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There are also many beautiful birds on the prairie, the most striking being the red-winged blackbird—a very big blackbird with glinting red feathers on the top of his wings. There was also a robin about twice the size of his English cousin, and a yellow-breasted bird which sang a very sweet little song, but never seemed to finish it. There were prairie chickens of a greyish brown, wild duck and large snipe, and a sort of water-hen.

The jack-rabbit was a very ubiquitous person, always jumping across the trail. He is really a hare, greyish-brown in summer and white in winter. Another local inhabitant who made his presence felt was the gopher, which looks like a cross between a squirrel and a weasel. They make their holes in the wheel-ruts of the trails, as we found by bumping violently over their excavations. Badgers adopt the same inconvenient habit, as we discovered to our cost when shot suddenly to the roof of the caravan. Fortunately, they are not so common as gophers. The latter do a great deal of damage to the wheat, so that the farmers are obliged to poison them and the children are given so much per tail; consequently I had little compunction in running over one occasionally when it sat up in the middle of the trail just in front of the wheel. At first I wondered why these beasties chose the trail for their burrows when they had all the enormous prairie at their disposal, until it was explained to me that the hard ground formed a better front door to their holes, as in soft ground the soil would fall in.

We were interested in watching the farming operations en route. They were disking and ploughing and sowing, generally driving six horses abreast. The machines were immensely wide, too large to pass through our widest gates, and it was a heavy alluvial soil, thus needing much horse-power. We also saw a large number of motor tractors in use.

All the main trails are bordered with telephone poles, and a red blaze on these poles indicates the

way—*i.e.*, an R or an L tells you when to turn to the right or left. At least, it is supposed to tell you, but as both letters are usually on the same side of the pole, it is up to you to guess whether you turn to the right to go to Winnipeg or to Regina. The matter is further complicated by the letters being made of paper on some trails, in which case they are generally half torn off.

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The trails, like the towns, are laid out in squares. In a town the avenues run east and west and the streets north and south. On the trail, when you are running north and south you find a trail running east and west every two miles; and when you are running east and west you find a trail going north and south every mile. But this arrangement is complicated as you draw near to the Arctic Circle, because as the trails are laid out in squares, these squares grow narrower in this direction and so an extra trail, called a correction line, is added at intervals. Also now and again an old Indian trail upsets one's calculations. You never talk of right and left on the prairie, but always of the points of the compass, and these points form the first lesson which a child learns. Yet the actual compass is of no use on these rough roads, as it gets out of order. One learns to steer by the sun and stars.

It is useless to ask for directions, you will merely be told "Go five miles north, and three miles east and one mile south and four miles west, and then look for the elevator at So-and-So. Ye can't miss it." But you can miss it, very easily. Again, you are often told that a place is "quite close" and find it to be at least five miles away.

There are no landmarks on these trails, except the elevators in the towns near the track. The sections are marked by a small heap of stones at their corners. There is scarcely a fence on the prairie, there being no stock to speak of and no wood at hand for posts. There are also no sign-posts or danger signals, and for lack of the latter we had a narrow escape of finishing our tour before it had well begun. Soon after we left Winnipeg, running through the main street of a little town, we suddenly saw a great C.P.R. train cross the road in front of us with no warning whatever. Had we been a minute or two sooner we must have been killed. It is no unusual thing for the track to cross the trail, but in this instance the houses prevented us from seeing the approach of the train.

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Meeting another car was an awkward matter as it meant climbing out of the ruts and running with one wheel in the gutter. Sometimes, in trying to avoid a mud hole or something, we ran at such an angle that I only kept my seat by clinging to the steering-wheel, and how Winifred kept hers is a mystery. Straw and sand are sometimes thrown into these mud holes, in a vain endeavour to fill them up. When stuck fast in one it was little consolation to be told that it was probably an old buffalo wallow.

This is how Winifred described the trail in one of her letters: "The road was long, the ruts were deep, the sloughs were lined with mud. The road was narrow, and on each side those watery sloughs did gleam with tempting sunset gleams of cherry, pink and gold, a warm, warm glow. They said 'Oh, guide your car into our gleams and spend the night with us.'"

## CHAPTER VIII

### FROM WINNIPEG TO REGINA

The first night we camped near a farm-house so as to be able to get water. We did this whenever it was possible. Going to bed in a caravan proved to be an acquired art. First we had to put all the camping equipment, etc., either in front of the driving seat or outside the van covered over with a waterproof sheet (there was always a very heavy dew at night); then we let down the mattresses and arranged the bedding. Next came the difficulty of undressing, there being barely 12 inches between the mattresses when they were let down. We could not make a dressing-room of the prairie because we generally camped near a farm, and anyhow the clarity of the atmosphere and the flat ground made one visible from a long distance. This first night we sat on our mattresses and wriggled out of our clothes, there being no room in the van to stand upright. Afterwards we adopted the plan of going to bed one by one. We put up the tent for a second room whenever we stayed long enough in a place to make it worth while. We had been obliged to do this trip without our sleeping-bags, and so were very cold at night, as the temperature then falls very low even in the summer. You really need a sleeping-bag as well as blankets on the prairie. Our excellent health throughout the tour was probably largely due to our precautions in this matter. My sleeping-bag had already done much service, having been lent me by a cousin who had used it on the French and Italian fronts, and my mosquito net was a loan from a padre who had served at Salonica. This preserved me from much discomfort and blood-poisoning, as later in the summer the mosquitoes were very ferocious, especially to us newcomers.

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We started on our tour with a due regard for appearances, both of us armed with travelling looking-glasses. But these soon got smashed in our bumpy progress, and henceforth we contented ourselves with tidying our hair from our shadows cast on the ground or our reflections in the wind-screen, or, Hyacinth-like, gazed fondly into the sloughs.

I turned out first in the morning, as I was going to cook the breakfast, and found it decidedly cold. When I went to the farm for milk and eggs the nice woman would not let me pay for them.

We found great generosity wherever we went. We had brought sufficient water from Winnipeg in the ferrostate flask for tea, but this was too precious to use for washing up, so we had our first experience of getting water out of a prairie well. This shortage of water and the expense of boring very deep wells is one of the farmers' great trials. In certain places you have to go down forty feet for water. If there is no gasolene engine or windmill it has to be drawn up with a bucket and rope. This is by no means easy, the problem being to prevent the bucket from floating empty on the surface of the water. To avoid this you have to swing the bucket so that it falls in sideways and fills itself, but if you are not very careful when drawing it up it will sway violently and spill half the contents. On this first occasion, having proudly drawn up my water, I essayed to take it away in our canvas bucket, but not knowing the habits of the latter it turned over just as I had got it filled. Afterwards I circumvented it by weighting it with a stone or propping it up.

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When at last we were all ready to start, the engine unfortunately wasn't. I thought that the sparking plugs had probably got damp with the heavy dew, or had got oily, so I took them out and cleaned them and also cleaned the carburetter. In the meantime Winifred went off to the neighbouring town to fetch help from a garage, but they were all too busy with motor tractors to come. Presently two farm men came and talked to me and helped to undo screws, but did not seem to know much about a car. The small boy from the farm saved the situation by his cheerful chatter. He kept telling me that the radiator was like a letter-box.

At last I got the car to start, and then it went very well. The trail was very sandy, bordered with coarse grass and prickly scrub, and there were hills at intervals. The car skidded badly in the sand, and once swung round broadside on up a bank, and nearly turned over. We had to cut down some of the thorny bushes in order to get it out without damaging the headlights. We had not gone much further before the car stuck in the sand again, going up a hill. Some men came by in a car and advised me to tighten the gear pedal, which I did. New cars need continual adjustment at first, of course. When we had done about fifty miles I thought that the engine smelt hot and found that the fan was not working, so I screwed up the belt and it was all right for a time. We passed through several towns that day, and stopped for the night near a slough, outside Alexandra. For the first time we were hushed to sleep by the "Canadian Band," as the frog chorus is called.

The next day was Ascension Day, and we hoped to reach some town in time for a service, but difficulties beset us from the first. I had to get some gasolene out of the side tanks, and this meant siphoning it, an exceedingly unpleasant performance, no less than sucking it through a tube to start the flow. Then the electric starter went wrong, and the engine was terribly hard to crank, as the starting-handle had not been used. At last we were off, but the trail was heavy with sand, and the engine got very hot and presently stuck fast at a hill. I found that the fan had gone wrong again, and took it down, and while trying to put it right found that a nut had not been properly adjusted. A man came along in a car and at once went to my aid. Then two more men came by and also stopped to help, and when we had adjusted the fan they all three pushed the van off and we went up the hill.

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But our troubles were not over yet. An immense hole, about five feet deep, yawned across our path as we topped the hill, and there was nothing for it but to plunge through it and down the hill beyond. The caravan swayed so violently that I expected every moment that we should be upset, but it always righted itself just in time, though everything on the shelves was hurled to the floor—a continual occurrence until we put up the netting. The sand was so thick here that we got on to a grass track beside the trail, hoping for better going, but this soon ended, and we had to bump back on to the trail again. In so doing we stuck fast in the ditch. By racing the engine I got her out, but we soon stuck fast again, this time up to our axles in sand. After we had tried in vain for an hour to get the car out, we gave it up and sat down by the roadside to read the service for the day in our prayer-books. It was easy to enter into the spirit of the festival out there on the wide prairie, with its immense distances and glorious blue sky. We were about thirty miles from any house.

After a time we started to dig out the wheels with our hands, but just then two of the men who had helped us before came back along the trail. "How many more times shall we have to help you two girls out of a hole?" they cried, and with much good nature proceeded to assist us, until at last, with reversing and pushing and putting our blankets under the wheels, we got out. We had to go half a mile back and along another trail, but at last reached Verdun. We only did twenty-seven miles that day.

We didn't stick fast anywhere next day, but the trails were very bad, and we were shaken to pieces. My arms became very stiff with the vibration from the steering-wheel, and sometimes it was nearly knocked out of my hands when a front wheel struck big clods. One had to hang on like grim death. After a time, however, I quite got into the way of driving in ruts. We stopped for the night at Wapallo, and were just going to have supper when the vicar came along and saw our van, whereupon he promptly took us home with him. His wife was most kind to us, and at once supplied our greatest (and most obvious) need by inviting us to wash. A real wash is a great treat on the prairie, where water is so scarce. After supper we went to evensong in the pretty little prairie church, near which we afterwards camped. We had done ninety-two miles that day.

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Next day, when we stopped at Medicine Hat for gasolene, a man came out of a store close by, and, seeing the van, introduced himself as the superintendent of the Anglican Sunday School there. He was most anxious that we should stop over Sunday, but we thought it best to get to Regina as soon as possible. As we neared the town we had a narrow escape from a slough. Going into Regina there was a very bad turn, in negotiating which the car swung round and one of the

front wheels went into a muddy ditch. By putting on the brake with great force, I managed to stop her from plunging farther in. I think I was getting a little tired. We had done 120 miles that day. Winifred went off to find help, but a big motor lorry came along as I sat waiting with the car, and stopped at once, seeing I was in difficulties. The driver called out that he would pull me out if I had a rope. I always carried one, and with its aid he soon towed me out backwards. When I thanked him he said: "You're Scotch, aren't you? I was in a hospital in Scotland during the War, and the nurses were so good to me that I'm glad to help any girls from the Old Country."

Everyone seemed both pleased and surprised to see us back, though unfeignedly astonished that one so "green" should have been able to bring the car through alone. It is 412 miles from Winnipeg to Regina—farther than from London to Glasgow. Far from being exhausted by our adventures, we felt braced up by the glorious sunshine and invigorating air of the prairie, and we did full justice to the feast of welcome prepared. Folks were interested in the caravan, and various remarks were made about it. Even to our fond eyes it could not be called exactly beautiful, but it was rather cruel of Canon X. to observe: "Ah! a Black Maria, I see."

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On the Monday following, while I was in the midst of preparations for our start that week, Nona Clarke rang me up to say that Aylmer Bosanquet was very ill, and could I come at once to help to bring her into Regina. I had about ten minutes in which to catch the train. Helped by kind Mrs. W., I bundled a few things into a suit-case and ran. But I had to stop at a drug-store to get some sort of stimulant for Aylmer, as Nona had said that she seemed on the verge of a collapse. It is in a case like this that prohibition is so inconvenient. I could get neither brandy nor sal-volatile without a doctor's certificate—and yet I had often seen people who did not *look* ill produce a certificate and get the stimulant they asked for. "Is there nothing you can give me?" I asked in desperation, and the shopman handed me some kind of ammonia, saying that was the only thing he could let me have. The bottle bore no directions, and when I asked how one should take it, and whether the dose would be about the same as sal-volatile, he replied indifferently: "Oh, yes, I think so."

I just caught the train, which then steamed out of the station and waited an hour at North Regina.

I found Aylmer very ill indeed, hardly able to speak, and without any of those little comforts which mean so much in sickness. The shack was all in disorder, too, as they were packing up to go on the prairie in the Ford roadster. Although she was so weak and ill she was full of interest in our work, and made me describe the journey from Winnipeg, but I soon saw that conversation was too much for her. Nona telephoned to a doctor in Regina, asking him to come out next day to see if the patient were fit to travel, in which case he was to accompany her back by the next train.

All that night a dust storm raged, succeeded next morning by torrential rain. I went out to get milk and bread for breakfast, buying the latter from the Christian Chinaman, who inquired anxiously for Aylmer, and said, when I wished to pay for my purchase, "Eef it ees for de missionarees you need not pay." Then there was the problem of how to get the invalid to the station, as the shack was by this time surrounded with a sea of black mud which no car could traverse. But Nona found a man with a dray who promised to come if needed. The doctor's train was so late that there was only a quarter of an hour between his arrival and the departure of the return train. But he made a hasty examination, and said that though she was very weak it would be better to take her into Regina. It is so difficult to get nurses or medical attendance out on the prairie.[4]

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I dressed her with difficulty, and she lay on the bed while we all combined to lift it bodily on to the dray. But the rain and wind were still so strong that Nona had to kneel beside the bed holding on fast to the rugs, while I held an umbrella over Aylmer's head. It was pathetic to see the people waving good-bye from their houses as she passed, for though they did not guess how ill she was, they knew that she was leaving them, perhaps for ever. Arrived at Regina, we took her to the Grey Nuns' hospital.

I had now only three days in which to complete our preparations if we were to start on the date fixed, which it was necessary to do if we were to fulfil our engagements. I went to see Aylmer as often as I could, and of course drove the caravan up to the hospital for her to see from her window. It grieved me very much (apart from my anxiety about her illness) to think that she could now take no part in this adventure, the idea of which was all her own. Indeed, this was to prove her only glimpse of our van, in the details of which she would have revelled, for before we returned from the prairie she had been ordered to British Columbia and then on to California. I never saw her again.

## CHAPTER IX

### SANDSTORMS AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS

We had arranged to start on Friday, May 21, and the day dawned beautifully fine. I fetched the caravan round to the parish hall, where our things were stored, and we loaded up. This was no

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easy task, for unless you did it very carefully you could not get everything in. The packages reached from floor to roof now that we were fully equipped. Whilst we were busily engaged in this task we did not notice that the weather had changed, but presently a great wind arose, and then an ominous darkness blotted out the sun. We knew that that horror of horrors, a fierce dust storm, was raging. It was a veritable blackness that might be felt; and when we went to say good-bye to some Regina friends they begged us not to start. One of them travelled for a firm, and he assured us that no commercial traveller would venture out in such a storm. It was bound to get worse and worse, he said, and he did his best to dissuade us. But I had arranged to get to Buffalo Lake by Sunday, and I had already been obliged to alter the date once owing to the delay in getting the caravan, so I felt that I could not put them off any more. If one delays for difficulties one will never do anything. So we started.

The wind whipped and whistled around the caravan, and blew the earth in great clouds over us, and formed huge drifts on the trail, which made the car skid as on loose sand. It was distressing to remember that this earth was full of newly-sown wheat. It was hard enough to see the way when we started, though Winifred held the map and directed me; but after sunset it was impossible to go on, as the headlights could not penetrate the dense clouds of dust. However, we had gone a good distance, and therefore decided to camp. Meanwhile our late host, at the urgent instigation of his wife, was searching the trail for our mangled remains.

The next morning was fine, and we started early; but quite soon we struck sand, and after the storm of the day before it lay in drifts. I tried to rush through at full speed, but with a tremendous skid the car lurched sideways and stuck fast in a drift. We got out, and tried to jack it up in order to wind rope round a wheel, as I had been told that Parsons' chains are useless in sand. To crown our misery the wind now began to blow hard, and we were almost blinded by the flying sand, which stung our eyes cruelly. In the dust-storm of the previous day we were spared this torture by the wind-screen and side-doors being kept shut. But help was at hand. One after another six men in all stopped their cars and came to our assistance. It was easier for them to get through the sand-drifts than for us because their cars were so much lighter, although a good deal of the caravan was made of a kind of stout beaver-boarding to save weight, but this was counteracted by our camping equipment, etc.

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Our helpers pulled us out with great difficulty, and we continued on our way through Moose Jaw. Towards evening we sighted Buffalo Lake church and steered for it, expecting that the vicarage would be near by. But before we reached it, in trying to negotiate a mud hole, we stuck fast once more. A farmer ploughing near came to our aid, and fastened his team to our rope. One of the trials of a mud hole was that when you got out to adjust the rope, etc., your boots became thickly coated with sticky mud, so that you could scarcely work your gear pedal. It was also exceedingly difficult to drive the car close at the heels of restive horses. They hated the noise of the engine, and were all ready to kick; and when the car reached firm ground it rushed forward almost on to the horses, and was only stopped by jamming on the brakes.

Thanks to this timely aid we reached our goal in good time to make camp. But the wind was still blowing strong, and as I was cooking on the Primus it suddenly burst into flames. Thinking the caravan in danger, Winifred hastily threw earth on it—which put an effectual end to my culinary efforts for that night. We made a fair meal on the food we had with us, and just as we had finished a buggy came along with the vicar and his family. They had been shopping in the neighbouring town. From the van he guessed our identity, and came up to ask how we had managed our cooking in this wind. We tactfully evaded this point, and assured him that we had made a good meal. But we were not sorry when he said that next day we must have meals at the vicarage.

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The next day was Whit Sunday, and we were very glad to be where we could have an early Celebration. So widely scattered is the population that there was only one other worshipper besides ourselves. After breakfast the vicar was going to take duty at a place about five miles away, so I offered to drive him in the caravan as there was another dust storm blowing up and he had nothing but an open buggy. As he was the first vicar I had driven I determined not to disgrace myself by sticking on the trail, and so went full tilt all the way and successfully ploughed through the drifts. We skidded and swayed a good deal, but my passenger seemed thoroughly to enjoy it. When we arrived, however, we found that none of the congregation had cared to face the storm; we therefore did a little visiting and returned home.

There was a regular weekly Sunday School here in which two of the parents taught. It was brilliantly fine in the afternoon and the children and their parents were all able to come. Car after car drove up, until there was a long line of them. The children were most beautifully dressed, with dainty white frocks and pretty hats. The parents and the elder boys and girls were also extremely well turned out. Indeed, it is one of the most striking features of prairie life that, with all their heavy manual work, the people dress well when not engaged in actual toil—a fine example of personal self-respect.

It was delightful to see this school, conducted by two of the mothers. We longed to give professional assistance but hesitated to offer it, as of course the idea of constructive criticism and demonstration lessons was quite foreign to them. But an opportunity for the latter presented itself when we gave round "Hope of the World" postcards and the children began to ask questions about them, whereupon the mothers appealed to me to give the explanation.

After the school there was a Family Service (characteristic of the prairie) at which all are present, from the father to the infant in arms. There were a great many baptisms, which made

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one think of Whitsuntide in the early Church. A delightful feature of the service was the freedom with which the children ran out to play when tired. I could see them from the window jumping in and out of the cars. But when they had worked off their superfluous energy they came back quietly to their places.

After the service we were introduced to all the people, and one young man remarked: "We thought your car was a motor ambulance and supposed there'd been a scrap."

The fervour of these people, and their evident appreciation of the services of the Church, made a strong impression on me. It was shown by their coming long distances—twenty miles in some cases—after working very hard for very long hours all the week.

In the evening I drove the vicar to another church for evensong. It was coated so thickly with dust from the storm of the morning that we had to clean it down before a service could be held.

Next morning the vicar showed us his stable, and we photographed his special pride, a handsome colt which he had broken himself. We had had a most delightful week-end, and were much cheered by our kind reception from the vicar and his wife, and felt quite weak with laughter at the former's amusing stories.

In the afternoon we started for Eyebrow, but did not get very far that day, as we stuck in the mud and had to wait to be pulled out. We arrived at Eyebrow next day, however, and went to see the layman in charge of the mission. It had not been possible as yet to arrange for us to visit any schools, so we decided to go on and spend some time here on our return journey. They entertained us most hospitably to supper, and allowed us to put our baggage in the church porch as it was raining in torrents. We next made a two days' journey on to Riverhurst, and on arrival went into a Chinaman's restaurant for supper. The food in these restaurants is both good and cheap. A three-course dinner costs only about one and eightpence in English money. As we were comfortably eating our supper we were surprised and rather alarmed to see a district policeman making straight for us. He put us through a searching catechism. Who were we and where did we come from? A brother officer had seen us and put him on our trail. We told him who we were and whose authority was behind us, and after a few more questions he seemed satisfied and left us to finish our supper in peace. We longed to know what crimes he had mentally charged us with.

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We found that there was a Union Sunday school at Riverhurst which all the children attended, including the only Anglican children in the place, four in number. It seemed hopeless to try to start a Sunday School for these four, so we noted them for enrolment in the Sunday School by Post, and went on towards Elbow.

We started in a dust storm, the unpleasantness of which custom cannot stale. I took some photographs of it, however. Presently we thought that we must have taken the wrong trail to Elbow, and so tried to turn on what looked like firm grass, but the ground was soft underneath, and the heavily-weighted car stuck fast, sinking in up to the axles. It was far away from any sign of human habitation, and the recommendation of Dr. Smiles seemed the only solution. So I started to dig out a wheel. Suddenly a boy on a horse appeared as if by magic, and asked if we wanted help, saying that he would go back to his father's farm for horses, which sure enough he did, and handled them manfully. He fastened his team to our rope, and I got into the car and started the engine. Then followed the usual breathless moment when the car charged forward on to the horses' heels. The boy then directed us to take a certain trail, and after his recent display of prowess we naturally followed his advice. But we soon found ourselves going up a very steep and narrow track with a bank on one side and a sheer drop into a ravine on the other, and with literally not an inch to spare on either side. On the steepest part of this road the car stopped dead, and I had to keep my foot hard down on the foot brake to prevent it slipping backwards. There was nothing for it but to unload the heaviest things, and I could not get out to help, as the car would then have run back. Winifred opened the back doors so that I could see behind me, and I managed to get safely down to the bottom of the hill, though it was exceedingly difficult to back round the sharp corners. I then put on full speed and rushed the car up, and at the top we loaded her again, thinking that the worst was over. But as we went on we found the road was as narrow as ever, with a very bad surface, big stones cropping out here and there. I was driving, with one wheel low down in a rut and the other high up, when the car again stopped at a steep bit, and I had to jam on the brakes as before whilst Winifred unloaded. But when I tried to release the brakes I found that the hand brake had jammed, and I could not get out and hammer it free as the van would have run backwards when I shifted it. At this crisis two men came along and helped us, and between us we put the brake right and got the car to the top of the hill. This was the only bad hill we had found and the only stony road. We discovered afterwards that it was not the right trail for Elbow. The town is so named because the Saskatchewan River runs in a elbow-like curve through the ravine at the bottom of this hill, on the crest of which the town is built.

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We went on beyond Elbow to Loreburn, and camped near the vicarage for the night. The vicar and his wife had only just arrived in the parish, with a little baby of a month old. She looked hardly fit to cope with all there was to do, but they insisted that we should come in to meals with them. I was the more grateful for this as I had had a difference of opinion with the spirit lamp, which blew up in my face and nearly blinded me.

This was the first occasion on which we used the tent, and its erection was something of a puzzle, as we had no sketch of the finished article, and had never seen it in action. But by the time I had it all laid out, and was wondering how I should put it up without help (Winifred having gone to the vicarage), some boys appeared, and said that they knew all about tents, and helped me



splendidly. There was no difficulty about finding the children at our stopping places, for the caravan drew them like a magnet. We reversed Froebel's injunction—"Come let us live with our children"—for the children invariably came and lived with us. On occasions their company was so persistent as to be rather embarrassing. One never knew at what moment the tent would be invaded by eager visitors. They were most delightful children, extraordinarily intelligent and full of practical wisdom. It was truly a case of "development by self-activity." They freely offered assistance and advice when they saw we were in need of either. It was a five-year-old girl who noticed one evening that I had laid the potatoes outside the caravan, and thoughtfully warned me: "I shouldn't leave those potatoes out all night if I were you; the gophers will eat them."



**DIGGING OUT THE WHEEL**



**THE TENT, AND MY ASSISTANTS AT LOREBURN**

*To face p. 48*



**1. & 2. HOUSEHOLD TASKS (see page 54)**



### 3. MR. M. AND HIS MOTOR CYCLE ON THE RAILWAY TRACK (see page 63)

On that first night at Loreburn we had torrents of rain, and next morning the trails were deep in mud. But I had promised to drive the vicar into Elbow, as he had no buggy as yet. We skidded violently from side to side of the road all the way, and had more than one narrow escape from a slough—I had horrid visions of a congregation waiting indefinitely for a vicar hopelessly submerged. I put on the Parsons' chains before making the return journey. This is a job one willingly defers till it is unavoidable. [49]

Despite the weather there were many people at church, so I was glad that I had made the effort. These prairie services really were an inspiration. In the afternoon I superintended the Sunday school, which consisted as usual of children from six to sixteen. Winifred and I divided the children into two classes, and the vicar and a teacher listened to our teaching. The greatest difficulty, here as elsewhere, was the grading of hymns and prayers. The best way seemed to be to open with devotions suitable to the infants and then to let them go off to another part of the church for their lesson while we had other prayers and hymns for the elder ones, closing the school in a similar manner; but if this made the session too long, we began with devotions suited to the younger children and closed with those more suited to the elder.

After school there was the usual family service, at which I specially noticed how well the organist played. We were afterwards invited to supper with him and his wife, and were interested to find that they used to live at Leeds and had sung at Morecambe Musical Festival. Canadian meals are delicious, and we had a sumptuous supper—bacon and eggs, layer cake and stewed fruit, and strong tea, very acceptable after our sketchy caravan meals. After supper we had some good music, and the organist told us some of his experiences as a prairie choir-master. His choir showed talent, so he felt that they were capable of chanting the psalms, and trained them to do so. He kept this as a pleasant surprise for the congregation, and felt very proud of his pupils when they duly acquitted themselves well. But the real surprise was his. Next day most of the congregation waited upon him in a body and stated that they would not attend church in future if such High Church practices were followed. [50]

We had obtained permission from the trustees of the public school at Loreburn to give religious instruction in school hours, as it was more convenient for us. I took the upper division, children of twelve to eighteen, and Winifred took the lower form, children of six to twelve, it being a two-roomed school. (In these prairie schools the scholars stay from six to eighteen.) The teachers were very nice. They showed interest in our work and listened to our lessons. As I could give them only one lesson, I wanted it to be one of permanent value, sufficiently connected with their everyday experience to recur frequently to their minds, so I spoke on the Union Jack, which floats over almost all of these little schools. I began with the splendid work of Canada in the War, and referred to the men of the widespread British Empire all united under one flag, thus leading on to the unity of Christian soldiers and telling the stories of the three saints whose crosses unite in the British flag. (A further bond of empire now is the photograph of the Prince of Wales, which is found everywhere in this neighbourhood since his visit to Regina.)

After the lesson we gave each child a prayer card and a picture of the "Hope of the World" or "The New Epiphany." It was very distressing to find that only two or three of the thirty children present knew the Lord's Prayer. Apropos of this a clergyman's wife told me how she had asked a child, "Do you know *Our Father*?" and the child answered, "No, but I know our grandfather." [51]

The children seemed to hang on our words, listening with intense eagerness to the lessons. "They listen to lessons here in this country that they would never dream of attending to in the Old Country," Winifred wrote home. "One has no fear here of possibilities of naughtiness either. They are good without being disciplined, not restless like the children at home."

The intense hunger for knowledge holds these sturdy, open-air little people in a trance of breathless interest. It was their desire rather than our skill which exercised the spell, as we knew well.

## ADVENTURES AND MISADVENTURES

It rained hard all next day, so I spent the time in making some things for the caravan; in particular, a wire cage for the electric bulb, which was always being knocked against and broken. One could never start directly the rain ceased, the trails were too bad, and when we did take the road on the following day we found a sea of mud. On the second day we arrived at Outlook, and camped above the ferry. There was no resident clergyman here, but a local lady did what she could for the spiritual needs of the children, holding a very successful Sunday School in the church, where she had arranged a beautiful "Children's Corner." A few suitable pictures and simple printed prayers were pinned on the wall within easy reach of kneeling children. They are encouraged to make this spot their special oratory. This particular "Corner" was arranged near the font, which seemed a specially suitable place for it. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet this lady, as she was ill, but we went to see the lay reader who took the services on Sunday. [52]

After we had camped that night a young girl came to talk to us. She explained that she was very unhappy and unsettled with regard to religion. She had gone to the "Pentecostals," poor child, because she was deaf, and could hear their loud declamations; but she had received no sort of help from them. Her parents belonged to the Church of England, but since they had been in Canada the younger children had not been baptized. Presently the girl's mother joined us, and we made friends at once and had "a good crack" when we each found that the other came from Cumberland. She told me that she had been brought up a Baptist, but had joined the Church of England. I urged her to prepare her children for baptism herself, and have them baptized at the earliest opportunity. This she promised to do.

Next day we had to cross the Saskatchewan River, no easy task from all accounts. We had been regaled with hair-raising stories of how a man drove his car too fast down the pier to the ferry boat, which had not been linked up, and the car plunged into the river and was never seen again. The same fate overtook a man who fell out of his boat when mending the ferry cable. I was not quite at my best for this particular undertaking, as I had one eye badly swollen from a mosquito bite through forgetting to put on my net when sitting down to write a letter. There were three ways of getting down the river bank to the ferry pier. One road zig-zagged so sharply that the long caravan could not turn at the bend, and the paling just there was so frail that had we run into it we must have broken through and gone down a bank. The other road was strewn with huge stones, so I eschewed roads altogether, and went down the rough grass bank, swaying and bumping and almost overturning, but it seemed the least perilous passage. I took the car down while Winifred was on in front, looking for a better road, as there was no reason why we should both be upset. A narrow road led on to the pier, which was a long wooden structure built over the sand and mud of the river's edge. The ferry, a wooden barge worked by a cable, was moored to the end of it, and I drove on to it cautiously. The men working the ferry were three Englishmen, who had served with the Canadian contingent, and they hailed the van delightedly as a long-lost friend, at first thinking it was an old motor ambulance from France. We took photos of them, whereupon they begged that we would not exhibit them as "specimens of the white heathen we met out there." "I felt indeed that we must look missionaries of the fiercest type," was Winifred's comment on this incident. [53]

There was only one trail to Bounty, our next destination, so when we came suddenly on a dreadful hole right across the path, with a bank on either side of the road, there was nothing for it but to go on. I tried to rush across, and suddenly felt an awful concussion. I was flung up against the roof of the van and saw stars for the moment, but somehow or other we got across. Then I went round to see what damage was done to our baggage, etc., and found that a three-gallon tin of coal oil had been flung up and had come down upside down. There it was, standing on its cork. I next examined the engine, which seemed very odd. The gear pedal had gone wrong and everything was crooked. Then I saw that the bonnet was not fitting. I lifted it up and found that the whole engine was two or three inches out of the straight. I saw that I could not put things right myself, and so determined to try to reach the town. Meanwhile, in this as in other mishaps, Winifred helped me enormously by sitting calmly on the bank reading a novel. She never fussed or made worrying exclamations, or hindered me by offering useless suggestions or unwanted assistance. She never complained, either, under the most trying circumstances, or made the slightest sound in those wild moments when we were nearly thrown out of the van by the roughness of the road.

We were five miles from Bounty, but I found that I could get along on low gear. A few miles farther on we came to another bad place, where the conduit had fallen in, but we managed to crawl through somehow. I was thankful to find a big garage at Bounty, with an efficient mechanic. He and I examined the car and found that the frame was sprung three inches on either side. He said that the body would have to be slung up and the engine taken out and a new frame put in, and that this would take a week to do. So we unloaded the van by the church, and took out the mattresses also for use in the tent, and then left the poor invalid at the garage. [54]

There are garages in every prairie town, even in what we should call little villages, for in Saskatchewan there is a car for every two people. These garages are well fitted up, and have all the latest inventions. Outside all of them there is a petrol pump and a "Free Air" cable for the convenience of passers-by. The latter has a gasolene engine which pumps up the air, so that you can fill your tyres in a second. No one thinks of using a hand-pump unless he has a burst right out on the prairie.

We lived in the tent this week, with most of our baggage stored in the church porch. As usual, the

children helped us to arrange our things. I had quite a holiday, with the caravan off my hands, but Winifred's duties went on as usual. We had apportioned the work as follows: she was to keep the interior of the van clean and do all the washing-up, whilst I drove, cleaned the engine, did repairs, etc., and cooked. Winifred's job was no sinecure. She hardly ever had much water for washing-up, so she used to clean the horrid greasy dishes and things with paper and then rinse them; and though I sometimes nearly threw her out of the van, she in turn sometimes kept me out of it when she was having a thorough clean up—a necessary evil after a muddy day or a dust-storm.

I wanted to telephone to Mr. W. at Regina, as he was holding my insurance policy for the car, so I asked permission to do so from a resident who had already greatly befriended us. When 'phoning I found it very difficult to hear what Mr. W. said; it seemed as if all the receivers were open. I was further distracted by hearing the owner of the telephone remark to Winifred, as she gazed at my back, "Eh! isn't she fat?" as who should say, "No wonder the frame was sprung!"

Next morning I walked to Conquest (six miles away) to interview the secretary of the Municipal Council, as the inhabitants of Bounty thought that the hole should have been attended to, and advised me to claim damages. I failed to get any compensation, but Bounty benefited from our misfortune, as the hole was immediately filled up. Calling at the Conquest post-office for letters, the old postman remarked to me, "I have heard all about your accident. You girls, you drive too fast." It seemed that the entire district knew all the details, even to the cost of the repairs. I now remembered having heard that a favourite winter amusement on the prairie was to take down your receiver and listen to the conversations along the line. Report said that a certain courtship had in this way provided entertainment for the whole neighbourhood.

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## CHAPTER XI

### SOME ASPECTS OF PRAIRIE LIFE

It was unfortunate that there was no Anglican Sunday School in this place, where we had perforce to spend a week. There were very few Anglicans there at all, but a great many Presbyterians and Nonconformists, who united to form a Union church and Sunday School. There was a very nice Anglican church, but most of the congregation lived at farms some distance away, coming in for Sunday services, when the vicar also came in from one of his other districts. He came to see us on the Saturday night, and explained that on the morrow there would be a United Family Service in the Anglican church, to which he was inviting all the members of the Union church. He asked us to write out and fix up notices about it. He also asked if we would give an address after the service on the need for religious instruction for the children.

Sunday was a very hot day, and with sinking hearts we realised that the congregation would be arrayed in lovely summer clothes, and that it was up to us not to discredit the Old Country. But it is difficult to look one's best when caravanning, and even one of Paquin's frocks would lose its bloom in a cotton bag, and the smartest hat would look dashed after the three-gallon oil tin had collided with it. Personally, I felt that my bravest efforts would be futile since Winifred's remark as we arose that morning: "Let me look and see if you are as much a fright as you were yesterday." When your nose and one eye have been entirely remodelled by a mosquito bite you do not look your best, nor can you be quite unselfconscious in public, and, alas! I should have to give that address, for Winifred had flatly refused.

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Patience is required when attending prairie meetings. What with the immense distances, varying clocks, and unexpected obstacles on the trails it is difficult to get anywhere to time. In this case we waited an hour for the organist, whose car had stuck in a mud hole. Winifred rose to the occasion, and was just making her way to the organ when the belated car was heard and the big bronzed young farmer hurried in.

The elders of the Union church preceded the vicar and his churchwardens up the aisle. The service was a shortened form of evensong, interspersed with many hymns. The sermon was a clear but non-controversial exposition of the Apostles' Creed. It was remarkable to notice how the preacher held the attention of all present, from the child of five to the old lady with grey curls. One hoped that this united worship might pave the way for union on Christian essentials, so that Christian teaching might be agreed upon for the schools and a united stand made against materialism and the many so-called Christian sects.

After service I was called upon to address the congregation. I had to speak from before the altar rails, there being no other place from which to command the congregation, except the pulpit, which I did not wish to occupy. As there had been a fairly long service, and the church was very full and very hot, I thought that a ten minutes' address would be sufficient. So I spoke briefly on the importance of religious education, leading up from the wonderful way in which Canadians had helped in the War, to the need for their help in warfare against evil. Christian soldiers must be trained, and a young country needs a Christian foundation. It is extraordinarily easy to hold the attention of a prairie congregation, and I was told afterward that they wished I had gone on longer. It is indeed a preacher's paradise.

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The vicar had to leave at once for his next service. He motored about eighty miles each Sunday and took four services. But the rest of us held a kind of social gathering outside the church, where we had opportunities of studying the prairie fashions. Most of these gorgeous garments are ordered by post from Timothy Eaton's store in Toronto. His enormous illustrated catalogue is sent yearly to every house, and is commonly called "The Prairie Bible." The children know it by heart, and amuse themselves on winter evenings by cutting out and colouring the fashion plates, with the embarrassing result that when they see a neighbour in her new spring costume they remark, "Oh, Mrs. So-and-So's new hat is on page 603, price so many dollars."

We had a washing-day on the Monday. When near a farm they allowed us to take our blouses, etc., and wash them with their apparatus, as the Chinks, who did our heavy washing, ruined the finer things.

On the Tuesday we went to Swanson by train (the trains only ran on certain days in the week). This had been one of the centres of the Railway Mission, and was worked with Birdview, but they had had no services for about a year, owing to the scarcity of clergy, and they felt the privation very much. The Railway Mission had now come to an end, and there were no clergy to supply these districts. We went to see the leading church people, with a view to taking Swanson on our return journey if it seemed possible to start a Sunday School there. We were told that there was no Sunday School of any kind thereabouts, and were advised to go to the day school and beat up recruits, which we did with great success. A farmer's wife promised to gather the people together for us when we came again, so that we could hold a demonstration school and a parents' meeting.

We wished to visit Birdview, but no train ran there that day. Our friend Mrs. T., however, said that her son should drive us in a car. A terrible sandstorm blew up, and we were almost blinded in the open car. We realised once more the advantage of a caravan. Great drifts of sand lay on the trail, and the car skidded from side to side, but we got there. Mrs. T. had arranged by telephone that we were to stay the night with a storekeeper and his wife. There were not many church people in Birdview, so I wanted to go out to a little mission church in the centre of outlying farms which used to be worked by the Railway Mission. The only way to get there was by car, and the storekeeper thought that no hired car would face the storm. But, happily, the wind dropped and the sand subsided, and we found a car to take us. So the storekeeper's wife and I started off.

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We were now in one of the "dried out" areas. There are certain belts of land in Saskatchewan which, when first taken up, nearly twenty years ago, proved very fertile. But over-cultivation, though advised by the Board of Agriculture in order to conserve the moisture, had rendered the soil so fine that most of it had blown away. It had been of no great depth to start with, and the sand below it had come to the surface, and now blew in great drifts. As the wheat came up, the flying clouds of sand cut it down, and even buried the scrub. Little vegetation was visible, and what wheat there was the grasshoppers devoured. They were enormous things, 3 inches long. They flew into the car with a great "plop," and even jumped down my clothes. The farmers hereabouts were ruined, and nobody would take their farms. They had not sufficient capital to start again. Yet with all this they kept up their courage and hoped for better days.

When we reached the little church we stuck fast in a big drift, but I took the wheel while the man pushed, and at last we got out. We went on to the leading farmer's, where they welcomed us warmly. They had had no services there for a very long time. I explained that we should like to visit the place on our way back if they would collect the people to meet us. The farmer's wife expressed great delight at the idea. They had been so long without a clergyman, and had so much appreciated services when they had them. She found it very difficult, she said, to keep Sunday when there was nothing to remind her of the day. They felt their spiritual privation, especially now that their material troubles were so great.

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I noticed here, as in many other places, an almost conscience-stricken look on the parents' faces when I mentioned the necessity of religious instruction for the children. It was not that they did not wish their children to be taught religious truths, but that they themselves were so cruelly overworked that they had no time for the care and forethought which the preparation of a lesson entails. When you work all the week from 5 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m. you are exceedingly tired on Sunday; and yet there is still some necessary work to be done if you live on a farm. But give these parents some idea of how and what to teach, with a suitable book to follow and pictures to illustrate the subjects, and they will do their very best, often making most excellent teachers. It is in places like this that the Sunday School by Post helps so greatly, especially in winter, when the children cannot attend a Sunday school at a distance.

We returned to Birdview that night (sticking again in the sand-drift on the way). Our kind host and hostess refused to let us pay for our entertainment. We were continually receiving most generous hospitality all the time we were on the prairie. We were never allowed to pay for our milk and eggs at a farm, and we were invited to many meals, which greatly helped our resources. We hardly liked to accept so much, knowing as we did how badly off the farmers sometimes were. But we knew how hurt they would have been had we refused. Their generosity was a great lesson in almsgiving. They always treat all missionaries in this way.

We took the train to Conquest, and then had to walk to Bounty, a very tiring six miles on the rough trail with the wind against us. Unfortunately no car overtook us, for it is the invariable custom to give pedestrians a lift. We went at once to the place where we had left our tent, but no tent was to be seen. We inquired about it at a neighbouring house, and a nice old man told us that the storm of the previous night had smashed the pole and ripped up the canvas, whereupon

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he had rescued it, otherwise it would now have been miles and miles away across the prairie. We felt thankful that we had had a house over our heads when this happened.

We were now homeless, tent and caravan both *hors de combat*. Many kind people would have taken us in, but in a prairie shack, or even in most of the smaller houses, there is seldom any accommodation for visitors, especially women visitors. So I went round to beg an old broom-handle, and with this I spliced the tent-pole. Then Winifred and I set to work on the canvas, and managed to restore it to the semblance of a tent cover. Early next morning another storm came on. We got up hurriedly and took refuge in the church, for the tent showed signs of collapsing on top of us.

That day we had been invited out to the B.'s farm. One of the Bounty farmers drove us out there behind a spanking pair of horses which had taken first prize at a show. A heavy thunderstorm came on and we were asked to spend the night, an invitation which was gratefully accepted in our shelterless circumstances. Mr. B. was a most interesting man. In England he had been a coachman, and had come out about seventeen years before with £8 in his pocket. He worked his way West, and took up a half-section. When he had got a home together a girl from the Old Country came out and married him. Now he had a splendid farm; the house and farm-buildings were lit by electric-light. A feature of this farm, as of all others, was the enormous barn. This is always much larger than the house. The hay and grain are stored at the top and the stables are below. On most large farms they keep at least twenty horses, besides up-to-date and ingenious machinery.

This farmer felt very strongly on the subject of emigration. As he truly said, in the Old Country he would probably have remained a coachman all his life, and would have had nothing to leave his children. But it was useless to come out to the prairie, he added, unless you were prepared to work hard. He himself worked from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. throughout the summer months. During the War he had been obliged to work his farm single-handed. Both he and all the other prairie farmers had given large gifts of wheat to England, and all the young farmers had enlisted in a body directly war was declared, often travelling miles to the nearest recruiting station.<sup>[5]</sup> In many cases their farms went to rack and ruin whilst they were away, as there was no one else to work them. Large numbers of them never returned.

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The conversation at meal-time was most entertaining. Mr. B. used to inquire if things were still the same in the Old Country, and if folks still touched their hats and said "Sir"—this with a twinkle in his eye as he looked at us. Of course, there are no class distinctions out West; the very word is unknown. We agreed with our host that the fairest measurement of mankind is to judge each one on his own merits. It is quite certain that no one should come out here unless he can become what is called "a good mixer." The following extract from one of Winifred's letters is descriptive of the country: "The people . . . must have pretty big minds to manage their own State, which is larger than the British Isles. There is, and must always be, a stretching out in this country, and it's a wide outlook for children . . . no appearances to keep up, a natural existence, hard work, but suitable, and prospects for children. . . . Canada is a leisurely place; no bustle. It is too large, I think."

When we got back to Bounty we found that the caravan was ready, and we joyfully fetched it from the garage and repacked it. Once again I felt glad that ours was a van rather than a roadster. Though more difficult to get along the trails it was a much more stable home. The wind is perhaps the greatest trial of prairie life. It sweeps with unbroken force over these wide spaces. Sometimes we had to go all day without hot food or drink, as of course it was not safe to use a Primus stove in the caravan or tent. At times even a trench would not keep off the wind, but it usually dropped at night.

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We regretfully bade farewell to the kind people of Bounty, feeling that the town was well named, and went on to Rosetown. On the way we passed through another dried-out area; our car and several others stuck in a great sand-drift near a farmhouse, which was actually being submerged in sand. We went to the house to ask for the help of a team of horses. A young farmer and his sister lived there. The girl told us they were "going to beat it," as nothing would grow, and the sand was up to the lower windows of the house. She had just washed some clothes and hung them up inside the house, and yet they were covered with sand. I was much struck with her extraordinary cheerfulness in these trying circumstances. This fine quality is characteristic of all Westerners.

The farmer pulled us out with his team, and we had no further trouble that day.

## CHAPTER XII

### MISSIONS AND MUD HOLES

When we arrived at Rosetown the vicar and his wife were out, as they did not know what time to expect us; but we found the vicarage door unlocked, as is the hospitable local custom, so we went in and read the letters from home which we knew were awaiting us there. Mr. and Mrs. M. soon arrived, and gave us a very warm welcome. They insisted on our sleeping in the house instead of



in the van, and having our meals with them. We said that in that case they must let us help with the chores. Mrs. M. had a tiny baby and no domestic help. Here, as elsewhere, our host and hostess were delighted to meet anyone fresh from England. Mr. M. had worked on the Railway Mission, and was now in charge of this district. A Canadian "parish" is often 2,000 or 3,000 square miles in extent. Mr. M. had a rural deanery of 6,000 square miles, and as many of his clergy were in deacon's orders, he had to perform all priestly duties for them. He used a Ford car in the summer, and in the winter took the tyres off a motor bicycle and fixed it up to run on the rail of the track. The prairie being so flat, he could see the trains in time to get out of the way.

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When talking to men like this we realised that our summer adventures were as nothing compared with what they experienced in the winter, with the thermometer 50 degrees below zero and blinding blizzards in which it was impossible to find one's way. This life of hardship and self-sacrifice won the respect of their parishioners and developed their own manhood. The farmers looked upon them as personal friends, fellow-men, instead of the remote being a clergyman is sometimes assumed to be. They are all-round men of affairs, too, as Winifred put it: "Out here a parson has to know about seeds and weather and dollars, but he is respected also for his office, and valued very much for what he brings to the people."

For the most part the men out here are the pick of the junior clergy from Oxford and Cambridge, men who have sacrificed much in leaving England. The clergy depend upon voluntary contributions, there being no endowments, of course. It is reckoned that in the diocese of Qu'Appelle the average contribution for each man, woman, and child is 15s. per head. They use the envelope system, so that if prevented from attending church the money is set aside just the same. Besides this, the farmers give generously in kind. But, as a clergyman's wife remarked to me, butter and eggs, though very welcome, do not supply clothes for the children. The drawback to the voluntary system is that the clergyman's income is as uncertain as that of his parishioners; for when the harvest fails there is no money for anyone. The Railway Mission clergy received monetary support from the Fund, but this Mission was only a temporary arrangement until the various districts became self-supporting. There is, however, a diocesan fund to help the poorer parishes. Though the parishioners do their best it is obvious that they can never provide more than a scanty support for a clergyman who has a wife and family, and hence the great difficulty in filling the Canadian theological colleges.

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The Rosetown Sunday School was in a flourishing condition, for the vicar was very keen. The children were taught to sing by a lady who had been accompanist to Clara Butt. On the Monday it had been arranged that I should take a Bible-class of elder girls, but when Mr. M. took me down to the house where it was to be held, we found that none of the girls had come (owing to school examinations), so we went to the movies instead!

There is a splendid picture palace in every little prairie town, and some of the films shown are really good. The cinema provides the sole recreation for the entire populace. On Saturday evenings there are long lines of cars all down the street, when the farmers and their wives come into town to shop and go to the pictures and meet each other.

I was asked to give a missionary address next day to the junior branch of the Women's Auxiliary. [6] This particular branch proposed to call itself "The Busy Bees," because the members intended to work so hard. I talked to the children about the "Hope of the World" picture, which seemed suitable to this country of many nationalities. Winifred remarked that it was a splendid country from the missionary point of view as "they see black and white and brown." Where this junior branch had been started the children were keen to join, just as every Canadian churchwoman seemed to belong to the Women's Auxiliary. From many years' experience as a secretary for S.P.G. one longed to see the Church of England follow Canada's example by directing all her missionary effort into one channel, and one wished that missionary fervour were as universal.

Just at the time when we had planned to start from Rosetown a tremendous thunderstorm came on, making the trails quite impassable for several days. The water cart which brought the town's drinking water from five miles away could not get in for three days, so we had very short rations. On the Thursday I determined to leave for Kerrobert, in spite of Mr. M. saying that no one ought to go out on such trails. I knew that if we did not start at once we should not get to Kerrobert by Sunday. The trails were indeed dreadful, about the worst we had ever seen. The half-dried mud was like putty. We had the Parsons' chains on, but even so we skidded from side to side and had to go on low gear all the time.

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About a mile out of the town we came face to face with a large wagon and four horses, which refused to make way for us. The road was steeply graded, so that if you got off it you would slide down into the mud and water of the ditch. I pointed out that it was as awkward for us as it was for them, indeed worse, as they had horses. They replied that if we stuck they would pull us out, and making a dash for it I managed to get on the gradient and up again. But what was my horror to find, a little farther on, another great wagon left standing in the middle of the road. It appeared that they had taken the horses from this to help on the other wagon. There was nothing for it but to drive round it, and this time my luck failed and we stuck fast in the mud. One of my Parsons' chains had come off in the last place, we found.

I put on another chain with great difficulty, as the jack kept continually sinking in the thick mud. When I had finished I looked round for Winifred, and could not see her anywhere. I got the car out and waited. Still no Winifred. Feeling very anxious, I went off to a neighbouring farm and asked to be allowed to telephone. I then rang up Mrs. M. at Rosetown, but she had seen nothing of her. At last I saw her coming along the road. She had been to look for the lost chain, found it



was broken and had got it mended in the town.

We then went on with great difficulty till we came to a most awkward place. It was a bridge over a creek, very narrow, and just as muddy as the rest of the trail, with a very rotten paling on either side. I knew that if the caravan skidded it would smash this paling and fall four or five feet into the little stream below. As there was no reason why we should both run the risk I asked Winifred to get out, and then managed to crawl over safely. Presently we came to a very bad bit, nothing but large holes of mud and water, but we ploughed through. Then came a tremendously steep hill up which I tried to rush, but I stuck half-way. Even with the chains on the wheels could not grip in the sticky mud, and unloading failed to help us. I then sought assistance from a farm at the top of the hill, and the farmer, a Frenchman, brought a horse and pulled us up. The trail got worse farther on, and we camped at the next farm we came to. We were in a dreadful condition of dirt and hunger, our feet twice their normal size with clotted mud, the caravan full of lumps of mud, our hands and clothes all over mud. I did not feel much like cooking, so when I went to the farm house for water I asked if we might boil some eggs there. Whereupon the farmer's wife insisted on giving us the eggs as well as boiling them for us, and she also gave us boiling water for our coffee. We thankfully ate our supper and went to bed.

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After sticking in several mud holes next day, we finally stuck fast in a very deep one, but a farmer ploughing near pulled us out. He told us that the trails got worse between here and Kerrobert, no cars had been through for several days, and he advised us to stop the night at his farm and go on by train next day. So we drove the van into his yard and received a kind welcome from his wife. I wanted to let the vicar of Kerrobert know that we were coming. They said that there was a telephone at the next farm a mile or so away, so I walked over there. On my return I found it exceedingly difficult to find my way in that featureless district, and I should probably have got lost had I not heard Winifred's hail.

We tried to make some return for the kind hospitality we received here by helping with the chores, but zeal without knowledge is a dangerous thing, and one of us, washing up the separator, dissected it so thoroughly that the farmer's wife gazed in consternation at the result.

On the Saturday the farmer drove us into Rosetown when he went in for his weekly shopping. He promised to look after the caravan for us while we were away. We got to Kerrobert in good time that night, and were able to carry out all our Sunday engagements. But we missed the caravan very much, as we could not take all our apparatus without it, and we had to put up at an hotel as the vicarage was very small. These little hotels are expensive and not at all comfortable. We hoped great things when we caught sight of a bath, and promised ourselves a real treat, but on inspection it proved to be full of dust, with no water laid on.

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There had been a Sunday School at Kerrobert, but the teachers had left the district. The vicar was too busy to take it, and his wife had her hands full with two small children. But for several Sundays in succession the children had come as usual, waiting and hoping against hope that the school would be held. Two little boys of six and seven years old had driven three miles in a buggy by themselves. The joy of these children made our struggles to get to them well worth while. There were about twenty of them in all. It grieved me that, though the Union Sunday school had plenty of teachers, no one could be found to teach the Church of England children.

We visited some very fine day schools and gave Bible lessons there, and also gave an address to parents in the church. The vicar arranged a children's service for the next day, so Winifred stayed to give the address while I went to fetch the caravan. Mr. M. drove me out to the farm, but I did not get started with the van till about 3.30 p.m. The trails had dried up a good deal, but the ruts were perfectly awful, as they always are after these heavy rains.

I had great difficulty in finding the way without Winifred to hold the map and direct me. Presently I came to a little town and stopped at the garage to refill my gasolene tank, but the petrol pump was empty. I had plenty in the side tanks but it took so long to siphon it out, so I determined to run on with what I had left. But beyond the town was a steep hill, and as I could get no run at it, and my gasolene being so low, I stuck half-way up. Again I missed Winifred badly. I could not get out to unload because the brakes were not strong enough to hold the loaded van, so I had to back to the bottom of the hill, unload, drive the van up, and then load again. This wasted a lot of time, though I got some help from a passer-by. Then I came to a "wash-out"—*i.e.*, a conduit that has fallen in. This one was a large hole right across the trail about five feet deep. As there was a large slough on either side I had to go back four or five miles to find another trail. I could not turn between the sloughs and so had to reverse for some way.

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The great difficulty now was to know where to go. I had been following main trails, but now I had to take any side trail in the desired direction which seemed passable. I went mostly by the sun, as I knew my way lay north and west. When it was growing dusk I was going down a steep hill, when I noticed a bit of wood lying across the trail. I thought it was merely a broken piece of wagon rack. At the same time I experienced the most curious sensation, a strong warning not to go any farther, the like of which I have never felt before or since. I stopped the van, and getting out walked along the trail a few paces and found a great wash-out right across the road. It was much worse than the former one, with quite as deep a drop and a much wider chasm. Had I gone on I could not have escaped it, and must have been badly hurt if not killed. I heard afterwards that there had recently been two bad accidents here. One man had broken three ribs and had had to be nursed at a neighbouring farm, there being no hospital near.

To the side of the wash-out there was an equally bad hole, but it had not such a sudden drop. It

was evident that cars had been through this, so I tried it. Remembering the sprung frame, I went rather too slowly and stopped dead just on the opposite incline, at an acute angle. My gasoline being so low contributed to this misfortune, so I filled up my tank by siphoning from the side tank and tried to crank the car, as the electric starter had gone wrong that morning. At this angle it is almost impossible to crank any car, and this handle was stiff, so I blistered my hands in vain. As it was late I made up my mind to go to bed and tackle it in the morning. I was hungry, however, and had had no food since I started, so seeing a farm about half a mile off I went to get milk and water. The farmer's wife said she was sick of this hole, so many accidents happened there. She promised that her husband should come and help me in the morning, and said that she would telephone to the Secretary of the Municipal Council to see if they could not get the road mended.

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I had my supper and was just going to bed, when I saw the headlights of an approaching car. I hurried out to stop them before they reached the wash-out. It was an enormous caravan on its way to Kerrobert sports. They were very grateful, and said they would tow me out in the morning, before they went on, if 4 a.m. was not too early. It was very difficult going to bed at this angle, but I managed to sleep. The prairie air is so wonderful that you can sleep anywhere and anyhow. Next morning the other van crawled round me and tried to pull me out, but my rope broke, and I told them not to stop for me. The farmer came later on, and between us we managed to get the engine going by priming the sparking plug, and then I got out of the hole all right.

The farmer directed me along the main trails. But, unknown to him, there had been a cloud-burst in this district during the recent thunderstorm, and this had washed away conduits and formed great sloughs within the space of three hours. Consequently I spent the day retracing my path and trying to find passable trails.

On one occasion I stuck fast in a very bad mud-hole, and so went to a farm for help. The farmer sent his man with two horses, and he pulled me out. While he was unhitching the horses, he became embarrassingly confidential. Beginning with the usual query "Are you married?" and the inevitable "Why not?" he intimated that now was the opportunity. I gathered he was "baching it" as many do, which meant that he had to do all his own domestic chores as well as his farmwork. I could imagine what his shack looked like, having seen some when asking the way with their unwashed crockery and general disorder, and I guessed that he was wanting a housekeeper and thought that I looked strong and useful. The man would take no money for his service, and when I refused to let him come and sit beside me in the caravan he called me ungrateful. It was an awkward situation, and I saw that the only thing to do was to get away at once. But as the caravan was not quite out of the mud the engine had stopped as soon as the horses ceased pulling. Fortunately they now became so restive that they took all the man's attention, so I cranked the car like lightning, jumped in and got away.

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Farther on I stuck again in alkaline mud, which sucks you down, but a farmer lent me boards and I managed to run along them. Presently I reached a farm with a telephone, and sent a message to Winifred lest she should be anxious. The farmer's wife kindly offered me food, which I gladly accepted, as I had had none since early morning. On other occasions, when we could not stop to cook, Winifred fed me with biscuits and chocolate, as on these rough trails I had to keep both hands on the wheel. When I tried to start the car again it would not crank. But there was a small hill near the farm, so I pushed the car to the brow of it by turning the wheels by the spokes. Then came the exciting moment when the van began to run down the hill and I had to jump in with all speed.

At a place called Dodsland I was advised to cut across the prairie, as the main trail was impassable. I had an exciting time bumping over the hillocks, and felt sure that everything in the van was being smashed to pieces. Finally, by asking the way at isolated farms, I got in sight of Kerrobert, and then found yet another slough half across my path, in which two side wheels stuck fast as I tried to get by. My efforts to dig the car out proved futile, so I went to a near-by farm for help. I found numbers of horses, but no men. Everyone had gone to Kerrobert sports. I was sorely tempted to take some horses and pull the car out myself. Then a car came along from Kerrobert, and most kindly turned round and hauled me out. I got into the town about 9.30 p.m. and went straight to the vicarage, where I found Winifred.



**PRAIRIE SCHOLARS**



**A YOUNG HERDSMAN (see page 91)**



**A PRAIRIE SCHOOL**



**A MAPLE LEAF TEACHER AND HER PUPILS**

*To face p. 71*

The next day I took the van to the garage to have the electric starter repaired, but as it was a new pattern the spare parts were not in stock, and they could not promise them before Saturday. This was awkward, as we were due at Coleville on the Friday (the next day). We could not work the Coleville district without the caravan, so many of the schools being far from the track. We went up on Friday by train, and back on Saturday for the car, which was not ready till Sunday afternoon, however. But we arrived at Coleville during evensong, in time for Winifred to play and for me to give the address.

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## **CHAPTER XIII**

### **FURTHER PRAIRIE SKETCHES**

We had come to Coleville at the special invitation of Mr. H., the clergyman in charge of the district. It seemed strange to meet out here, he being the son of the late vicar of my parish at home. We had promised to spend a week in his district, and he had planned out a full programme for us. On the Monday we gave an address in Coleville school (during school hours), and then went on to Victory school. This school-house was a mile and a half from any other house, and many miles from a town. All around were wide stretches of unbroken prairie, with a few farms here and there. The prairie was covered with flowers of all colours—the wild, blue flax, flame-coloured mallows, many-hued vetches, and a lovely deep pink low growing wild rose with a very sweet perfume, and a small anousa of turquoise blue.

A Maple Leaf teacher was in charge of this little one-roomed school—a very pretty girl. She was

delighted to see anyone out from England. After school was over the children brought round the teacher's horse, and then they all mounted and galloped away in a picturesque cavalcade. Most of them lived about four miles off.

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We went on to Smilie in the evening, where I gave an address to parents and children. While I was buying gasolene next morning, a man came into the garage, and, seeing the name on the van, began a conversation with us. He was glad that someone was going round to teach the children, he said. He had been taught the Bible when he was young, but nowadays people knew nothing about it. Why, only the other day he had asked a workman if he knew what building it was which had been raised without sound of axe or hammer, and he actually didn't know! It was *quite* time the children were taught the Bible.

We had no housekeeping cares in this district, as Mr. H. had arranged for nearly all our meals to be provided. So generous, indeed, were the folk of this neighbourhood that all our gasolene was sold to us at half-price. On the Tuesday we went out to a prairie school where they were having holidays. But our visit had been announced, and the children drove in to have a Bible lesson, holiday time though it was. Moreover, after Winifred had given them an hour's lesson the class still refused to disperse.

Out here I saw the first flock of sheep which I had found on the prairie. We had dinner with the owner, an old Welsh farmer, and his wife. He remarked that he was very glad that we were going round to teach the children, and when I asked why, he replied that the young people now growing up hadn't been taught the Bible as he and his wife had been taught it at home in Wales, adding gloomily: "Half the motor cars you see in the town on a Saturday evening haven't been paid for. It's time somebody went round to teach them something."

He did not usually attend any meetings, it seemed, but we had evidently made a good impression, for, to everybody's surprise, he turned up in the evening at my address to parents. We had a special Welsh hymn in his honour. This meeting, as was often inevitable, was an hour late in beginning. Those who arrived first telephoned to the rest to know if they had started. It was rather like a Derby day, Mr. H., on the top of the caravan, announcing from time to time who was first in the field. While we were waiting, a good many young men were introduced with the usual formula, "Meet Mr. So-and-So, one of our bachelors," and etiquette obliged us to reply, "Pleased to meet you."

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Next morning we went out to Travet Park school, miles away across the unbroken prairie. We should never have found our way had not Mr. H. accompanied us. It was pleasant to miss the telephone poles and see countless flowers instead. We never passed a farm all the way, and we could hardly see the trail. At Travet Park the teacher told us that she had started a Sunday School on Fridays after school hours, but very much wanted help with books. The children here listened with breathless attention to the lesson we gave them. It was most encouraging to find both teacher and children so keen. We had dinner at a farm, and afterwards I took the van to collect people for the parents' meeting—among others, a young mother with her tiny baby, and an old lady with a broad Cockney accent and a bonnet trimmed with black cherries, some of which were jolted off in the van and remained with us as trophies. It was a real cross-country run. We were actually *told* to drive over the wheat. Then we came to a ditch which we crashed into and out again, and then over a large badger's hole. By the time we arrived at the school I felt that all ideas had been jerked out of my head. But the meeting began with a hymn, and then Winifred said a few words, and by that time I had collected my scattered wits.

Next day we had a puncture far out on the prairie—our first misadventure of the kind. I had no spare wheel, and this entailed a hot job in the broiling sun. At last we arrived at the farm where we were taking Mr. H. to baptize two children—a child of three and an infant in arms. The father was ploughing, but he left his horses and came in for the baptism.

We then went on to Kindersley, where Mr. W. was in charge. We had done 130 miles in Mr. H.'s parish. Mr. W. kindly gave us a special Celebration next morning, as Mr. H., who was still in deacon's orders, was never able to have one. He then returned to his district.

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We spent a week at Kindersley. The Women's Auxiliary had arranged to give us dinner and supper every day in different people's houses throughout our visit, and others brought us milk and eggs for breakfast. We met many thoughtful and interesting people here, some of whom had been early settlers. While entertaining us, they told us stories of these early days. The settler and his wife used to trek fifty miles in an ox-wagon to the bit of land he had bought. There they lived in a tent until he could build a sod shack. The wife would perhaps have to go twenty miles to the nearest slough to wash her clothes, and sixty miles for stores, letters, etc. Probably there would not be another woman for miles around. In time a solid wooden shack replaced the sod building, and the farm slowly acquired all the latest modern appliances. Then motor-cars linked the isolated farms together, and with the coming of the railway little towns sprang up here and there. These tales of quiet heroism filled me with great admiration.

On the Saturday the president of the Women's Auxiliary invited us to meet all the members at a tea-party, and asked me to give a description of our aims and objects. They seemed interested, and thought it was a work which the W.A. might support. On the Sunday we had an early Celebration, and, after breakfast, started off for Avonhill, some sixteen miles away in Mr. H.'s district, which we had been unable to visit on the previous Sunday. We went along a road with sloughs on either side until we found a slough right across the trail. So I had to reverse on this narrow road for about a quarter of a mile, and then had to cut across the prairie; this made us an

hour late in arriving. We held a service for parents and teachers and children, and left them some books. Although we were invited to dinner, there was no time to stop for any, and we got back to Kindersley just in time for the Sunday School at 2.30.

On the Tuesday I held a study circle in the church for adults (by request). It was on "Prayer and the Prayer Book." Among the members was a "Dunkard," a sect which combines the tenets of the Quaker and the Plymouth Brother. This woman had a most spiritual and beautiful face. She wore a sort of uniform with a dark bonnet much like a Salvation Army girl's. There were some Presbyterians in the class, too. We ended with a discussion on the respective value of forms of prayer and of extempore prayer, those not in communion with us showing great sympathy and breadth of mind. [75]

Next day we went out on the prairie with the vicar, to visit the parents and children who lived far away. There had been some rain, which added to the glory of the flowers—masses of wild mustard and purple vetch and luxuriant gaillardias.

On Friday, July 9, we started for Alsask, fifty miles off. We arrived by supper-time, though we did not start till 4 p.m. We had a terrific thunderstorm on the way. It was a wonderful and terrible sight, great zig-zags of forked lightning against inky black clouds. We tried to keep pace with the storm, expecting a torrential rain at every moment, which would render the trails impassable. I set my teeth, and got every possible ounce of speed out of the caravan. We could actually feel the heat of the lightning. (They are called out here "electrical storms.") Just as we thankfully caught sight of the Alsask elevators, the storm increased. A terrific wind got up, and we saw a great grey cloud of dust swirling towards us, mingling with the black storm-clouds above. As we entered Alsask, the clouds burst and the rain came down in torrents. I tore down the main street looking for a garage, to get the van under cover as soon as possible. Fortunately, I soon found one. When the storm had partially subsided, we made our way to the vicarage, and from under cover watched the lightning and tried to take photos of it. Later on, when it had cleared a little, we brought the caravan up to the vicarage and slept in it.

The vicar and his wife were not long out from Southwark Diocese. He had been secretary for his diocese for the A.W.C.F., and, like me, had got keen in this way. The vicar's wife was a trained educationist, and ran a splendid Sunday School, but, like all who know the most about a subject, she was eager for fresh suggestions. Here, also, we received much hospitality, and so got to know the people, and when we were not at other folks' houses the children were with us. On the Sunday we held a demonstration Sunday School. [76]

While we were here a Sunday-school picnic was arranged. There were about thirty to forty children, most of whom went with their parents, but we took some in the van and the vicar took some in his car. Shrieks of laughter arose from our passengers when the van skidded badly in the sand. Our destination was a big slough, which was almost a small lake. There was a crazy boat on it, in which the children rowed about, keeping it afloat by vigorous bailing. I unwillingly ventured in this craft in response to a pressing invitation, feeling certain that my weight would send it to the bottom. A further diversion was paddling, in which we also joined the children. It was very hot and quite shadeless: 104 degrees in the shade and 126 degrees in the sun is quite usual during the Canadian summer, hence the national welcome accorded to ice-cream. On this occasion the vicar brought a barrellful, which he doled out into cone biscuits all through the afternoon. Each child ate about six, but they paid for what they had. These ice-creams are most delicious and wholesome, being made of pure cream from the Co-operative Creameries. These are established in all large towns. They buy up the farmers' cream, making it into butter or ice-cream, the latter being sent all over the country in barrels. Co-operation is one of the great secrets of success out here. Even this picnic tea was co-operative. Everybody brought their own, and then shared it with others. Thus the speciality of some clever housewife was enjoyed by many; and Mrs. X.'s iced layer cake or Mrs. Y.'s salad was greatly in demand. Everybody wished to have his or her "picture" taken, and it was very difficult to get them all in, so we perched some on the top of the caravan.

On the Thursday we had another expedition. The vicar had just returned from camping with his scouts at Laverna Lake, some thirty miles off, and he happened to mention that he had left all his equipment there and did not know how to get it back, so I suggested that we should fetch it in the caravan. We got there in good time, though the trails were rough, and I had a delicious swim before lunch. [77]

It is a beautiful lake, surrounded by low hills. All around the margin were lovely wild tiger-lilies. Mr. H., from Coleville, was in camp there with his scouts. It is an ideal place for a camp.

We got back to Alsask in time to give a Bible picture talk to the children around the caravan. Then we went on to a social evening, at which we were asked to speak. All present seemed to realise the great importance of work amongst the children.

On Friday morning the vicar kindly gave us an early Celebration as we were going on to Youngstown, eighty miles away, where there was no Anglican clergyman. It was a very hot day, and the trails were extremely rough. When running one felt a little air, but when one stopped for meals the heat was intense. The tyres got so hot that I had to keep them covered or they would have burst.

Alsask is on the borders of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and we were now in Alberta. We had written in advance to a Mr. and Mrs. S., some of the leading laity of Youngstown, and Mrs. S. had

replied that it would be useless for us to attempt anything there this week because a Chautauqua would be going on. Therefore, as Youngstown was the most westerly point of the diocese which we were to visit, we thought it best to go on and make arrangements for our work when the Chautauqua should be over, meanwhile going on to Banff to see the Rockies. We did not arrive at Youngstown till 8 p.m., and had to wait for some time before we could see Mrs. S. as she was out. We then arranged meetings for the Saturday and Sunday of the following week, thus giving her time to let all the people know.

## CHAPTER XIV

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### A CAMPING TRIP IN THE ROCKIES

While I was visiting Mrs. S., Winifred had found a garage where we could leave the caravan. She had also inquired about the trains for Banff, and found that one left about 5 a.m. next morning. Mrs. S. gave me the vicarage key, so that we might store our things there. This we did overnight. We got up very early in the morning, collected our sleeping-bags, the tent, the tea-basket and a little food, with a small saucepan and a spirit lamp, and a "grip" apiece, and drove these things to the station in the van. We then left the van outside the garage (as previously arranged), because it did not open till 7 a.m., and just managed to catch the train. We had a few hours' wait at Calgary, and arrived at Banff about twelve o'clock at night. We had not the least idea where to go, and there was nobody about except an old man with a lorry. I asked him where the camping-ground was, and he replied that it was too far to go that night, but he would take us to a place where we could camp for the present, and he would come and fetch us in the morning; so we put our things on the lorry and climbed up after them, and he whipped up his horses and drove off at a gallop into the darkness.

Presently we stopped suddenly where a wood loomed up against a star-strewn sky. "Here's the place," our charioteer said briefly, and we pulled our things off the lorry and were speedily left alone. It was pitch dark under the pines, so we could not see to put the tent up. We groped for the rope which confined the tent and sleeping-bags, and after some fumbling undid the knots and got out the bags and waterproof sheets and mosquito-nets. Then we undressed with great difficulty in the heavy dew, and somehow or other crawled into the bags and rolled ourselves up in the waterproofs and pulled the mosquito-nets right over our heads. The latter pests were awful. They even bit us through the nets, and made such a noise in the early morning that we could stand it no longer, and got up, whereupon they fell upon us with renewed zest.

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We now saw the exquisite beauty of the place. The sun shone down through the tall pine-trees and glittering dew-drops spangled every blade of grass. We came out of the wood, and there were the Rockies in full view—lovely pointed peaks, with snow on their summits. Near at hand flowed a beautiful clear river. Trees and water were an intense delight after the bare stretches of prairie.

I collected sticks and boiled coffee in the little saucepan, and we had the most delicious breakfast. By the time we had finished the old man had come for us. He drove us a few miles beyond the town to a large pine-wood. The Spray River ran through this wood—a swift clear stream, opalescent with melting snow. The wood was full of tents, but we found a nice spot near the river for our camp, not too near anyone else. I then went off into the town to look for an Anglican church, as it was Sunday morning. The way into the town was through a beautiful avenue of tall pines, an avenue over two miles long. By dint of asking the way I found a lovely little church. It had the prettiest natural decoration—moss growing on the window-sills. It was just 11 a.m. when I arrived, and I found there would be both Matins and Holy Communion. I was well rewarded for my efforts. In the evening we both went into the town for evensong, and had supper at a restaurant.

We had heard of the beauty of Lake Louise, so on Monday we made a trip thither. The last part of the way was by a funicular railway. Lake Louise was hardly known before 1890. It is a small jewel of a lake, just over a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide. It lies 5,670 feet above sea-level, and Mount George at the head of the lake is 11,355 feet high. This mountain is covered with glaciers and perpetual snow. I live in the Lake District, and also know the lakes of Scotland, Switzerland, and Italy, but I have never seen such exquisite colouring as that of Lake Louise. It flashes on you suddenly as you emerge from the pine woods, a mirror of gleaming turquoise, framed on either side by dark pine-clad slopes, with glistening white peaks between them, these being reflected in the clear waters. On the lower slopes of the mountains and at the foot of the lake there is vivid emerald green grass. Facing this loveliness the C.P.R. has built an artistic hotel, chalet fashion, which does not spoil the landscape. From the windows of this hotel the whole enchanting picture is seen as in a frame.

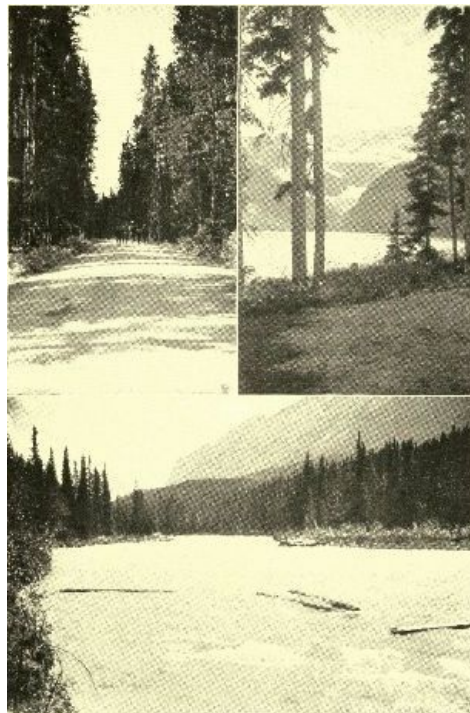
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In the afternoon Winifred went in a motor char-à-banc to see other lakes and mountains, and I walked up through the pine woods on the right of Lake Louise to Lake Agnes, a climb of 1,200 feet. A little above this I saw a tiny lake called Mirror Lake. These two are sometimes called the Lakes in the Clouds. By this time a thunderstorm had come on, which greatly enhanced the grandeur of the scene.



On the Tuesday I went to the famous sulphur baths at Banff. The water comes out at 98 degrees in one spring and 112 degrees in the other. There are open-air swimming baths with glass all round them, so that you can see the mountains all the time. The next day we went down the river in a motor-boat, seeing a most wonderful panorama of woods and mountains, which a thunderstorm made more beautiful. The lightning seemed to strike a waterfall and glance off again. That same night there was another tremendous storm, the thunder echoing and re-echoing in the mountains, sounding as if two storms had met and burst above us. I distinctly felt the heat of the lightning and could not help wondering how soon it would be before we were struck, being under trees. But although the rain was terrific it never came through the tent.

Another day we motored to Lake Minawaake, passing several canyons. We came back by Banff Park, where we saw moose and other tame wild animals, the most interesting of all being the buffalo, one of which was wallowing with his legs in the air. I took a photo of him, but was not allowed to get out of the car to do so as they said he would probably charge. This is the only herd now in existence, and they once covered the prairie. Another very interesting sight was the lumber being floated down the Bow River to Banff, where it is sawn up and sent by train all over the prairie. The flowers here were very luxuriant. The most striking one was the Red Indian's Paint Brush.



- 1. THE AVENUE AT BANFF, ALBERTA**
- 2. LAKE LOUISE**
- 3. LUMBER ON THE BOW RIVER**

*To face p. 80*



**SLINGING HAY INTO THE BARN (see page 87)**



### **THE CHURCH ON THE INDIAN RESERVE (see page 99)**

On the Friday we returned to Youngstown. We had a very exciting journey as there were sixty wash-outs on the track. It was very sandy, and had given way in the recent big storms. You wondered all the time what was going to happen next, especially after it grew dark and they kept shunting us from one line to another. Then a madman got in, and insisted on conversing with us when he was not fighting, until removed by the conductor. We arrived at Youngstown at 1.30 a.m., but as the tent had not arrived, and the caravan was garaged, we had nowhere to sleep, and so finished the night on a very hard wooden bench in the waiting-room. [81]

## **CHAPTER XV**

### **ON THE RETURN JOURNEY**

The Chautauqua at Youngstown was now over, but we heard all about it from Mrs. S. It consists of meetings, with lectures on all sorts of international and intellectual subjects, interspersed with concerts and social gatherings. It seems a very good plan for places far from large centres of human life and thought. By this means they are brought into touch with modern movements. Speakers from all over the world lecture at these Chautauquas. Mrs. Pankhurst was speaking at this one.

That night we gave our promised picture talk around the caravan. We had a mixed congregation of Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Lutherans. The children seemed most interested, and would hardly go away. The Anglicans were without a clergyman at present, and they felt this privation very keenly. They had had one of the Railway Mission clergy, who had lived here and worked the surrounding district. The four missionaries who had served this district at different times had all been killed in the War. Now no one was forthcoming owing to the distressing dearth of clergy. Everything was ready should anyone be sent. Monetary support was guaranteed. The vicarage was a nice little two-roomed shack with a garage and Ford car all complete. The church was dusty from long disuse, and Winifred spent all Saturday cleaning it. The furniture had been made by one of the congregation. It was of some dark wood and of very original design. The asphalt path from the church to the vicarage had been laid by a Roman Catholic neighbour. This same spirit of goodwill was shown when I went to buy gasolene and oil from a Youngstown Roman Catholic. He refused to take any money for it, saying that he was glad to help on religious work amongst the children. [82]

On Sunday we held a Sunday school at 3 p.m. The children were most eager for instruction; they knew almost nothing, poor little things. In the evening we had a service for adults in the church. A man took the collection in his hat because they could find nothing else. He carried it up the aisle and gave it to me, and as I laid it on the altar I felt that it was a more acceptable offering than many a laden alms dish offered that night in some rich cathedral. Here, as in many places, we were asked who paid us. When we explained that we were not paid, it seemed to give the people a better grasp of spiritual things. In this country of growing materialism, in which the monetary value of a thing is of first importance, it was difficult for them to understand anyone doing honorary work. They began to think religious education must be of real importance when they saw that we considered the work its own reward. The congregation asked us to keep the collection money for our work, so we thanked them and promised to use it towards paying for the pictures which we left at each place. [83]

In all the parishes which we visited we left a dozen Nelson pictures backed on linen, with wooden slips top and bottom so that they could be hung up in the church, and also some small Nelson pictures for use in class, as well as lesson books of different grades. Where the Canadian Sunday School magazine was in use the teachers found these additional books useful to supplement it both in matter and method.

We discovered that there were several outlying missions which had been worked from Youngstown, so we decided to visit the nearer ones, and take the others on our way back to Regina. On the Monday we went to Ryson and looked up the children at the farms and got them to join the Sunday School by Post. At one farm we were thankful to take shelter as a thunderstorm was raging. The farmer's wife was away, but he and two of his brothers were at home. The farmer was a great student of the Bible, so he and I had a theological discussion under cover of the piano where Winifred and the brothers made music.

After another day or two's visiting we started for Cereal, but lost our way and did not arrive until 10 p.m. Here, also, we took the names of several children for the Sunday School by Post. The next day we went to Stimson, over a very bad trail. We addressed the children in the afternoon, had supper at a farm, and then held a service in the school, with prayers, hymns, and address. The latter was given under difficulties. Several small children came with their parents, and several dogs accompanied their masters. Presently one baby fell down and began to cry, whereupon all the other babies howled in sympathy and all the dogs began to bark. I tried to make my voice heard above the din, but Winifred came to the rescue by collecting children and dogs and taking them all outside. Afterwards we discussed the best way to start a Sunday School, and took names for the Sunday School by Post in case it proved impossible.

We started about 8 a.m. next morning for Alsask and Kindersley. We meant to go over a hundred miles that day. The trails were awful, however, and presently we came to a graded place which was all loose earth, and the car skidded badly, running off the grade and sticking at an angle of 45 degrees. We unloaded, and when I got in again to drive it I had to hold fast to the wheel in order to keep my seat, the slope was so great. But I managed to get back to the trail. We reached Alsask about 2 p.m. and found Mr. H. there, who wanted to be taken on to Kindersley. After five miles the car stopped dead. On examination I found that the hub of a back wheel was broken in half. Just then two men came along in a car and said they were going to Alsask, so they took me and the wheel. While it was being mended I bought some food to take back with me to the others, but had to wait an hour or so till the men were ready to return. They took me back to the caravan, and I put the wheel on again and we started once more. But the car still went badly. Then we came to a steep hill newly graded, which we could hardly get up. At last I found that I must put in new sparking plugs, a difficult job in the dark. Whilst I was doing this Winifred had a splendid view of a distant electrical storm. It was a magnificent sight to see the lightning flashes playing on a vast expanse of sky.

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Then we came to a nightmare of a road, very steeply graded and with loose hard clods about 3 feet deep on the top. These nearly knocked the bottom out of the engine, so I had to drive on the side at an incredible angle, expecting every moment to be overturned, though my companions were steadying the van with might and main, the one hanging on to one side, and the other propping up on the other. Every now and then we had to stop and unload, or else we must have capsised. We arrived at Kindersley about 2.30 a.m., and found Mr. and Mrs. W. still waiting up for us with a splendid supper prepared, to which we did full justice. About four in the morning a tremendous thunderstorm came on. I woke up with a start and suddenly remembered that I hadn't covered up the engine, so I scurried out to do so, otherwise my sparking plugs would have been ruined and the whole of the engine flooded. The difficulty was to keep the tarpaulin on, as there was always a big wind. I made up my mind that another year the engine should have a proper mackintosh cover to clip on.

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We could not start for another twelve hours because the trails were so heavy after the storm. The Chautauqua had reached Kindersley now. The big brown tent was pitched just opposite the vicarage and I heard the singing, but had no time to go to any of the lectures, unfortunately. We did not leave for Rosetown till 4 p.m., but we arrived there at 9 p.m., a seventy mile run.

The next day (Sunday) we went on to Dinsmore, where the vicar lived whom we had met before at Bounty. We had not been able to hear from him, but knew he expected us to take a Sunday School and address parents somewhere in his district that afternoon. We started about noon, but lost our way, and when we inquired at a farm were wrongly directed, so we did not get to Dinsmore till 2.30. Just as we were entering the town we got on to a rough trail with a lot of big clods. A front wheel struck one of these and badly bent the steering-rod, which made it very difficult to steer the van, as it kept veering towards the left of the trail all the time. When we reached the vicarage we found the vicar had gone, but I knew that he had a service at Surbiton on Sunday afternoons and so asked the way there. The caravan got more and more difficult to steer. I tried to straighten the steering-rod with a tyre iron, but it was not strong enough. Then we came to a creek where there had been a bad wash-out, and a board up across the trail said "No road." But I noticed that cars had been going over the creek a little to the right, which meant going down a hill like the side of a house, over the stream, and up an equally steep hill on the other side. One needs to steer particularly well on these occasions, but I had to risk it and got across somehow.

At last we arrived at the school-house at Surbiton, and singing told us that service was going on. We crept in and found the room full; some of the congregation were even sitting in the porch. The Sunday School was over, but I was asked to give an address to the people.

The vicar had to go on immediately to another service, but he had a puncture and no spare tube, so I lent him one of mine. He introduced us to the Sunday School superintendent and her husband. She was most anxious to learn anything about methods. All the children of every denomination attended her school. She invited us to stop to supper, and it finally ended in our camping in their yard for nearly a week. We wanted to teach the children, so our host and hostess suggested that they should be invited to a cricket match, and have a picture talk afterwards in the evening. They complained of the lack of organised games for the children, a thing we had already noticed. Here and there a teacher would organise a base-ball team, and that was all. One felt how invaluable it would be to have more Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. The difficulty here lies in the lack of people for Guiders and Scout-masters.

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The cricket match could not take place till after school, then the children arrived in cars and

buggies, and we had a splendid game. We played till it was too dark to see, and then had the Bible picture talk by the light of the moon and the headlights of the cars. The day-school master and the parents standing behind the children seemed just as interested as the latter were.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AMONG THE PRAIRIE FARMS

Our host and hostess were charming, cultured people. He and his brothers, 'Varsity men, were farming in a little colony of their own. He was a member of the Provincial Parliament, or Senate. Our hostess was a trained nurse from St. Bartholomew's. She had been matron at a hospital in Rosetown, and she still helped in cases of illness whenever she had time. She told us how badly nurses were needed on the prairie. She was also President of the local Grain Growers' Association, which is similar to the Home-Makers' Club and the Women's Institutes—we got the latter idea from Canada. The chief aim of these associations is the selling of farm produce and the general betterment of home and rural life. Our hostess was one of those who saw the need for a higher moral standard in the country, and her Association had appealed to the Senate to that effect.

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They were most kind and hospitable, and insisted on our having meals with them. The farm hands sat at the same table—in this democratic country no longer below the salt. On several evenings I went with our host and his children to play cricket at other farms, and I noticed that the farm-hands and everyone else joined in the game.

It was very interesting to go round the farm and see all the wonderful labour-saving devices. They had cut the hay and were getting it in. The term "wild and woolly West" is said to have originated from the "prairie wool," or natural hay, which is specially luxuriant on dried-up sloughs. It is a grass with a fluffy, golden-brown plume. But this natural hay can only be cut every other year, hence many farmers are sowing hay seeds as well. The wagon which they use for carting hay and wheat has enormously high rack-like sides. On this farm, when carting hay, an immense canvas sheet with rings at the corners is put in the wagon and the hay piled up on it. When a wagon-load reaches the barn, a rope attached to a pulley in the barn roof is put through the four rings of the sheet, the horses are taken out of the shafts and harnessed to the pulley-rope, and the whole load is swung up into the barn, along a rod, and on to the rick. The whole operation only takes three minutes. There was a blacksmith's shop on this farm, and as some of the metal on my shock-absorber had broken, our host cut me a piece of metal, and I mended it with his assistance—a job which entailed lying under the car for an hour with earth falling into one's eyes. The vicar was famous as a "fixer" of broken-down Fords, and one day he came to the farm with his children to gather Saskatoon berries.<sup>[7]</sup> Whilst he was waiting for the party to start, he and our host took out my steering-rod and straightened it at the forge. As he put it back he eyed me solemnly and remarked: "I suppose you know that your two lives depend on this rod."

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One very hot night we were sleeping in the van with all the doors wide open for the sake of coolness. I woke up suddenly to a tremendous clap of thunder with terrific forked lightning and a hurricane of wind, and hailstones the size of a hen's egg. I sprang up and pulled the wind-screen to and shut the side doors, and then woke up Winifred and told her that we must hold on to the back doors for dear life. If once the wind got in it would certainly overturn the van. How we got through the next half-hour I cannot tell. There was no catch inside the back doors, as we always bolted them from the outside, but so sudden and terrific was the storm that there was no time to run round and bolt them. The wind would have swept you off your feet, and you might have been struck by the lightning. For the same reasons it was impossible to make a dash for the farmhouse, and even if we had got there safely by any chance, the caravan would have been smashed to atoms as soon as an open door gave entrance to the wind. The only thing to do was to hold the back doors with our fingers in the chinks, though how we managed it I do not know. The alternative was to abandon the caravan and lie flat on the ground, as one was advised to do in cyclones, but in this case we might have been killed by lightning. All through that half-hour the van quivered like a live thing, and we expected every minute that it would be blown away or broken in. I have never felt so near death. The storm lessened after a time, and then I bolted the back doors. In the morning we found that the farmhouse had been nearly flooded by the torrential rain, a stream of water having poured through the house. They had looked out at us anxiously from time to time, but could no more reach us than we could get to them when the storm was at its worst. Two great hay-wagons had been blown several yards into a fence, and we heard that a shack eight miles off had been blown over, and the settler had had all his limbs broken. We had often heard of these storms before. On one occasion such a storm burst upon a prairie school, smashing in the windows. The young teacher gathered the children into the porch, where they escaped injury. But when they returned to their homes most of them found the shacks blown over and their parents killed. A neighbouring school was entirely wrecked and the teacher and children killed.

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On the Saturday, when the trails had dried up, we started for Birdview. We were now entering the dried-out area again, but the sand-drifts had sunk a good deal and become more compact, so we managed to get the caravan through, though she skidded a bit. We camped by the little

prairie church, built miles away from any farm so that it might be in the most central spot for each. Beside it stood the vicarage, a one-roomed shack with a cellar beneath. There was also a good-sized parish hall and a stable for the parishioners' horses. This complete isolation has its perils. During the influenza epidemic in 1918 one of the clergy lay here helpless for three days before anyone knew that he was ill.

We stayed here for a week, having the place all to ourselves. We cleaned out the shack and had our meals in it, sleeping in the van. It was intensely hot, and we found the cellar a great boon for our butter, etc. These cellars are a necessity on the prairie, keeping your food cool in summer and your house warm in winter. Mrs. M., the farmer's wife who had arranged for our visit here, used to bring us water and milk and eggs from her farm two miles away. The well at the shack was now very low. She also drove us to visit a day-school teacher who had promised to carry on the Sunday School if we started it. We held the school on Sunday, and two prospective teachers listened. After school there was a most excellent tea in the parish hall, provided by the parents who had brought the children. Delightful *al fresco* meals are a feature of prairie life. After tea we held a service in the church. We had made it as beautiful as possible, with golden rod in the altar vases. Members of the Women's Auxiliary had cleaned it thoroughly for us. This service will always remain in my memory. There were people of all ages present, and a large number of men, both middle-aged and young. Winifred played, and I read the service and gave the address. We had a shortened form of evensong. For the lessons I selected passages from the Gospels about our Lord and the children. I also used some of the beautiful prayers written for the Forward Movement—in particular, the one for a parish left without a clergyman. We chose well-loved hymns, such as "Rock of Ages," from the Canadian hymn-book, which is beautifully called "The Book of Common Praise." It is the best collection of hymns which I have ever seen, including suitable ones for both children and adults. There is also a Canadian prayer-book, some of the prayers being for the special needs of the country, such as the prayer in time of drought. We used this one at the service on behalf of this dried-out area.

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I spoke on the importance of religious education, building up my theme from the Gospel readings of the lessons. I tried to show how juvenile crime had increased in countries which neglected the spiritual welfare of the children. I ended by reminding them that, just as they had chosen a font for their War Memorial, so the children, properly trained, would be a living memorial of those who had laid down their lives for Christian ideals. It was very easy to draw analogies between the spiritual life of the child and the growth of the wheat, which is so easily prevented by storms and drought from coming to its full perfection.

At the close of the service we went to the door to say good-bye to the people. I was very touched to see that some of them were crying, no doubt from memories which the old familiar hymns and prayers had brought to mind.

The next day we were invited to supper at a farm five miles off. On the way we had a feast of beauty from the flowers, which were especially glorious now. This is the native land of golden rod and Michaelmas daisies. I have never seen such a variety of the latter—little white ones growing low on the ground, little pale mauve ones, and great bushes of deep mauve and yellow ones. There were also perennial sunflowers with beautiful dark centres, and fine erigerons. At last we arrived at the farm. It was a melancholy sight, almost buried in sand, and the farmer was leaving it. In spite of being very badly off they gave us a most delicious supper—roast chicken and layer cake and fruit and tea. It was especially welcome just then as I had been doing a lot of cooking that week, so a meal which I had not prepared was a great treat. (This may be taken in two ways.)

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The next day we taught in the day school and enrolled some children for the Sunday School by Post. Then we went on and paid several visits, finishing up at Mrs. M.'s farm, where we had supper. It was wonderful to see her small son, aged three or four, rounding up cattle mounted on a tall steed. This infant had already made our acquaintance, driving over to our shack all by himself to bring us eggs.

On Thursday we left for Swanson, nearly sticking in the sand more than once. At last the sub-radius rod broke with our continual skidding, but I was able to get another at a hardware store on the way. We reached Swanson that night and camped by the church. Next day we went to see the farmer's wife who had promised to get the people together to meet us. The family consisted of Mrs. Z., a widow, her daughter, and two sons. As we drove up we saw that the wheat was being cut. Some of the binders were drawn by motor tractors and others by horses. After the tea-supper, which is the last meal of the day, Winifred went to the piano to play songs for the girl. I noticed that the two brothers looked very tired after their day's work, and guessed that they were waiting up for us as I had seen that our room led through another. At last in desperation they went to bed, and we found them fast asleep when we went through. This shack was in advance of many, as it had a door between the rooms instead of a curtain, but the girl ingenuously suggested that as it was a hot night we should leave the door open.

The next day we went out to help them stook the wheat. It was a beautiful sight, the sky so very blue and the wheat so very golden. I felt quite at home at this job, though one had to stook from a quarter to half a mile before turning, and the sheaves in the stooks were placed in a circle instead of in our English way. Their aim is to keep out the sun and wind, which would dry the wheat too much, whereas ours, of course, is to let them in. They told us that a stooking machine had been invented, but it was not very satisfactory as yet. The wheat usually stands only a week in stook, and is then threshed on the field. The rack (*i.e.*, wagon) is accompanied by a loader

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(elevator) which shoots up the sheaves into the rack. When this is full it is driven to the thresher. This differs from our English threshing machine. Instead of coming out in bundles, the straw is cut fine and blown out of a funnel, accumulating in a heap on the ground. It is left there all winter, being used either as fodder or as fuel. The grain pours down a great pipe into a wagon, instead of being put into bags as with us. The wagon is then driven off to the nearest "depot," where there is always an elevator, as the tall buildings used for storing the wheat are called out here. The wagon drives into the building, where it is weighed with its freight. Then the wheat is tipped out and taken up to the store rooms above. From there it is shot down a pipe into railway trucks, and sent by train to Fort William on the Great Lakes. There it is cleaned and again stored in elevators, and then poured down a great pipe into the grain boats which carry it down the Great Lakes. Then it goes by train to Montreal and Quebec, where there are even greater elevators, whence it is sent all over the world.

We were told that this was the first good harvest in that district for five years, which shows what a gamble prairie farming is. What with drought and late frosts in spring, and hail and rain when the wheat is ripe, the result must always be uncertain. The farmers are obliged to put all their eggs into one basket, as they cannot store a root crop in winter owing to the intense frost. A daily paper, dated September, 1921, has the following news from Montreal: "Two feet of snow fell in the district of Saskatchewan, causing much damage to crops and bringing the snow-ploughs out. Drenching rains throughout the remainder of the province suspended harvesting and threshing. The storm is the worst for 25 years."

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Of course I had put on my landworker's clothes to stook in, and to my surprise this caused a great sensation. They had never seen a landworker in real life, only pictures of them in the *Sketch* and the *Daily Mirror*. They said the kindest things about British women war-workers.

## CHAPTER XVII

### BACK TO REGINA

We returned to Swanson that evening in order to be ready for Sunday. While we were hanging up pictures in the church two boys came in. We had already met these two out in the harvest field, and had asked them to come to Sunday School. One of them pointed to the cross on the altar, and asked, "What's that?" I found that he knew nothing about the Life of our Lord, so I showed him the picture of the Nativity, and from this and the other pictures told him the sacred story. The other boy joined in at intervals, supplementing my remarks. I found that he knew the story quite well, and asked him how it was that he knew so much, and he explained that he was a Roman Catholic. I told them that there would be Sunday School on Sunday afternoon, and asked them to come, which they did. (There was no Roman Catholic church in the place.) The children seemed to enjoy the school, and the teachers-to-be came to listen. A bad thunderstorm delayed us in beginning the service following, as the people could not get there. But they arrived eventually, and seemed to think the effort worth while. A few of the people from the Birdview district, who had attended our service on the previous Sunday, were among the congregation.

We were given an early supper by kind Mrs. T., who had mothered us when we were there before, and, thus fortified, started on our twenty-mile drive to the ferry over the Saskatchewan River, where we camped. There was another thunderstorm that night. I got up very early, and had an awful business cooking breakfast because of the raging wind. I had determined that on any future trips there should be a tin shield for the Primus, as digging a trench was of little use.

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Meanwhile we heard that the ferry had not been running for several days, as the river had fallen and the sand had silted up. If I had known this sooner we might have crossed at Saskatoon, where there was a bridge, but we were now a hundred miles or more away. It was necessary to cross without loss of time, because Winifred wanted to catch the train at Outlook on the following evening. She was obliged to get back to England by an earlier boat than I was taking, because the tour had been prolonged beyond the original date, owing to weather and other difficulties.

When we had got down the steep, slippery trail to the river I found that the ferry-barge was not starting from the pier, but lower down stream where there was no pier, and between us and it was nothing but sand and mud and water in which the caravan would sink. There were two other cars waiting to cross. Their owners had gone over to Outlook in the ferry to get a team of horses to pull them through. Just at this moment a wagon and two fine horses drove down to the river bank. We explained our difficulty to the driver, and he offered to tow us on to the barge. The ferry-boat had now returned, and the touring cars were towed on with difficulty. The waggoner hitched us on to his wagon, and I asked Winifred to get out, as there was no reason why she should run the risk of being overturned. Then our wagon started, and I started the engine to help the horses, but this frightened them and they tried to bolt. The man shouted to me to switch off, which I did, but they still galloped on and seemed to be making straight for the river. Hitched on behind like this I was helpless. But the man was a splendid whip, and he knew his horses. He steadied them with his voice, and, getting them in hand, swung them sharply round and on to the barge, though still snorting and plunging in their fright. It was exceedingly difficult to steer the van round just at the right moment, but I managed it somehow. The barge men (our former

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friends) seemed to find it very hard work getting the heavily-laden boat across, with the wind against them. On the other side there was no pier to land on, only mud and water as before, so the waggoner offered to pull us ashore. His horses were really magnificent—extraordinarily strong—for they pulled both the wagon and the laden van through the sand and water, past the touring cars stuck in the mud. The man refused to take any money for his services, though it was usual to charge a dollar or so for pulling out cars, etc. But only once in all our three months on the prairie, and with our numerous calls for help, would any man take money for his services to us. I am sure that our work was helped by our being women. Much more consideration was shown to us than would have been the case with men similarly situated. Perhaps this is because there are fewer women than men out there. The men certainly seem to feel that they cannot do enough for them.

I took the grass track up from the river, the same which I had used when crossing the ferry before; but the van stuck at the top, so I had to unload, and then back down to the bottom and rush up again at full speed. It was a very hot day and a weary task repacking the van. We bitterly regretted our refusal of the kind waggoner's offer to pull us up.

I saw Winifred off by train, and then went on to Eyebrow, 96 miles. It was rather fun trying to race Winifred's train, which I could see on the track a little ahead of me. I did nearly catch her at one station, but was not quite quick enough. I was very grateful for all Winifred's help, and found it rather difficult to find my way without her, as she always held the map. But I struck a green blazed trail after a time, and then found my way quite easily. This trail fortunately avoided that bad corner at Elbow, and the surface of all the trails was far better now than when we came up. I arrived at Eyebrow about 5 p.m.

The next day Mr. T. took me to visit some parents, with whom we had meals, and then on to Keelerville day-school, where I gave an address. I was surprised to find one little girl answering all my questions with great fluency, while the others sat in open-mouthed admiration. I said to myself, "I'm sure you've been to the Qu'Appelle Diocesan School for Girls," as I had noticed the same phenomena in Sunday Schools in Regina, and my surmise proved to be correct. [96]

We went out to supper, where we had the usual great bowl of boiled eggs, from which we helped ourselves, everyone being expected to eat at least three. It was very dark on our return journey, and the headlights sometimes went very dim. I found it extremely pleasant to be driven for once.

I left Eyebrow on the Wednesday afternoon, and went on to Mortlack, about 38 miles. I found my way all right, but had to go through a great deal of sand. Fortunately I did not stick. The vicar and his wife gave me a very warm welcome when I arrived that evening. There were five small children and a young theological student in the house. The vicar had been presented with a Ford caravan very much like mine, in which to get about his rural deanery. For everyday use he had a Ford car, and he took me round the district in this. I taught in two schools and held a parents' meeting on the first day, and gave a picture talk and two addresses to parents and teachers on the next day. Indoors I helped the student with the household chores, which he had made part of his duty. The vicar's wife had her hands full with the children. The latter were charming people; they specially loved jumping in and out of the caravan. I secured temporary quietude by taking them down the town and presenting them with "all-day suckers." This protection of the Canadian parent is a large hard, brightly-coloured confection, stuck on a pointed stick, which forms a handle. As the name suggests, it is supposed to last all day. Another favourite comestible is chewing-gum. The children in their turn frequently presented me with both these dainties. But what I really liked were the delicious ice-creams and ice-cream sodas and sundaes. Those of the latter that one buys in England are but pale shadows of the original. The real, true sundae is a bowl of genuine ice-cream, on the top of which is preserved fruit in rich syrup, with chopped nuts scattered over it. [97]

This rural deanery received a great deal of support from the Colonial and Continental Church Society. They wanted me to stop at Mortlack over Sunday, but I felt that I should never get all my affairs settled up in Regina before catching my boat unless I went on at once.

So I started off for Regina on the Saturday, and got there in the afternoon (70 miles). The trail was exceedingly bad, as they were newly grading it, and in some places I had to get over mounds of loose earth about four feet or more high. It was odd to find my watch an hour different from the Regina clocks. The big towns have summer time, but the C.P.R. and the country places keep to ordinary time.

I had a very warm reception from the W. family, behind whose house I stored the caravan until I had time to clean it. The first thing to do was to clean myself and my wardrobe. I looked more like a mechanic than a Sunday School "expert." I found oil on most of my clothes, and without Mrs. W. should never have got them clean again. It was very nice not to have to turn out in the morning and cook breakfast over a bad-tempered Primus. Mrs. W.'s meals were not easily forgotten, and now they seemed extra good. The Canadian breakfast is a dream: you begin with grape fruit, and then come "cereals," followed by eggs and bacon, and sometimes griddle cakes with maple syrup, or johnnie cakes.

When I went to church on Sunday morning I had another kind reception, and the vicar insisted that I should give an address to the whole Sunday School in church that afternoon.

Next day I went to see Archdeacon Dobie and Archdeacon Knowles, and had a long talk with them, the gist of which I append later. I told them that I wished to present the caravan to the

diocese, that this work might be carried on. Archdeacon Knowles offered to take charge of the van and its equipment during the winter, promising that it should be stored in the Synod garage. [98]

The caravan had covered at least 3,000 miles in just over three months. We started from Regina on May 21 and got back on August 21. We visited ten existing Sunday Schools and started four new ones; we also visited twelve day schools and enrolled sixty children in the Sunday School by Post. Besides this we gave many Bible picture talks to children and addresses to parents and teachers, held a good many services in church, and did a lot of visiting.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### AN INDIAN RESERVE

I felt that I could not leave Canada without seeing an Indian Reserve. I had met Miss A., the headmistress of the Christian boarding school at Punnichy, so I wrote to her asking if I might pay a flying visit to the Reserve, and received a warm invitation. I left Regina at 9.30 p.m. and did not arrive at Punnichy till next morning at 6.30. I travelled with a large number of Doukhobors, extraordinary people who talk a most curious language. They come from southern Russia, and are a religious sect. They live in communities, having everything in common, even wives. The women wear picturesque clothes—a coloured handkerchief over their heads and another over their shoulders, with a very full short skirt. I noticed that the train inspector seemed uneasy at my being in their compartment, and soon moved me to another one. But I had to remain an hour with them in the waiting-room at Saskatchewan, and they seemed quite harmless and were interesting to watch.

I was met by a Mrs. T., who drove me in her own car up to the Reserve. I found that she had nursed in France during the War, had had shell shock, and had received the Royal Red Cross. Her husband was the headmaster of the day school on the Reserve. She had found that the Indians were without a nurse of any kind, and so she was giving her services in that capacity and had her hands full. She had even bought a car in order to get round the Reserve. There was a great deal of sickness, the Indians being very tubercular now, and there was much infant mortality. Mrs. T. said that she badly needed another nurse to help her. She was then on her way to the school to help the doctor operate on a good many children for adenoids and tonsils, but it would be a case of "first catch your hare," as the patients always fled into the bush on these occasions. [99]

Miss A. and her father, the chaplain on the Reserve, received me very kindly. After breakfast I was asked to give the children a Scripture lesson. They were bright, attractive children, but not nearly so quick as the British children. They knew a great deal, however, having been well taught. It seemed very sad that our British children had been so neglected that they knew less about the Bible than these Indian children did. I bought some of the beautiful moccasins and bead chains which they make on the Reserve. The mother of one of the pupils had made the Bishop's mitre all out of beads.

Outside the school-house there was a poor little boy lying on a mattress, the other children entertaining him with picture books. I asked what was the matter with him, and was told that he had broken his leg and the witch-doctors had essayed to cure it, doing him great harm. But he was now getting well under proper supervision. We had meals with the Indian children, in a nice family way. They talked good English, of course, having been in the school for several years. The *raison d'être* of the boarding school is to give the children a good standard of living. When they attend a day school they have to live at home in the dirty hovels, which undoes much of the civilising influence they have received. When they are old enough the boys are trained to work on the school farm, under the management of Mr. A. I was shown the beautiful little church, but was saddened to see the many little wooden crosses marking the babies' graves. We saw some fine Indian men, looking quaint with their long braided hair and big shady hats. They are being trained to farm work, at which they prove most efficient. I should have liked to have seen the Indian warriors in war paint, but this is seldom allowed by the Government now as it is found to have such an exciting effect on them. There had been a display of the Hudson Bay Company at Winnipeg in the May of that year, but I was not able to go. [100]

There was something singularly tragic in the sight of these people, disinherited, and suffering from diseases which they never knew in their old free life. It is one of those great injustices for which there seems to be no remedy.

I remained for evening prayer, and was asked by Mr. A. to give the address. I told the story of St. Christopher, which seemed to be much appreciated. Then I caught a night train and got back to Regina next morning.

## CHAPTER XIX

## HEADED FOR HOME

On my return from Punnichy I went to see the Bishop and Mrs. Harding, and described our caravan tour. His lordship said that my account only emphasised his previous conviction that work among the children was of vital importance, and he hoped I would come back in the following spring to carry it on. I explained that I had my diocesan work in England, and had only six months' leave of absence, and was even now hurrying back to take a Teachers' Training Course.

I had plenty to do during the next few days. I had sent home to England for a good many books and pictures, and these now had to be done up and sent off to the different places we had visited on the prairie. A decidedly arduous task, too, was the cleaning of the caravan, to which a good deal of the trail still clung. I spent strenuous hours with a hose and brush, cleaning it inside and out. A hole had been knocked in the composition boarding of the door, and I racked my brains to think of a way to mend it. Then I remembered the paper pulp with which we make raised maps. This did splendidly and hardened well. Then there were all the books and pictures and models to catalogue and store for the winter, ready for those who should take the van out next spring. [101]

I had told the garage to fetch the caravan and take the engine down and clean and overhaul it, but as they did not send for it I took it round myself on the Monday and said that it must be done by the Thursday, as I had to leave for England. When I went next day they had merely taken down a little bit of the engine. They did not get to work on it properly till the Wednesday, which was very annoying, as I wished to have the back springs strengthened, a long job, and one which I meant to see thoroughly done. I spent Thursday running to and fro between the garage and the parish hall (where many of my things were stored). I had to catch an early train in the morning, and so told a porter overnight to fetch my cases and boxes from the parish hall. After supper I went round to the garage again to see if the van was finished. It wasn't. I knew that if I left it the mechanics would go off to some other car, and not only would my van certainly not be done in the morning, but quite possibly it would never be properly done at all, and when used next year might break down at a critical moment. I therefore determined to stay and see it finished. I knew the garage was open all night, with a special set of mechanics for night duty. Hour after hour passed. I stood around by the van and handed tools from time to time, and pointed out what I wanted done, and by thus keeping them at it the van was actually finished soon after 7 a.m. I rushed off with it to the W.'s, and Mrs. W. and I packed all the equipment in it as fast as we could. Then I hurried up to the Synod garage, taking a man with me to remove the electric starter, which would freeze if left in all winter. As I flew along I thought wistfully of the splendid breakfast which kind Mrs. W. had prepared and which I had no time to eat. I handed over the car and keys, got another car to take me to the station, and just managed to catch the train. There was no time to feel sentimental over bidding farewell to my beloved "Tin Lizzie," who had done such wonders for us. Several friends came to see me off, but my cases from the parish hall only appeared on the platform as the train steamed out of the station, and it was months before I saw them again. [102]

I went by train to Fort William, on Lake Superior, then by the Great Lakes and down the St. Lawrence River. Lake Superior is a huge inland sea, into which you could drop England. On Sunday morning we reached the easterly end of the lake, where the great locks are between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. We stopped at Sault St. Marie for several hours, and some of us went ashore to church. I hunted about for an Anglican church, and seeing one with a cross on it made for it; but it was a Roman Catholic church, and was packed to the doors. Next I found a Presbyterian church, and at last found an Anglican one, which I afterwards discovered was the pro-cathedral. The Archbishop of Algoma was preaching on the Lambeth Conference, from which he had just returned. I had to leave before the end of the service lest the boat should go without me. We started again at one o'clock, and went down Lake Huron and through the Georgian Bay and past the Ten Thousand Islands. It was very beautiful. We arrived at Fort McNicholl at 8 a.m. on Monday. I then went by train to Toronto, and thence took a steamer down Lake Ontario. It was a grey day, but the scenery was lovely, and the waves quite rough, like the sea. We passed into the St. Lawrence at night, and on the Tuesday morning began to pass the Thousand Islands, some of which are disfigured by enormous houses, which look too big for the island. At Prescott we changed into a tiny steamer called *The Queen of the Rapids*, and went on down the river, soon coming to the first of the rapids, which the steamer shot. There is a drop of three hundred feet between Prescott and Montreal. The biggest rapid is the Lachine Rapid, with a fall of eighty-five feet. These rapids have always been shot by the Indians in their canoes, and now one always comes on board to pilot the steamer down. The river here is far wider than the Thames at London, and the rapids form a foaming bar from side to side, through which there is only one narrow channel. As we rushed through we were suddenly aware that the walls of water close on either side were veiling rocks, between which the boat passed with only a few inches to spare. We went three miles in one and a half minutes. In 1921 the rudder chain broke when the steamer was shooting the rapids. The boat dashed on the rocks and had a hole knocked in it, but the passengers managed to reach an island and were all saved. [103]

We arrived at Montreal that night, whence I went on to Quebec by train, the *Empress of France* being too big to get up the river. I arrived at Quebec in the cold early morning, and spent the day hunting up my luggage, but finding very little of it. I found time, however, to go up to the Heights of Abraham, whence I had a magnificent view right over the harbour. Both here and at Fort William the gigantic elevators were a striking sight, and I could also see a lot of lumber floating in Quebec harbour.

Quebec is a strangely old-world town, noticeably so after the very modern West. I went into a shoemaker's shop to get a shoe mended, but had to make my wants known chiefly by signs, as the man spoke a queer old French and knew no English.

This journey down through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence is so exceedingly beautiful that it is a pity more people do not take it. But it is only possible in the summer months. After October the lakes are too rough, and in winter the St. Lawrence is blocked by ice.

As we steamed out of Quebec the Heights of Abraham looked very fine with the sunset behind them. We went by the northern passage, between Labrador and Newfoundland. At night the Northern Lights lit up the sky for two or three hours together, and just here we had to go slowly for fear of sunken icebergs.

We got to Liverpool on September 15, but though we arrived at 4 p.m., we did not get off the boat till 7.30 p.m., as a White Star liner was at the landing-stage, so I did not get home till next morning.

## CHAPTER XX

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### SOME PRESENT-DAY NEEDS OF THE PRAIRIE

In the interview which I was granted with Archdeacon Knowles and Archdeacon Dobie before leaving Regina, I tried to explain my conviction that the future of the Anglican Church on the prairie depended on the training of the children. If they remained as ignorant of religion as we found them in many places, it was obvious that their generation would have no use for the Church. On the other hand, they were now in an intensely receptive state, and the parents were more than willing that they should receive instruction, and had supported us by every means in their power, both by promising to carry on our work and by giving us most generous hospitality. Experience had proved that a caravan was the best means of reaching these outlying districts, first because they were often so far from the railway, and also because there was no accommodation for women visitors in most of the shacks.

When I offered my van to the diocese, Archdeacon Knowles suggested that I should leave suggestions for its future use. Those I made were as follows: (1) That in the spring, summer, and fall, a Sunday School expert should use the van on the prairie, starting Sunday Schools, visiting the farms and day schools, giving Bible lessons in school hours, if allowed by the trustees, if not, after school hours; taking names for the Sunday School by Post; helping the existing Sunday Schools, teachers, and clergy. (2) That the expert must be a person fully trained for the work, either at St. Christopher's, Blackheath, London, or in any similar institution which might be started in Canada. (3) The expert must be accompanied by someone who has driven a car for at least a year, and done her own running repairs. She should be able to cook, and willing to teach a class under the direction of the expert. (4) Concerning the finance: the travelling expenses of the workers, their board, and the running expenses of the caravan should be raised in England until the diocese is able to support them. If possible, a salary should be provided, but, failing this, honorary workers might be found.

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Archdeacon Dobie read me a report which he had just received from two of the Mission clergy who had gone out in the other Ford caravan. They had done between two and three thousand miles already, and I afterwards heard that by the end of the season they had gone 6,000 miles and baptized 101 children. It was interesting to note where their report corroborated ours. They spoke of the spiritual desolation of the people, who asked them if the Church would only send clergy where a stipend could be guaranteed. They remarked on the eagerness of the children to learn, their intense appreciation of the sacraments and services, and the pathetic ignorance of the children and young people, many of whom had never been to a service before. The bad effects of this isolation and lack of education were very noticeable, they said. One of the clergy, in his report, spoke of the people "disappointed of their hope year after year, cut off from the Church—the glory and joy of which separation has deepened—there is little wonder at times they are almost on the verge of insanity." He adds: "If only some lover of Christ and of the British Empire would provide for two such vans to run for a few more years until the tide turns and the country develops, much might be done to save the children of the prairie and to foster a spirit of loyalty to the Mother Country."

These Mission clergy seemed to feel, as we had done, that the time for seizing these wonderful opportunities is now or never. The worship of the almighty dollar may easily take the place of true religion unless this present hunger for spiritual things is satisfied. It would be a serious reflection on the Anglican Church if she should let this golden opportunity pass.

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Some time after I had returned to England I received a letter from a man at Stimson (which the Railway Mission used to work from Youngstown), saying, "Why don't they send us a clergyman? Once a fortnight a service is held here by howling dervishes, calling themselves Nazarenes, instead of our dear old Church of England services." In one of the prairie towns I saw the Holy Rollers' tent erected, and should like to have attended one of their meetings just to see what they are like; but as I was doing Anglican Mission work, I feared it might create a wrong impression. I

received a description of the meeting from an eye-witness, however. The order of procedure is as follows: The preacher gets up and begins to speak in excited tones, gradually working himself up into a frenzy and becoming unintelligible. This is contagious, and the audience soon become frenzied also, finally rolling about the floor—hence the name by which the sect is known. When the people are in this ecstatic state they are persuaded to sign cheques for large amounts. The Holy Rollers will not come to a town unless a considerable sum is first guaranteed, and this peculiarity of theirs adds point to the settlers' query with regard to the Anglican clergy. It is dreadful to think of the sheep being left to these hirelings.

A matter of grave import had come under my notice on the prairie, and I felt it to be my duty to speak of it to those who were working for the welfare of the province. The lack of a high spiritual standard, with its consequent elevated moral tone, is having a gravely deleterious effect on the children's morality, proving a serious menace to the health of the community on which the welfare of this new country depends. On this point I was strongly supported by the wife of one of the members of the Senate, herself a trained nurse, who had lived for many years on the prairie, and also by an experienced clergyman and a Sunday School superintendent. All three gave me permission to use their names if necessary, and promised to supply corroborative details. They lived in widely separated districts, thus making their combined evidence of more value. Whilst in Regina, therefore, I reported to the presidents or secretaries of the following: The Local Council of Women, The Women Grain-Growers' Association, The Women Home-makers' Club, and the Social Service Council, all of which organisations work throughout the province, and are interdenominational. [107]

The secretary of the Social Service Council asked me to give a report of our work on the prairie to the Interdenominational Sunday School Council for the province. I was very glad to be present at this council, because I learnt so much. We discussed methods and organisation, not doctrine. It was most interesting to hear about the camps and clubs which they hold for adolescent boys and girls. When I gave an account of our caravan tour I took the opportunity of drawing attention to the moral question, and emphasised my belief that on this matter all the Churches should co-operate.

I sent a report of my work to Dr. Hiltz, which he read to the Executive Committee of the Board of Religious Education. They were good enough to show interest in the matter, and suggested that the Western Field Secretary should inquire what the diocese of Qu'Appelle thought of the scheme, and if the report were favourable he should try to develop the scheme in other Western dioceses.

Meanwhile Miss Margaret West, who had been trained at St. Christopher's and had been working in the diocese of Ottawa, became Diocesan Field Supervisor for Qu'Appelle. She lectured and gave demonstration lessons in Regina, and acted as secretary for the Sunday School by Post. When I suggested it, she expressed herself as quite ready to go out on the prairie in the spring of 1921, but she could not drive the caravan. I inquired of the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance in Canada if there were any ex-service girls who could drive caravans, and they replied that very few had volunteered to drive in France, and those who had done so were now dispersed and could not be communicated with. I then applied to various organisations in touch with ex-service women, and received a list of women who had driven motor ambulances or transports in France, but all of them wanted their expenses paid and most of them needed a small salary. There was no fund as yet, but through the "Recruiting Committee for Service in the Kingdom of God" I was fortunate in finding an honorary worker, who would pay all her own expenses. This was Miss Higginbotham, who had driven a car for years, and had also driven a Ford in France for the Y.M.C.A. and the Church Army, as well as doing canteen work. [108]

Miss Higginbotham joined Miss West in the spring of 1921, taking out with her a large number of books and several thousand pictures which I was sending for distribution. They arranged to visit a very large district, comprising many more places than we had visited. At the end of the season Miss West wrote: "I have about 200 members collected this year for the Sunday School by Post . . . the children need the A.B.C. of the Faith . . . they are astonishingly ignorant but very nice to teach, so appreciative of one's efforts and so ready to learn . . . I enjoyed the summer very much—the people were very kind." They had many adventures similar to ours in mud holes and thunderstorms, and also received similar kindness and hospitality. In the *Bishop's Leaflet* for the diocese of Qu'Appelle (December, 1921) a summary of their work is given, which ends thus:

"What are the results of this itinerary? The Diocesan Field Supervisor has gained an intimate knowledge of the needs and difficulties of the prairie town Sunday Schools and has got into touch with many of the teachers, so that she is now in a better position to give assistance. Also nearly 200 boys and girls living in districts where there is no Church of England Sunday School have been enrolled in the Sunday School by Post and are now receiving regular instruction in the Faith of the Church."

In a letter dated April 26, 1921, Dr. Hiltz gave us the following encouragement: "At the meeting of the Executive Committee held last Friday I read extracts of your latest letter telling of the plans for 1921. The Committee was very much interested, and I have much pleasure in forwarding to you the enclosed resolution, which will give you some idea of the attitude of our Executive towards the work which has been done." The resolution was as follows: "That this Committee desires to express its great appreciation of the work done in the diocese of Qu'Appelle by Miss Hasell and Miss Ticehurst during the summer of 1920, and rejoices to learn that the work is to be continued during the summer of 1921 by Miss West and Miss Higginbotham. The [109]

Committee thanks these ladies for their great help, and commends their spirit and self-sacrifice for the emulation of the whole Church."

Dr. Hiltz added that he was calling the attention of the General Synod to the caravan plan. (The General Synod consists of the four Archbishops, all the bishops and clergy, and certain representative laymen from each diocese of the Dominion.)

The following extracts are from the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the General Board of Religious Education of the Church of England in Canada, October, 1921.

From the Report of the General Secretary:

"*Diocesan Conference and Synods.*—A feature of all the conferences and synods attended, was the outspoken conviction of the Bishops and officers of the dioceses of the urgent necessity for the immediate increase of effort in the training of the children of the Church in the Faith of their fathers. The Bishop of New Westminster . . . cited the fact that communistic leaders in Great Britain and Europe recognised the strategic importance of influencing the young, and had established Sunday Schools for propagating their doctrines. The Bishop urged that the Church must not be less alive to a great basal principle.

"Without doubt, the present is a critical period in the life of our Church in the West. The great dearth of clergy has left many parishes, formerly occupied, without Sunday Schools or any other Church organisation. The Church of the future, in the country districts of the West, will be the Church that will now go into these fields and train and enfold the young."

"*The Caravan Plan.*—The Executive Committee asked for a report on the use of the caravan for religious educational work in the prairie dioceses. There can be no question that the van can be used to accomplish great results. . . . The van idea is rapidly gaining ground. Qu'Appelle Diocese has three vans at work, one of which is for purposes of religious education alone. Saskatchewan Diocese secured a fine new van this year, which is being operated for general missionary work. From experience this summer, the Field Secretary is prepared to recommend its use to every diocese that may be prepared to man and use it in scattered missionary districts.

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"A van or motor-car, under the direction of the Field Secretary, could be utilised to good purpose in our work. Two competent lady-workers in Calgary volunteered for field work during July, but we had no means of sending them out. A motor could have been used steadily during August, and it could be sent on special missions into other dioceses."

From the Report of the Executive Committee:

"*The Caravan Plan for Reaching Sparsely-Settled Districts.*—Following up the suggestions of the Board at its last meeting, the General Secretary communicated with several persons in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, with a view to finding out how far, in their judgment, the Caravan Plan, as used by Miss Hasell and Miss Ticehurst, had proved successful.

"The consensus of opinion was that the results were good, but could only be made permanent by a regular system of visitations. . . .

"The Western Field Secretary has had an opportunity during the summer to investigate this work, and has been doing some experimenting in the Diocese of Calgary. The Diocese of Qu'Appelle also tried out the plan again this past summer under the direction of Miss West.

"As a result of the investigations of the Field Secretary, he recommends that the plan be adopted in every diocese that is prepared to man and use the van properly in scattered missionary districts."

From the Report of the Parochial Department, under the heading, *Council on Rural Schools*: "In one Western diocese the Sunday School caravan similar to the mission van has proved of great value to the work of rural schools."

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From the above it will be seen that the caravan scheme supplies a felt need, and as ex-students of St. Christopher's and ex-service girls have volunteered, the only hindrance is lack of funds.<sup>[8]</sup>

As showing the approval which this work has received from the Church's representatives, I may add that the Bishops of Saskatchewan and Calgary have both invited me to work a van in their dioceses in 1922.

It was a bitter disappointment to me to be unable to talk over the results of our work with Aylmer Bosanquet, for it was she who originated the scheme, and she would have delighted in the details of its working. But she was in British Columbia when I returned from the prairie, so all I could do was to write her a full report, and keep her in touch with all the developments of the work. She soon grew too weak to write herself, but her interest never flagged, and she dictated most encouraging and stimulating letters. She passed away on Shrove Tuesday, February, 1921.



She was a true missionary, with a gracious and loving personality. She had a definite call and followed it. This led her to exchange a life of luxury for one of hardship, and to expend much of her wealth in the service of God. She laboured unceasingly, and with a vision which seemed to leave a living impress on all with whom she came in contact, and inspired them to greater heights of devotion and service. As the lessons of childhood are indelibly engraven on the mind, there must be many prairie children who will bless her name in after life for the imprint she left upon them. She had a statesmanlike grasp of the trend of events, and lived to do a wonderful work in Western Canada, pointing to lofty ideals and raising the standard of public opinion in this young and growing country, not only from the Church point of view, but also from the Imperial standpoint.

She has been one of the glorious instruments used in helping to bring about God's purpose, that "the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

## APPENDIX

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### I.

The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf was started under the directorship of Dr. G. E. Lloyd<sup>[9]</sup> in order to remedy the great shortage of teachers in Western Canada. It aims at enlisting Englishwomen who are not merely taking up teaching as a livelihood, but who are "willing to do something beyond what they are paid to do, for the sake of Church and Empire." Their object is the building up of character and the development of loyalty to the Empire, and they are to go specially to the prairie schools among the foreign population (now called the New Canadians), many of whom cannot speak English. The problem is—What can be done to make the un-English settlers British in sentiment? Wherever immigration spreads over the new territory, there, in two or three years' time, appear the little country schools, built by the settlers out of the rates and taxes, or from bonds guaranteed by the Provincial Government. All the children of the district, from four miles on either side, go to that school. In Saskatchewan alone three hundred new schools were built in 1915, five hundred the year before, and more than six hundred in the year before the War. Not only do these hundreds of new schools need teachers, but there is a continual thinning of the ranks as teachers go on to other professions or the women teachers marry. Many of the leading men in Canada have taught in these little one-teacher schools at the beginning of their career—such men as Sir Robert Bordon, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Sam Hughes, and Sir George Forster.

[113]

The demand for teachers in these schools is so great that very many non-British persons are accepted, and it is, to say the least, very unlikely that such persons can or will train these young British subjects as Britain would have them trained. It follows that there is here a magnificent opportunity for patriotic young Englishwomen. They would also be able to help the children of those isolated Anglicans who have no resident clergyman, as well as the mixed populations of "anybody's people." Of course, no Church of England doctrine or any other doctrine may be taught in the day schools. These are Government schools, and every religion has an equal right there. But much may be done out of school hours.

Anyone can be a teacher who can pass the Government test and who takes a short "Method" course in the Normal School. If she has any practical experience of teaching she may obtain a "Provisional Certificate," and begin to teach at once, taking the Method Course later on when the prairie schools are closed in winter. The teachers are paid a fair salary. The lowest is about £14 a month, ranging up to £45 in the towns for head teachers. The higher stipends, of course, are for those who make teaching their life-work. Any further particulars may be obtained from the Rev. P. J. Andrews, Secretary, The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf, 13, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

### II.

The present hospital arrangements in the prairie provinces are as follows: The Regina Railway Mission started hospitals in a few of the little towns where they had established missions, and some of the municipal councils took up the matter and opened a great many more. But there are no free hospitals in the West. A patient's expenses are about 22s. a day (five or six dollars), which makes a hospital prohibitive for most. Many farms are miles away from any sort of medical or surgical attendance, and as the farmer's wife has generally no one to help her with her house and children, she can seldom, if ever, go away into hospital for her confinements, and at these times often has no one with her except her husband. Of course, all goes well sometimes, but it is obvious that child and mother must suffer should complications arise. I met a great many farmers' wives in outlying districts whose health had been ruined through lack of skilled attention at these critical times.

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There is a splendid opening here for ex-V.A.D.'s. The Social Service Council of Saskatchewan is offering free training in a municipal hospital to any V.A.D., after which she would go out to the farms as a nursing housekeeper, her work being to give the mother professional attention and to keep the home running while she is laid up. She would need some knowledge of the domestic arts, such as washing and cooking. Her work would be similar to that of a village district nurse in

England, only she would have but one family under her care at a time. It should be added that the father of a family helps a great deal in the house. These nursing housekeepers would be paid \$17 to \$20 per week, just half the salary of a graduate nurse. Thus they would be earning a good income and at the same time doing a noble work. In this new country the health of the mothers and children is of supreme importance.

Applications for further particulars about nursing housekeepers may be made to the following secretaries for Social Service: Mr. W. J. Stewart and Mr. W. P. Reckie, 45, Canada Life Building, Regina, Saskatchewan, Western Canada.

### III.

The Women's Auxiliary is the women's branch of the Anglican Church Missionary Society for Canada. There are members in every district, and they work magnificently for the cause, raising enormous sums of money. One place, which had only three members, made about \$300 in the year (about £60 or £70). They get money by sewing meetings, teas, and social gatherings. The money is used first for the parish, to build or furnish the vicarage house, and supply church furnishings, etc., and then to help the work among non-Christians, both in Canada and overseas.

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### IV.

The cost of a caravan is £316 (\$1,250); running expenses, £40 (\$160); passage out and travelling expenses, about £50, but for ex-service girls, who can get a free passage, £29; board and lodging on the prairie for five or six months, about £40; board and lodging in Regina, between £3 and £4 a week (\$15). Donations may be made payable to Miss Eva Hasell, Canada Mission Account, London, City, and Midland Bank, Penrith, Cumberland. A sum of more than £300 has already been contributed.

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#### FOOTNOTES:

[1]An organisation started in memory of Queen Victoria to bind together the members of the Empire.

[2]The Qu'Appelle Diocesan Boarding School for Girls.

[3]See Appendix I.

[4]See Appendix II.

[5]Canada raised an army of 450,000, and it is estimated that 60 per cent. were members of the Church of England. The Canadian casualties were 152,000.

[6]See Appendix III.

[7]Something like wortleberries.

[8]See Appendix IV.

[9]Now Bishop of Saskatchewan.

#### Transcriber's Notes:

original hyphenation, spelling and grammar have been preserved as in the original

Page 36, "hers a mystery" changed to "hers is a mystery"

Page 61, "The Canadian casualties" changed to "The Canadian casualties"

Page 62, "sand drift near" changed to "sand-drift near"

Page 62, "3,000 miles" changed to "3,000 square miles"

Page 90, "Michaelmas daises" changed to "Michaelmas daisies"

Page 114, "here for ex-V.A.D's" changed to "here for ex-V.A.D.'s"

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ACROSS THE PRAIRIE IN A MOTOR  
CARAVAN \*\*\*

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